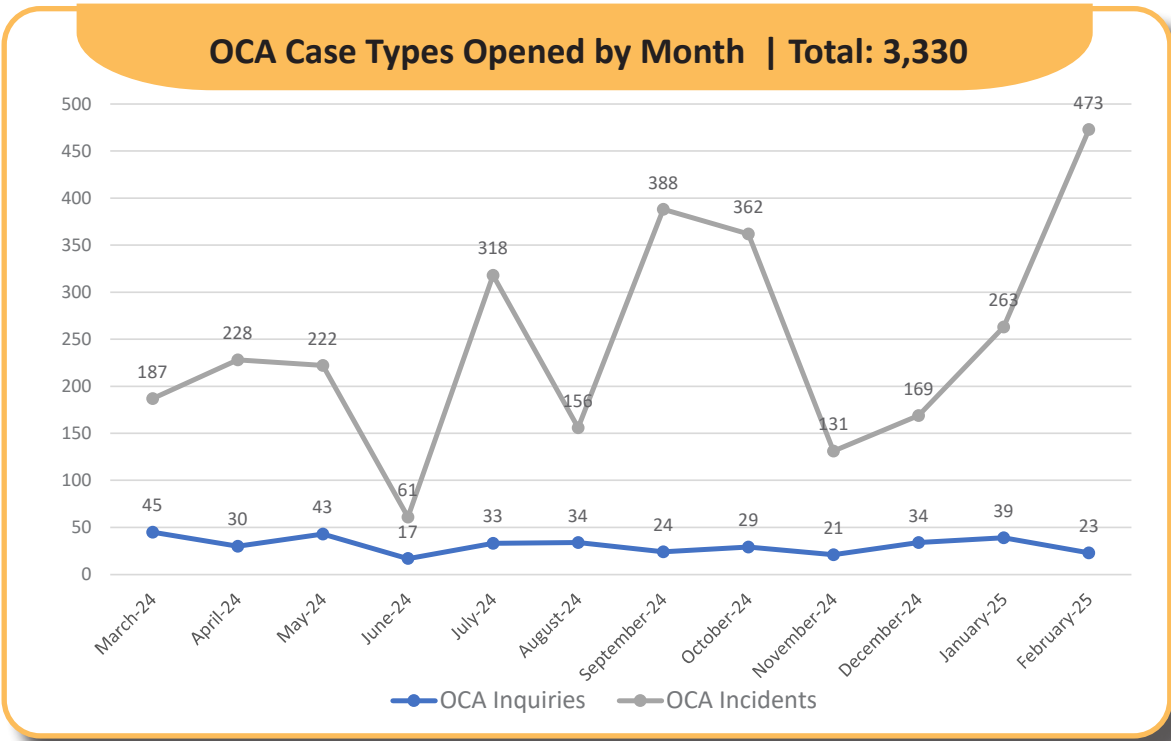


Office of the Child Advocate

The Child Advocate, Cassandra Sanchez | MARCH 21, 2025



Oversight Commission on Children's Services Report

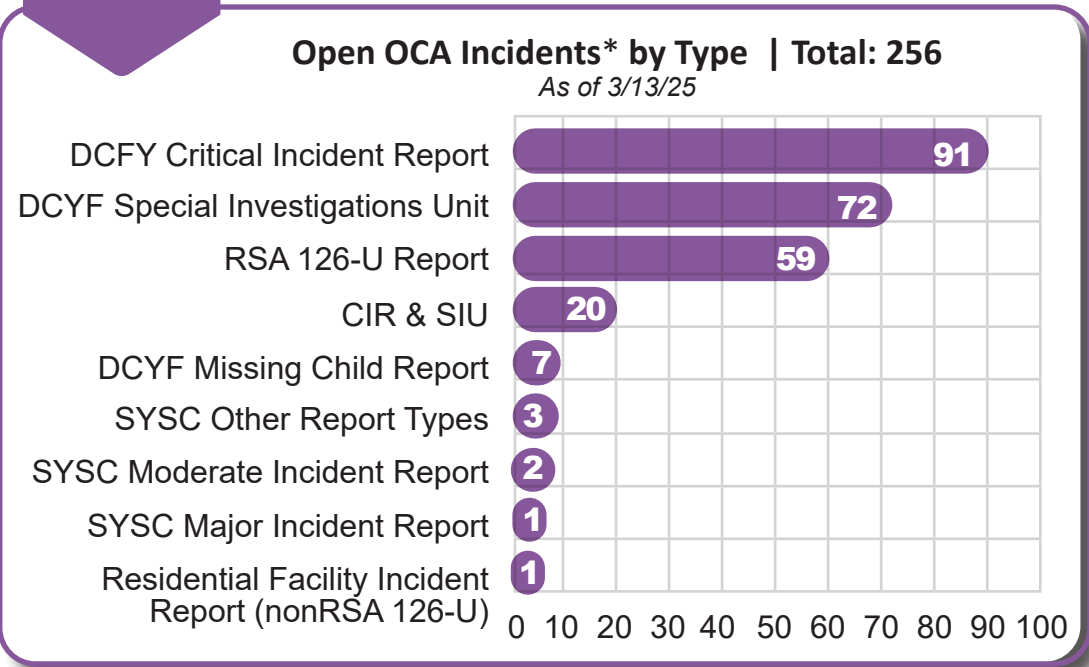


Open Inquiries by OCA Staff

As of 3/13/25

Total: 124

- 43** Assistant Child Advocate 1
- 46** Assistant Child Advocate 2
- 29** Legal Aide
- 6** Child Advocate



*Incidents include all critical incident reports from DCFY (serious injury to children, child fatalities, parent fatalities, media coverage of DCFY involvement, etc.), missing children, and incidents documented by residential programs and SYSC, including restraints and seclusion. | 1

Facility/Child Visits

2/26/25 – Chase Home, Dover
2/26/25 – individual visit to a child at a hotel
2/28/25 – SYSC
2/28/25 – Hampstead Hospital
3/13/25 – SYSC – *visit to specific children*
3/14/25 – MPA Hampton – *visit to specific child*
3/19/25 – Unity House, Keene
3/20/25 – MPA Pike

OCA Outreach/ DCYF District Office visits

3/1 – 3/31/25 – Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meetings
@ Berlin District Office
3/1 – 3/31/25 – Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meetings
@ Littleton District Office

Conferences/Events Attended

3/16 – 3/19/25 – Attended National Council of Juvenile
and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
National Conference on Juvenile Justice,
Boston MA

Upcoming Visits & Events

3/28/25 – Laconia District office staff meeting
4/14 – 4/15/25 – DCYF Annual Conference, Manchester

Other Work

2/25/25 – SOC Assessment Advisory Group
2/26/25 – SOC Tier 3 (Intensive Community Services)
workgroup
3/12/25 – Initial meeting with Governor’s Constituent
Services Office
3/13/25 – Meeting with DHHS and community advocates
regarding budget
3/21/25 – Juvenile Justice Transformation Phase II

Ongoing Work

- YDC Steering Committee
- Routine meetings with DCYF Human & Sex Trafficking Specialist
- Monthly meeting with DCYF leadership
- Monthly meeting with Clinical Director at SYSC
- DCYF Systems Review meeting
- US Ombudsman Association (USOA), Children & Family Chapter meeting
- USOA Conference Planning Committee
- Magnifying Voices Planning Committee
- Model Court/CIP Executive Committee
- Family Treatment Court (FTC) Oversight Team meeting
- Child Fatality Review Committee
- Monthly meeting with management team at Hampstead Hospital
- Monthly meeting with BCBH leadership
- Children’s System of Care Advisory Committee
- Quarterly Community Collaboration Meetings regarding Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ Youth
- APPLA meetings



Picture on left:
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conference

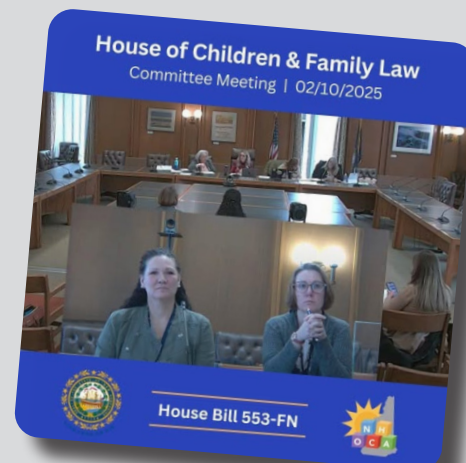
OTHER ISSUES

- **Budget – On 3/17/25 House Finance Division I passed an amendment, 5-4, to repeal the OCA statute and eliminate the office for a cost saving of about \$2 million over the biennium.**
- **Case example**
- **Use of the Cottage**
 - DCYF discontinued in early January. Hoteling continues to be utilized, although sparingly.
 - DCYF and OCA have had more consistent communication around the staffing of children in hotels which has allowed for opportunities to collaborate on next steps for some children who may be more difficult to place.
- **OCA Visits to Children**
 - The OCA has been unable to get out to facilities to visit children and assess care at the same rate that we did previously, including out of state visits, because of our increased caseloads and complexity of cases.
 - Visits to Hampstead Hospital and SYSC have remained a priority and happening on a nearly monthly basis.
- **DCYF Central Intake**
 - 27.61% of calls to central intake between 4/1/24 and 10/1/24 were abandoned.
 - **UPDATE:** OCA received further data which shows the greatest increase in abandoned calls in the months of March-May 2024, with an increase beginning in June and a steadier increase through August and September.
 - DCYF is continuing to analyze this data internally to focus on reduction of abandoned calls.

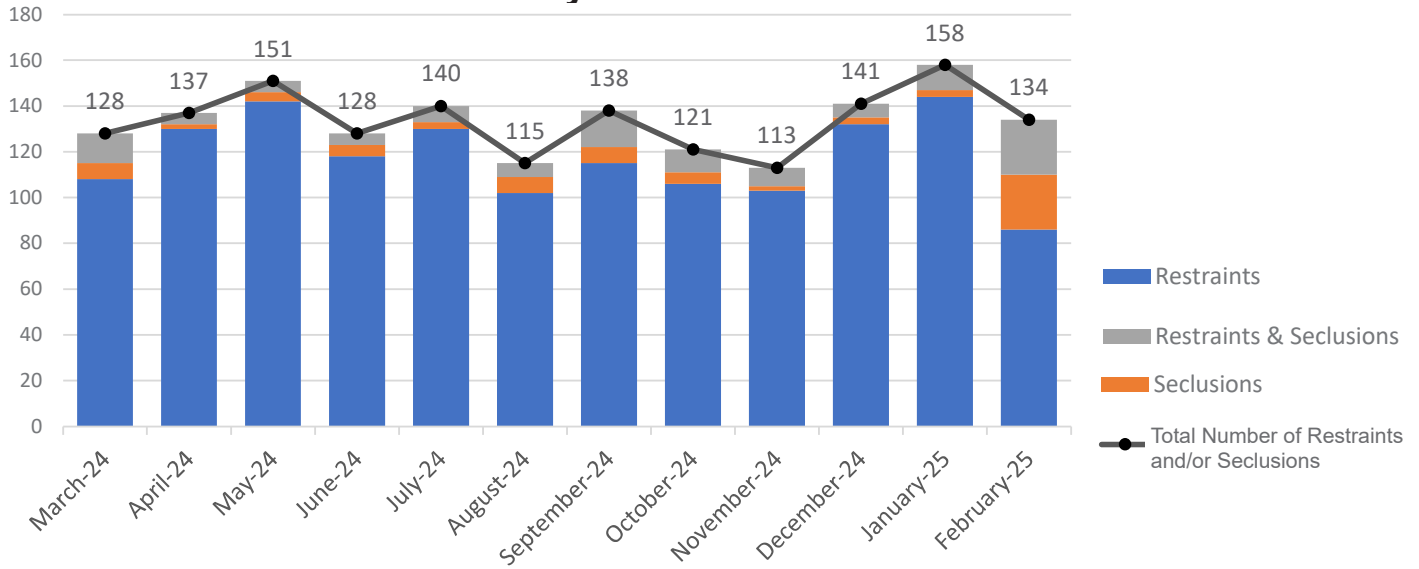
*Pictured on right:
Providing information to the
House Children and Family Law
Subcommittee on February 10, 2025.*

• Legislation

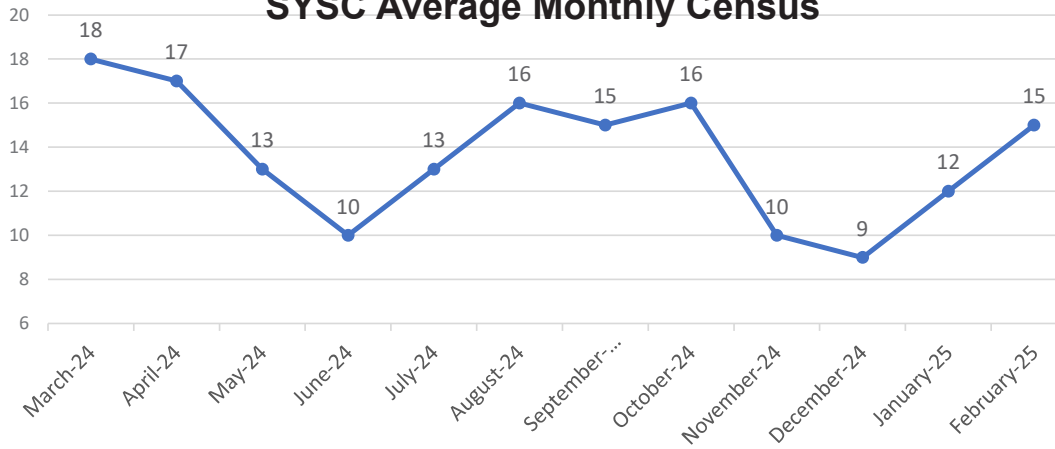
- **HB 553** – Updated Abuse & neglect definitions and presumptions of harm, filed by Rep Alicia Gregg, after extensive work by Senator Carson and Senator Whitley in the study committee throughout the fall. Further subcommittee work sessions were held in February and March. A final “replace all” amendment was introduced at the Executive session on 3/18 and passed the committee 11-4.
- **HB 653** – Alternative to restraint and seclusion school pilot program, filed by Rep Peter Petrigno, reported out of the House Education Policy committee, OTP 17-0.
- **SB 161** – DHHS’ “clean-up” bill from SB 417, passed the Senate with an agreed upon amendment.
- **SB 76** – RSA 21-V OCA clean-up bill was voted ITL by the Senate Children & Family Law Committee. It seems there was some confusion about our role, the 2020 expansion of our oversight to include community agencies that provide services to system-involved children, as well as the need for the confidentiality of our office.
- **Concern:** **HB 257** new crime of child neglect, vague and may tend to criminalize poor parents, interfering with goals of maintaining family unity.



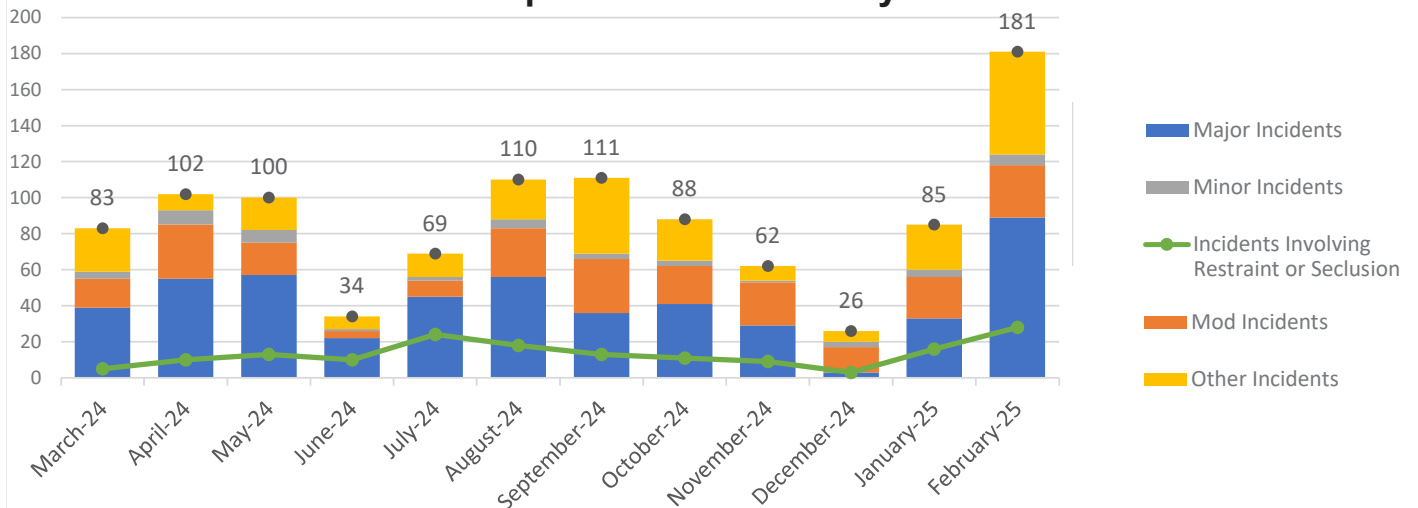
Restraint & Seclusion Reported to the OCA by Date of Incident*



SYSC Average Monthly Census



SYSC Incidents Reported to the OCA by Date of Incident



*This data includes all residential facilities in which the OCA receives restraint and seclusion reports from, rather than highlighting specific facilities.

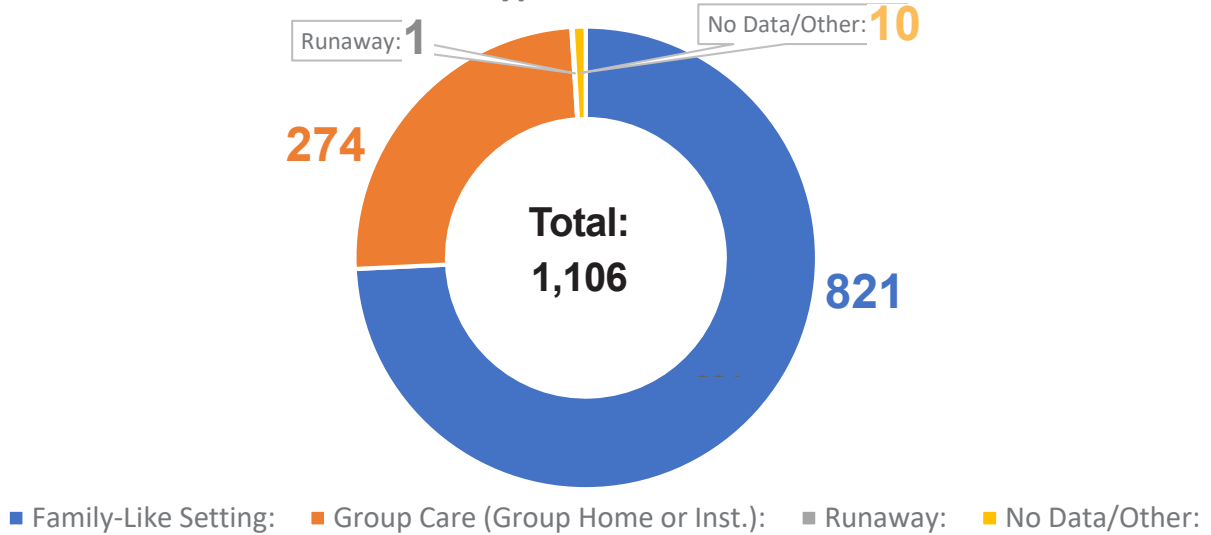
CHILDREN IN CARE

New Hampshire DCYF CPS/JJS Children In Care - February 2025

As of 02/28/25 Data source: NH DHHS

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	821	74%	699	4	118
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	274	25%	113	33	128
Runaway:	1	0%	0	0	1
No Data/Other:	10	1%	3	2	5
Total Children in Care:	1106		815	39	252

Placement Types for Children In Care



Placement Type Breakdowns:

Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	415	51%
Relative Foster Home:	360	44%
Supervised Independent Living:	46	6%
Total:	821	

Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	220	80%
New England (Outside NH):	46	17%
Outside of New England:	8	3%
Total:	274	

Children Outside New England

Alabama	1
Arkansas	1
Florida	4
Louisiana	2
Total:	8

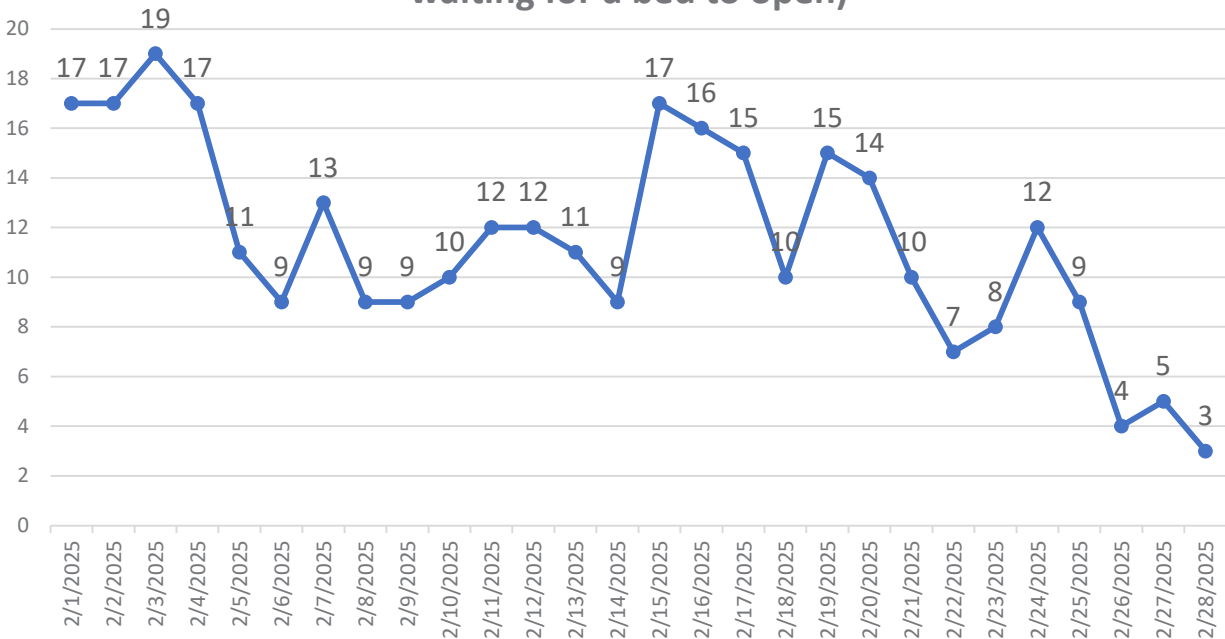
Hampstead Hospital

February 2025 Inpatient (HHRTF) Disposition Data for Hampstead Hospital (Minors)

Data source: Hampstead Hospital

Disposition	# of Dispositions	% of Total Dispositions	% of Accepted Dispositions
Total Dispositions in February:	125		
Not Accepted (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	18	14%	
Accepted:	107	86%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	13	10%	12%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	21	17%	20%
Admitted	73	58%	68%

Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Waitlist for Minors February 2025 (Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

Hampstead Hospital

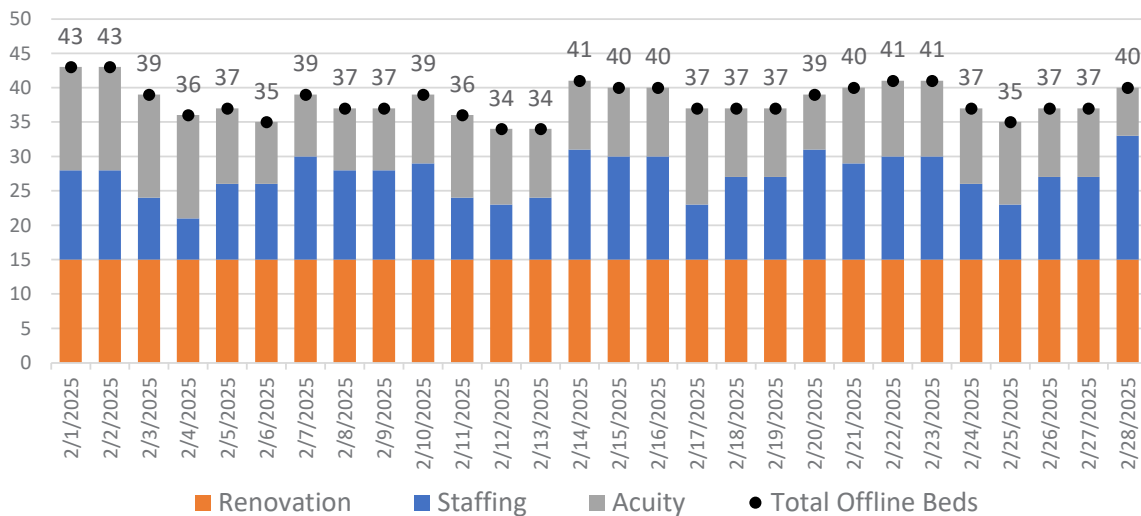
AVERAGE MONTHLY

OFFLINE BEDS
38

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BEDS OFFLINE
54%

OCCUPIED BEDS
33

Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Offline Beds February 2025



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital



All available beds were occupied for the entirety of the month.