

# Office of the Child Advocate

## Report to

# Oversight Commission on

# Children's Services

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Child Advocate, Cassandra Sanchez

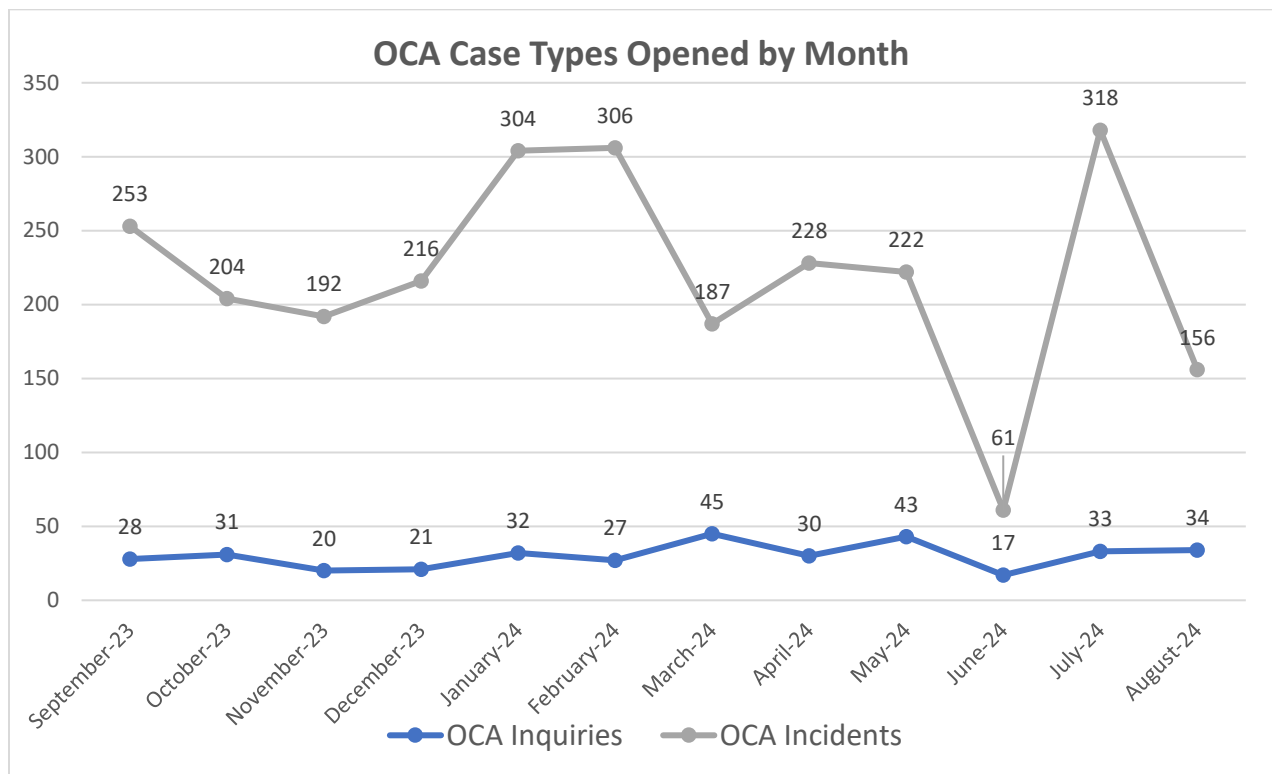
September 20, 2024

*Covering May 19, 2024 – September 20, 2024*

## Total OCA Cases (Inquiries & Incidents)

Rolling 12 Month: 9/01/23 – 8/31/24

Month	OCA Inquiries	OCA Incidents
September-23	28	253
October-23	31	204
November-23	20	192
December-23	21	216
January-24	32	304
February-24	27	306
March-24	45	187
April-24	30	228
May-24	43	222
June-24	17	61
July-24	33	318
August-24	34	156
<b>Total Inquiries:</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>2647</b>
<b>Total Cases:</b>	<b>3008</b>	

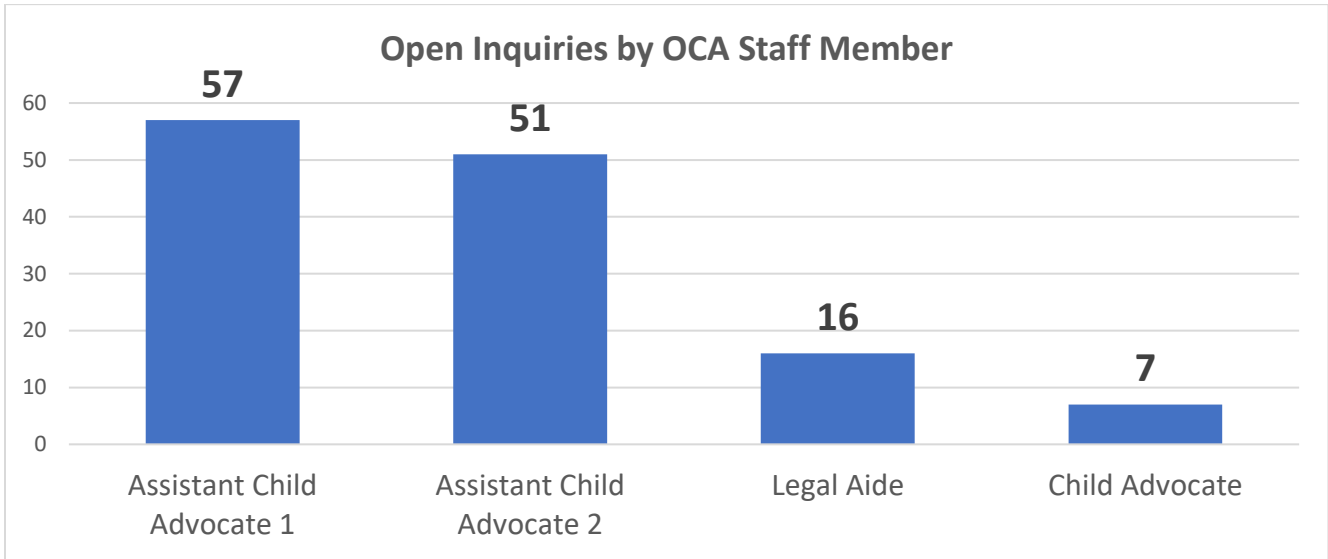


### OCA Case Explanation

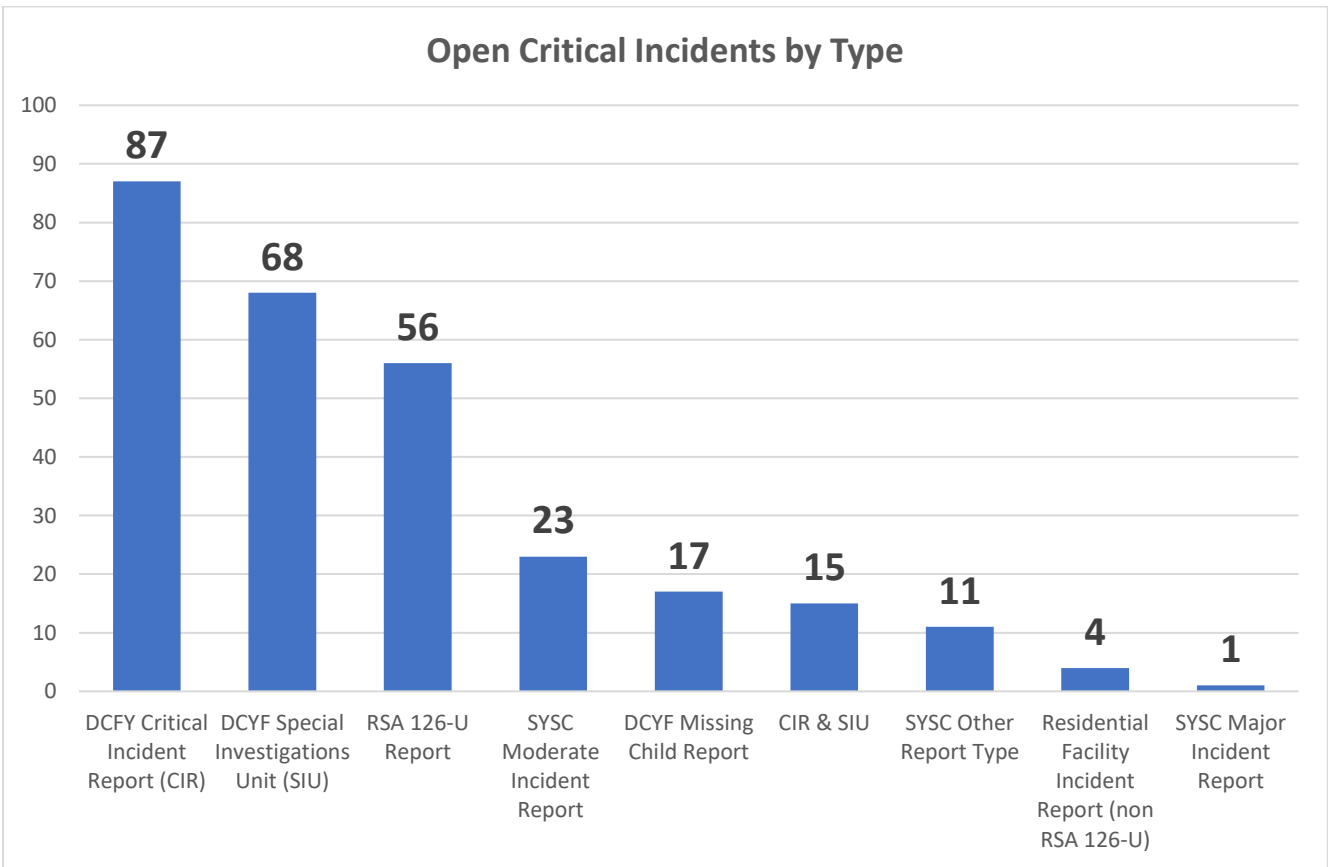
- Inquiries to the OCA include phone calls, emails, and cases opened from in-person meetings with children, caregivers, providers, and stakeholders.
- Incidents include all critical incident reports from DCYF (serious injury to children, child fatalities, parent fatalities, media coverage of DCYF involvement, etc.) and incidents documented by residential programs and SYSC, including restraints and seclusion, and missing children.

**Current OCA Caseload**  
As of 09/16/2024

**Total Open OCA Inquiries: 131**



**Total Open OCA Critical Incidents: 282**



### **Facility/Child visits**

5/24/24 – Pine Haven Home for Boys, Allenstown  
5/29/24 – Hampstead Hospital and East Acres PRTF  
5/31/24 – SYSC  
**6/13/24 – Site visit to Rolling Hills Hospital, Ada, OK**  
7/3/24 – Nashua Children’s Home  
7/5/24 – Hampstead Hospital and East Acres PRTF  
7/8/24 – East Acres PRTF - *visit with specific child*  
7/10/24 – SYSC  
7/31/24 – Nashua Children’s Home  
8/1/24 – Hampstead Hospital and East Acres PRTF  
8/19 & 8/23/24 – Elliot Hospital - *visit with specific child/family*  
8/22/24 – SYSC - *visit with specific child*  
8/30/24 – SYSC - *visit with specific child*  
9/4/24 – SYSC - *visit with specific child*  
9/5/24 – Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center - *visit with specific child/family*  
9/13/24 – Hampstead Hospital and East Acres PRTF



### **OCA Outreach/ DCYF District Office visits**

6/18/24 – Waypoint Treatment Team Leadership presentation and Q&A, Concord  
7/18/24 – Oklahoma Commission on Children & Youth Informational meeting  
7/19/24 – Meeting with DHHS Constituent Relations  
8/2/24 – Introductory meeting with Affirming Spaces Project  
8/20/24 – Manchester Police Athletic League Informational meeting  
8/27/24 – Ombuds visit to Manchester Police Athletic League offices  
9/4/24 – Attend Family Treatment Court, Newport  
9/9/24 – Presentation to New Hampshire Queer Consortium (NHQC)  
9/9/24 – Foster Parent Support Group Informational meeting  
9/11/24 – Meeting with MYTurn, the alternative educational support organization for SYSC and communities

### **Conferences/Events Attended**

5/21/24 – Training: Creating Accessible Public Health Communications  
**5/22/24 – Magnifying Voices Youth Art Contest, Henniker (pictured)**  
5/28/24 – Training: Credible Messenger Mentoring: A Community-Centered Approach to Youth Justice Transformation  
5/29/24 – Training: Responding to Prenatal Alcohol and Other Substance Exposures: FASD, Trauma and Child Welfare  
5/30/24 – Youth Success Project: Art Book Reception, Manchester  
6/6/24 – Reunification Celebration, Crazy Kids, Pembroke  
6/9 – 6/13/24 – APSAC Colloquium, New Orleans, LA  
6/10/24 – Training: Child Abuse, Neglect, and Maltreatment Deaths: Fixing Ongoing Policy Failures in America’s Child Welfare System  
6/11/24 – Tabled at and attended the NH Juvenile Court Diversion Network Summit, Concord  
6/25/24 – DCYF Strategic Priorities Retreat follow up  
6/26/24 – Training: Engaging the Media to Amplify Public Health Messaging  
7/13/24 – Tabled at Capital City Pride 2024: Youth Celebration, Concord

7/18/24 – Training: CMWS: Mentoring LGBTQ+ Youth: An Urgent Need for Each of Us to Act, Part I  
 7/18/24 – Training: #GSMChat – Becoming the Social Media SME at your Agency  
 7/22/24 – Training: OJJDP’s Continuum of Care: An Effective Framework for Youth Safety, Accountability, and Justice  
 8/1/24 – Training: #GSMChat – Branching Out! Exploring Alternative Social Media Platforms  
**8/8/24 – Tabled at the DCYF Youth Summit, Concord (pictured)**  
 8/15/24 – Training: CMWS: Youth Townhall Series  
 8/15/24 – Training: #GSMChat – Interactive Storytelling Strategies for SocialGov  
 8/21/24 – Training: Legislative Wrap-Up: Key Policy Updates Impacting Child Well-being  
 8/22/24 – Training: SocialGov RoundUp  
 8/26/24 – Training: NHWBA Lunch and Learn: Defending LGBTQ Rights – Legal and Legislative Landscape  
**9/4/24 – Presented *Young Child Sexual Abuse: Working Together to Address the Crisis* at AG’s Conference, Manchester**



**Upcoming Visits & Events**

9/23/24 – Screening of *The Kids We Lose* and Panel Discussion, co-hosted with Waypoint, featuring Dr. Ross Greene, Lives in the Balance  
 9/25/24 – MPA Hampton  
 9/27/24 – Children’s Mental Health Advocacy Conference, hosted by Lives in the Balance (virtual)  
 10/4/24 – Communities That Care, Concord (Panelist)  
 11/20 – 11/22/24 – US Ombudsmen Association (USOA) Annual Conference, Oceanside, CA (Facilitating & Presenting)

**Legislative Committees & Interim Studies**

**SB 459** (HB 1499) Committee to Study the Child Protection Act  
**SB 572** Committee to study the sharing of confidential records among members of a multidisciplinary child protection team (MDT)  
**SB 566** Committee to Study the Foster Care System  
**SB 236** Committee to study nonprofit organizations contracting with DHHS for children's services  
**SB 573** Committee to Study Consent & Confidentiality Laws Applicable to Adolescent & Young Adult Healthcare in NH  
**SB 411** Committee to Study Emergency Mental Health Services for Persons 21 years of age and younger in NH  
**HB 1590** relative to training regarding child abuse and neglect for licensed physicians, advance practice nurses, and physician assistants  
**HB 1214** relative to establishing a committee to study best practices for the development of a restorative justice model for misdemeanor-level behavior and hate crimes committed by juveniles under the age of eighteen  
**HB 1269** relative to the use of child restraints in schools

**Other Work**

6/3/24 – Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) Sustainability meeting  
 7/17/24 – Quarterly Community Collaboration Call – Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ Youth  
 7/25/24 – NH Human Trafficking Collaborative Task Force – Quarterly Advisory  
 8/19/24 – Attended Criminal Court Hearing regarding System Involved Child Fatality

Ongoing: YDC Steering Committee

Ongoing: Commission to Study Community Impacts of the Secured Development Center & Subcommittee on Safety

Ongoing: Regular meetings with DCYF Human & Sex Trafficking Specialist

Ongoing: SYSC PREA meetings

Ongoing: Monthly meetings with DCYF leadership

Ongoing: Monthly meeting with Clinical Director at SYSC

Ongoing: DCYF Systems Review meetings

Ongoing: US Ombudsman Association (USOA), Children & Family Chapter meetings

Ongoing: USOA Conference Planning Committee

Ongoing: Magnifying Voices Planning Committee

Ongoing: Model Court/CIP Executive Committee Meetings

Ongoing: Family Treatment Court Oversight Team meetings

Ongoing: Child Fatality Review Committee meetings

Ongoing: Monthly meetings with management team at Hampstead Hospital

Ongoing: Monthly meetings with BCBH leadership

Ongoing: Children's System of Care Advisory Committee

Ongoing: Monthly meeting with Attorney General's Office

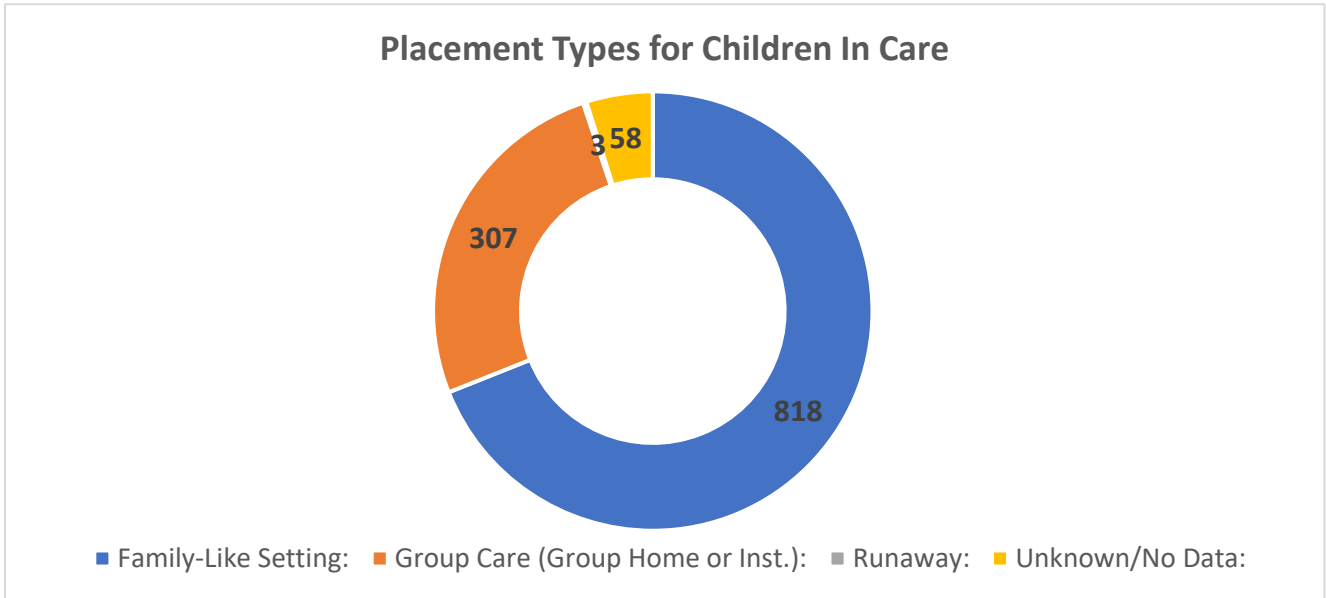
### **Topics of Concern**

- Med flights including chemical restraints of children being sent to placements out of state
- Continued and increased use of out of state placements (reflected in *Placement Type for Children in Care* pages)
  - Including a facility that is NOT certified nor was ever visited prior to placement
  - OCA noted a serious violation at a different facility for overmedicating and medicating against consent
- Continued concerns for the Caregiver Coordinator Unit (CCU)
  - Continued use of foster home where multiple disclosures were made about foster parents abusing children, and no intention of moving those children until the OCA intervened repeatedly
  - Lack of written violations for foster parents who are abusing/neglecting the children in their care, or otherwise not following the foster parent agreement and/or foster care licensing regulations
  - Not calling certain foster homes for placements, and refusing to consider waivers for foster homes in order to keep siblings together or nearby, or a child in their home community
  - Continued separation of siblings, even when it does not appear necessary
- During facility site visits, the OCA continues to identify children stuck in residential care, particularly children who are in the guardianship of the State and therefore without any court, attorney or CASA oversight – *Data collection/review project underway*
- DCYF culture – the current culture at the agency is creating many barriers for the OCA to engage in our mandated oversight activities. There appears to be breakdowns at multiple levels of leadership, including:
  - Attempts to block the OCA from accessing documents/correspondence
  - Assurances that certain next steps would occur without follow through or accountability
  - The OCA has provided written formal recommendations, which align with the law and policies; these recommendations have been disregarded by the agency with no reasonable justification supplied
- It was reported to the OCA that DCYF attempted to access confidential OCA correspondence via a third-party discovery request. After being told that these records would not be provided as this information is confidential pursuant to RSA 21-V, the DCYF attorney proceeded to question third parties in Court about their conversations with the OCA. This was immediately reported to the AGs office, but we have serious concern for the chilling effect this will have on providers contacting the OCA to express concerns confidentially, which is essential for us to perform our oversight duties.

## New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 5/31/24

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	818	69%	697	5	116
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	307	26%	126	41	140
Runaway:	3	<1%	0	0	3
Unknown/No Data:	58	5%	49	1	8
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1186</b>		<b>872</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>267</b>

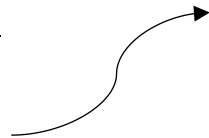


### Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	417	51%
Relative Foster Home:	359	44%
Supervised Independent Living:	42	5%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>818</b>	

### Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	246	80%
New England (Outside NH):	54	18%
Outside of New England:	7	2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>307</b>	

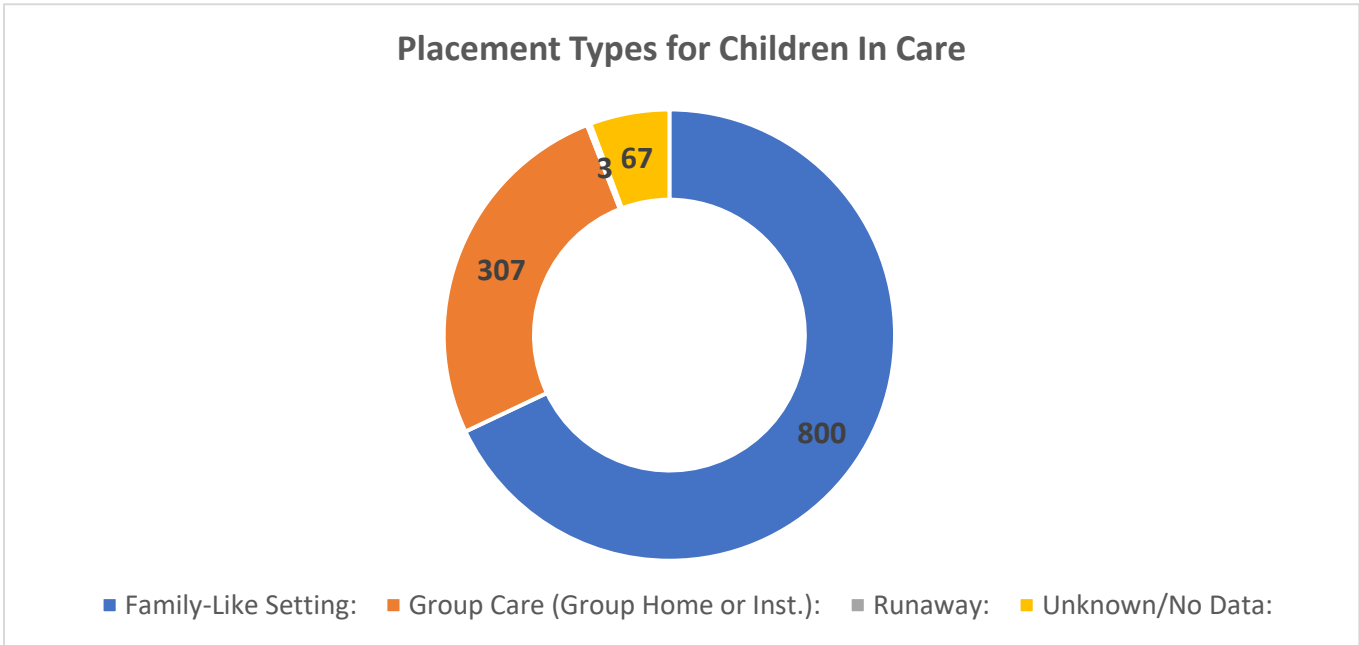


Children Outside New England	
Arkansas	2
Florida	3
Georgia	1
Oklahoma	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7</b>

## New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 6/30/24

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	800	68%	680	6	114
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	307	26%	125	43	139
Runaway:	3	<1%	0	1	2
Unknown/No Data:	67	6%	57	1	9
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1177</b>		<b>862</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>264</b>



### Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	421	53%
Relative Foster Home:	330	41%
Supervised Independent Living:	49	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>800</b>	

### Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	245	80%
New England (Outside NH):	56	18%
Outside of New England:	6	2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>307</b>	

### Children Outside New England

Arkansas	1
Florida	3
Georgia	1
Oklahoma	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6</b>

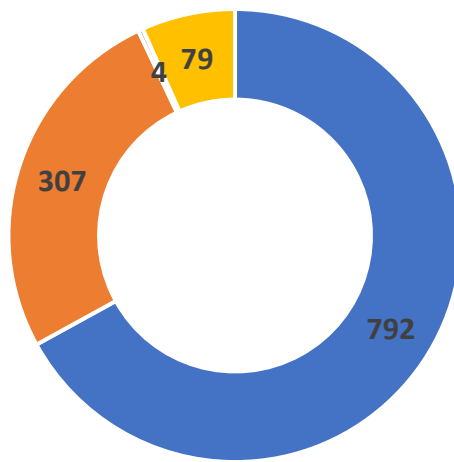


## New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 7/31/24

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	792	67%	670	5	117
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	307	26%	129	44	134
Runaway:	4	<1%	0	2	2
Unknown/No Data:	79	7%	68	2	9
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1182</b>		<b>867</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>262</b>

### Placement Types for Children In Care



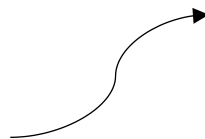
■ Family-Like Setting: ■ Group Care (Group Home or Inst.): ■ Runaway: ■ Unknown/No Data:

### Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	434	55%
Relative Foster Home:	309	39%
Supervised Independent Living:	49	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>792</b>	

### Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	243	79%
New England (Outside NH):	56	18%
Outside of New England:	8	3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>307</b>	

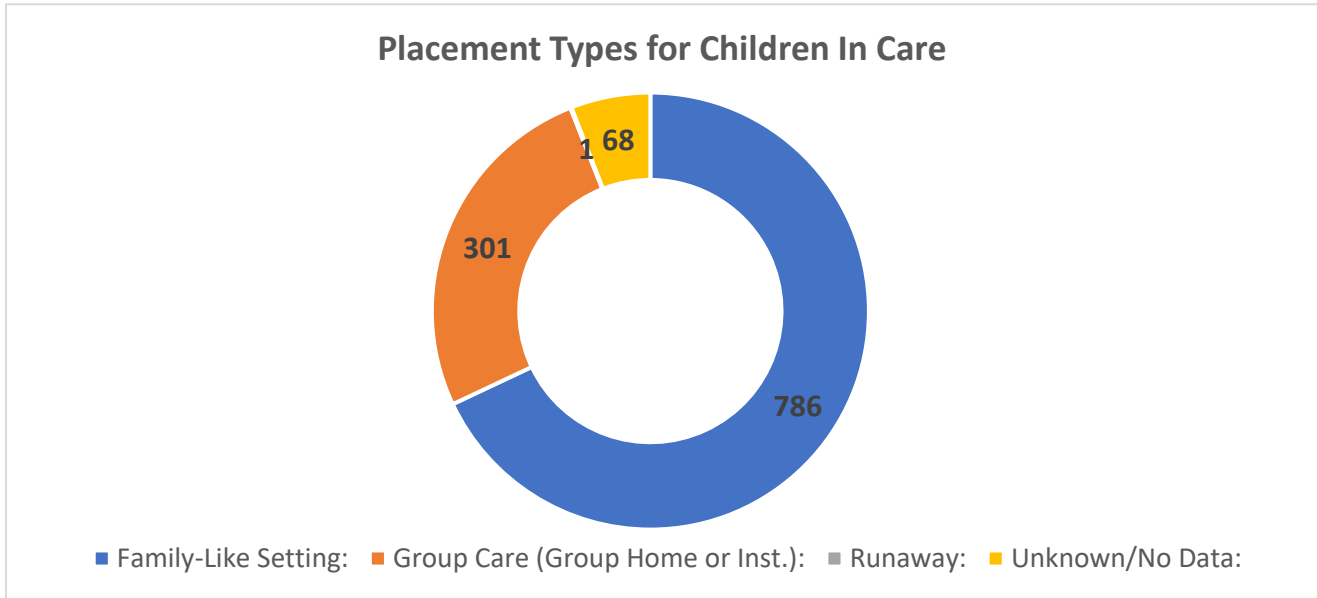


Children Outside New England	
Arkansas	1
Florida	5
Georgia	1
Oklahoma	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8</b>

## New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 8/31/24

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	786	68%	664	4	118
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	301	26%	132	43	126
Runaway:	1	<1%	0	1	0
Unknown/No Data:	68	6%	62	2	4
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1156</b>		<b>858</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>248</b>



### Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	436	55%
Relative Foster Home:	303	39%
Supervised Independent Living:	47	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>786</b>	

### Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	244	81%
New England (Outside NH):	47	16%
Outside of New England:	10	3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>301</b>	

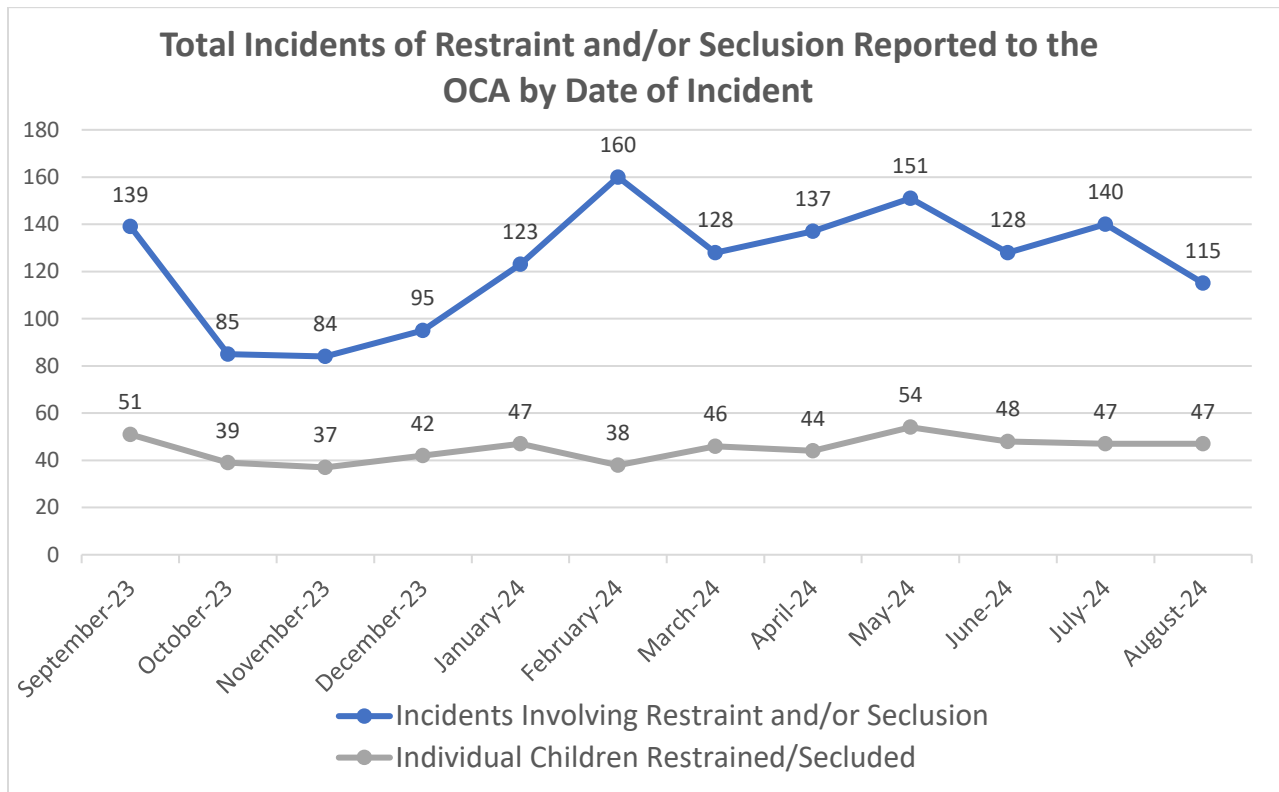
### Children Outside New England

Arkansas	1
Florida	6
Georgia	1
Oklahoma	1
Louisiana	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>

## Restraints & Seclusion Incidents Reported to the OCA from Residential Facilities

Rolling 12 Month: 9/01/23 – 8/31/24

Month	Incidents Reported to OCA Involving:			Total Incidents	Number of Children
	Restraints	Seclusions	Restraints & Seclusions		
September-23	127	1	11	<b>139</b>	51
October-23	69	1	15	<b>85</b>	39
November-23	80	1	3	<b>84</b>	37
December-23	85	3	7	<b>95</b>	42
January-24	112	6	5	<b>123</b>	47
February-24	142	5	13	<b>160</b>	38
March-24	108	7	13	<b>128</b>	46
April-24	130	2	5	<b>137</b>	44
May-24	142	4	5	<b>151</b>	54
June-24	118	5	5	<b>128</b>	48
July-24	130	3	7	<b>140</b>	47
August-24	102	7	6	<b>115</b>	47
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1345</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1485</b>	



### Restraint & Seclusion Explanation

- This data includes all residential facilities which the OCA receives restraint and seclusion reports from.
- The OCA only receives restraint and seclusion reports from contracted facilities; we do not receive them for certified-only facilities, including many of the out-of-state facilities beyond the New England region.

## SYSC Incidents Reported to the OCA

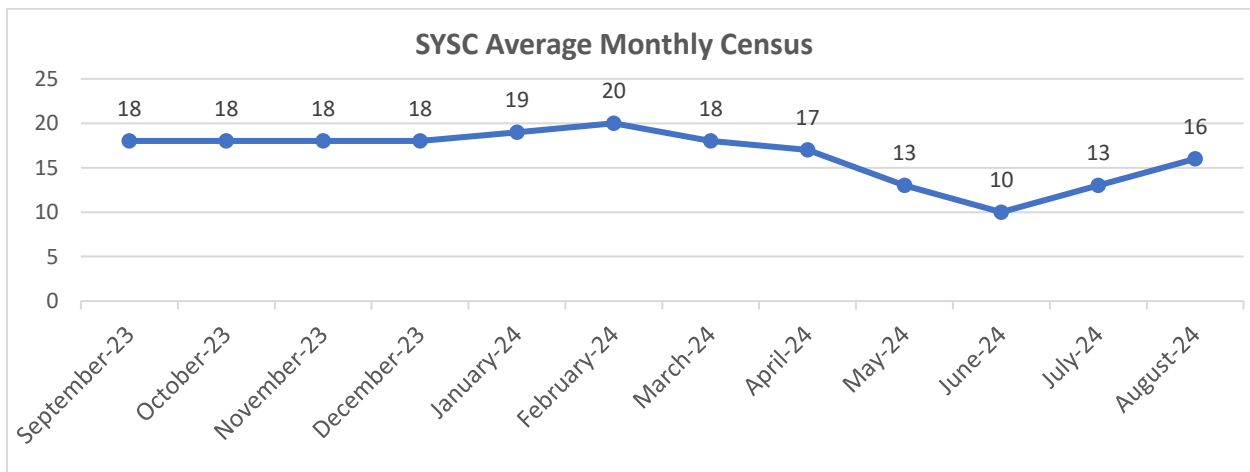
Rolling 12 Month: 9/01/23 – 8/31/24

Month	Major Incidents	Mod Incidents	Minor Incidents	Other Incidents	Total
September-23	50	22	4	19	95
October-23	54	17	6	19	96
November-23	34	22	7	18	81
December-23	65	18	6	25	114
January-24	68	16	6	34	124
February-24	56	13	9	26	104
March-24	39	16	4	24	83
April-24	55	30	8	9	102
May-24	57	18	7	18	100
June-24	22	4	1	7	34
July-24	45	9	2	13	69
August-24	56	27	5	22	110
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>1112</b>

### SYSC Incidents Involving Restraints or Seclusions by Month

9/01/23 – 8/31/24

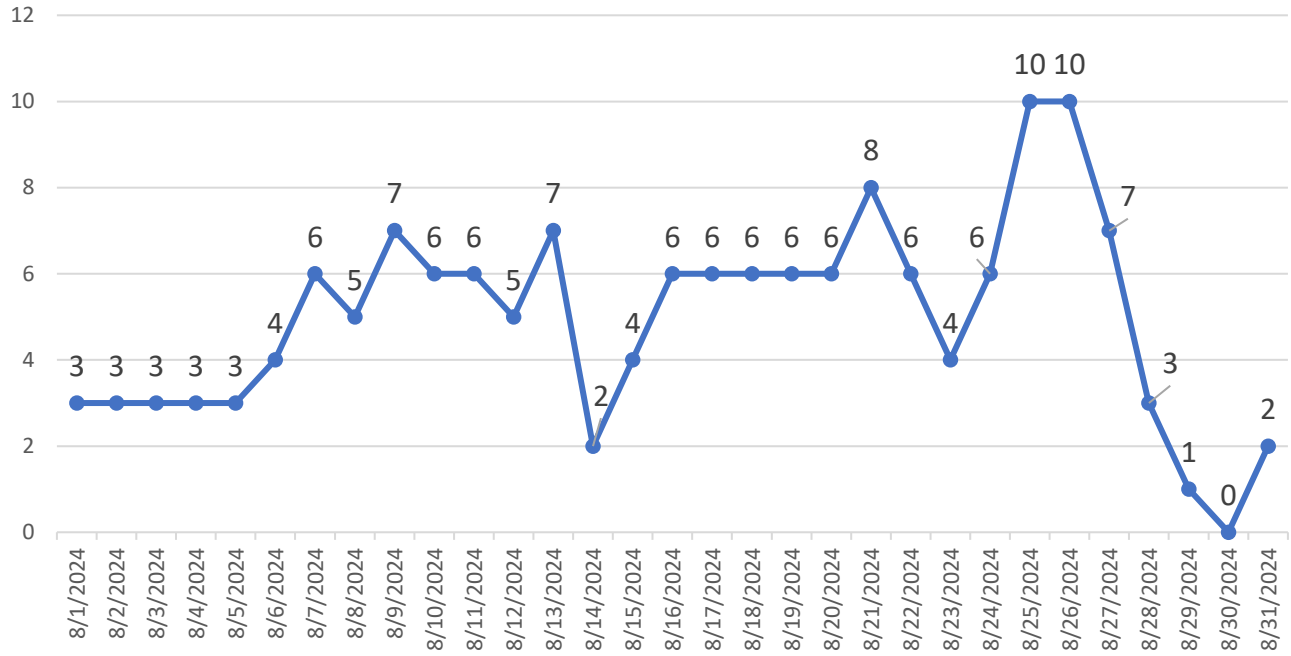
Month	Incidents Inv. Restraint or Seclusion	Individual Children
September-23	12	7
October-23	12	8
November-23	3	3
December-23	15	7
January-24	9	7
February-24	13	7
March-24	5	4
April-24	10	7
May-24	13	6
June-24	10	9
July-24	24	8
August-24	18	10
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>144</b>	



### SYSC Explanation

- Although the census at SYSC can fluctuate day to day, the average monthly census data has been added to this report for additional context.

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Waitlist for Minors August 2024 (Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)



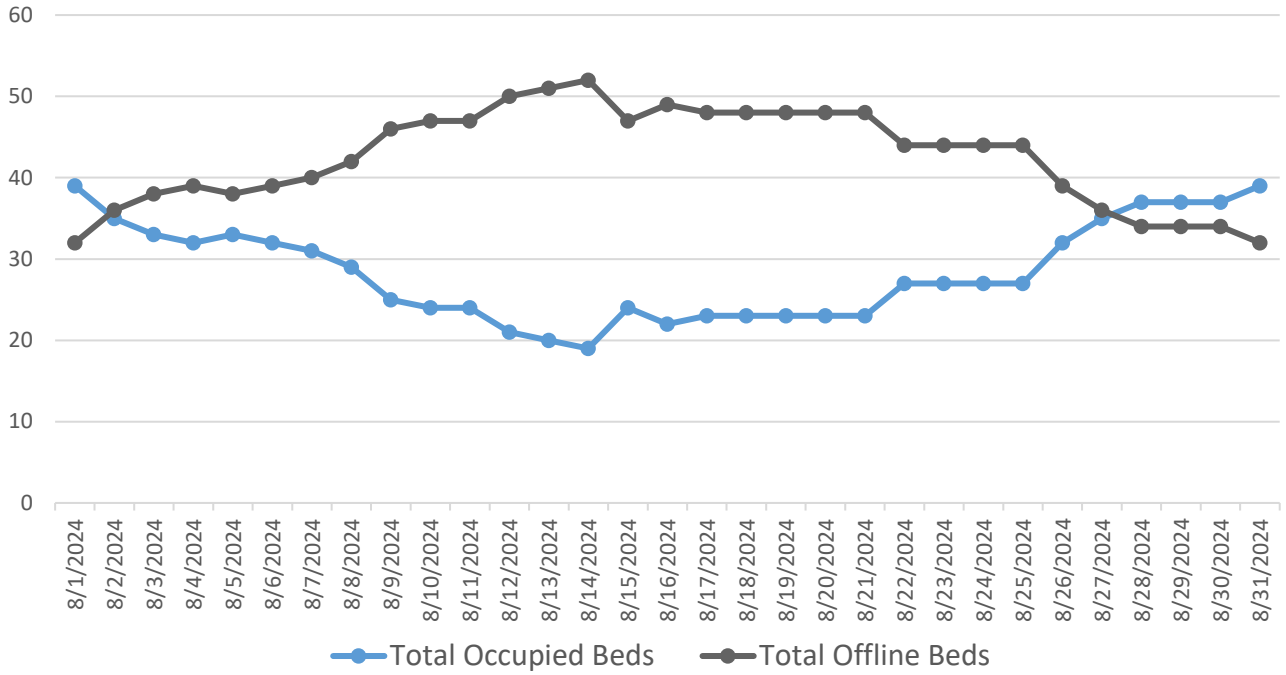
Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

August 2024 Inpatient (HHRTF) Disposition Data for Hampstead Hospital (Minors)			
Data source: Hampstead Hospital			
Disposition	# of Dispositions	% of Total Dispositions	% of Accepted Dispositions
<b>Total Dispositions in August:</b>	<b>112</b>		
<b>Not Accepted</b> (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	<b>32</b>	29%	
<b>Accepted:</b>	<b>80</b>	71%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	<b>11</b>	10%	14%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	<b>12</b>	11%	15%
Admitted	<b>57</b>	51%	71%

#### Hampstead Hospital & East Acres Explanation

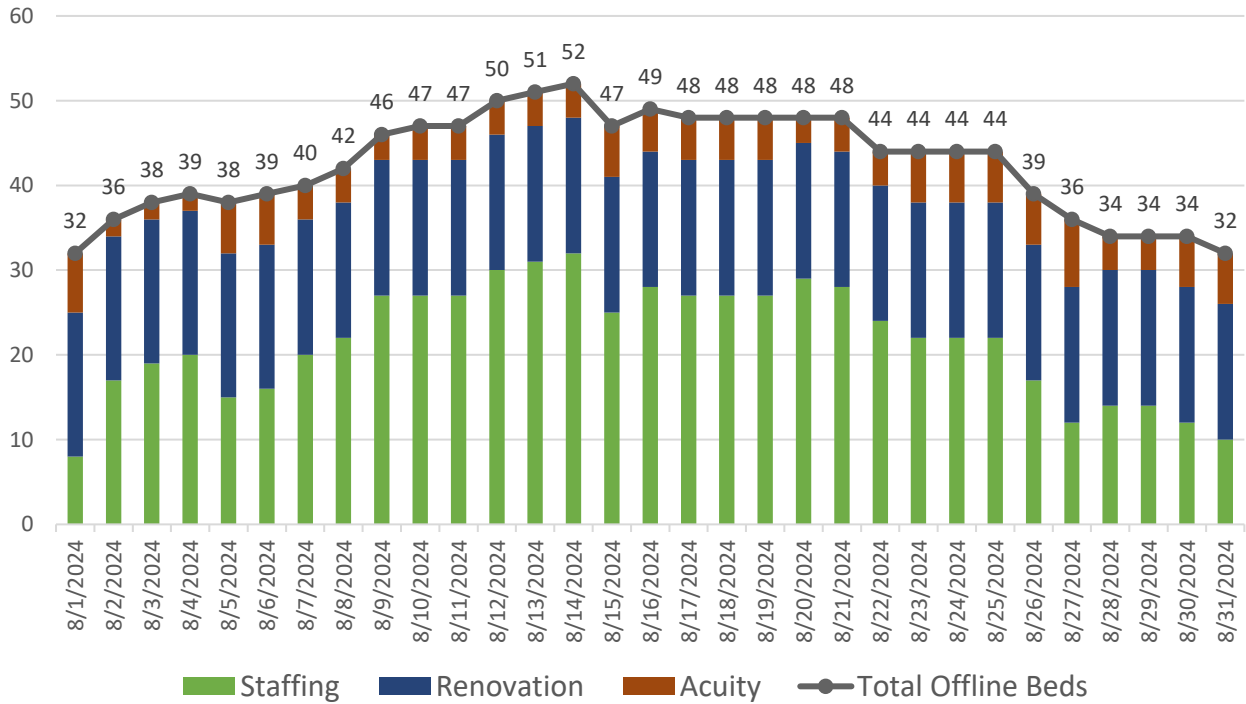
- Above is a graph with Hampstead Hospital waitlist data that is shared publicly by DHHS (for DHHS data, see: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/about-dhhs/locations-facilities/state-run-and-designated-acute-psychiatric-bed-data>).
- Below you will see new graphs focusing on the number of occupied and offline beds. The 3 reasons for beds being offline as provided by Hampstead Hospital are staffing, renovation, and acuity.

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Occupied & Offline Beds August 2024



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Offline Beds August 2024



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital