

# Office of the Child Advocate Report to Oversight Commission on Children's Services

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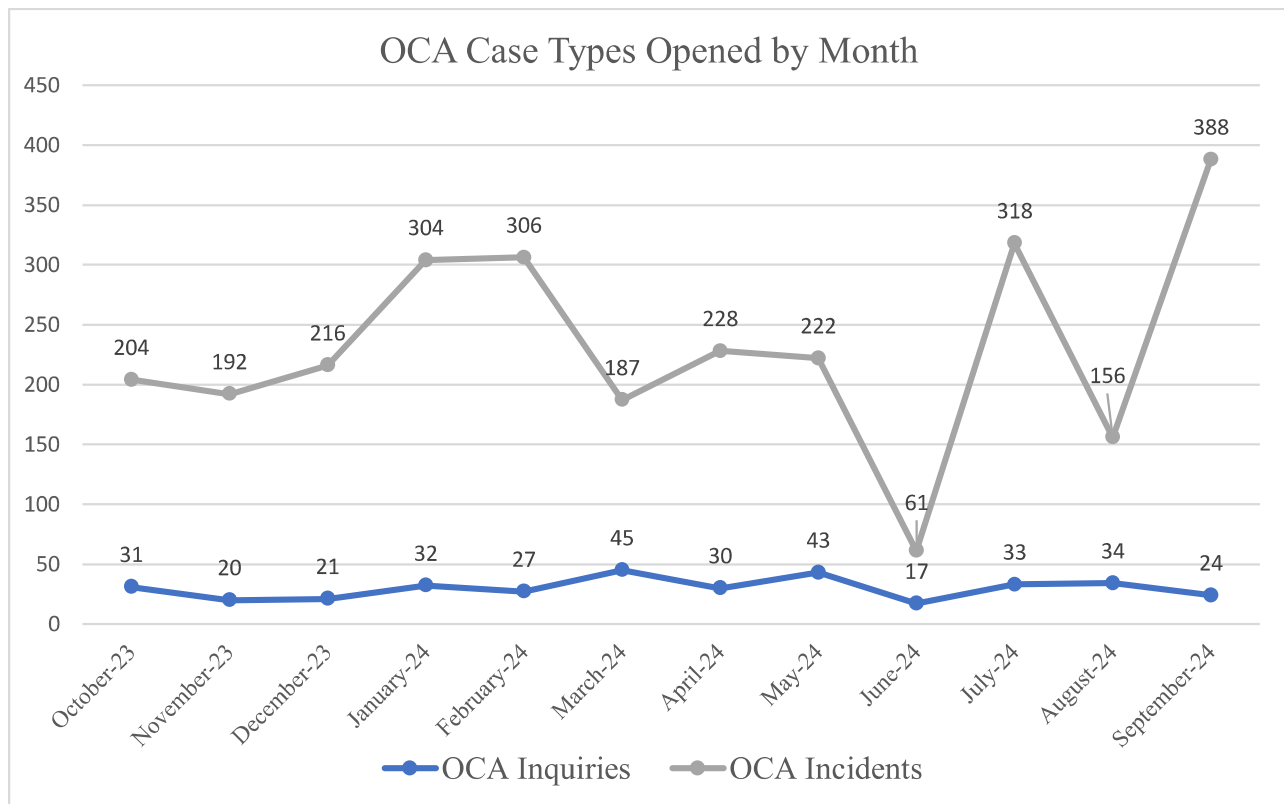
Child Advocate, Cassandra Sanchez

October 18, 2024

## Total OCA Cases (Inquiries & Incidents)

Rolling 12 Month: 10/01/23 – 9/30/24

Month	OCA Inquiries	OCA Incidents
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
September-24	24	388
<b>Total Inquiries:</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>2782</b>
<b>Total Cases:</b>	<b>3139</b>	

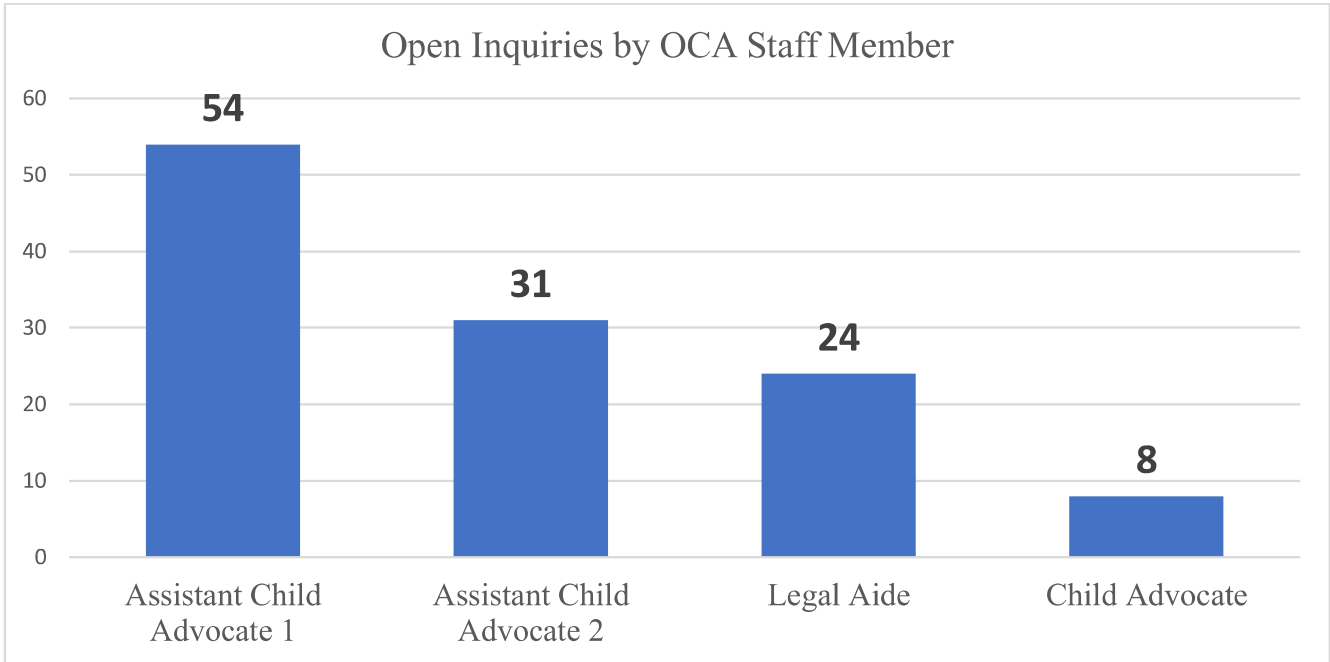


### OCA Case Explanation

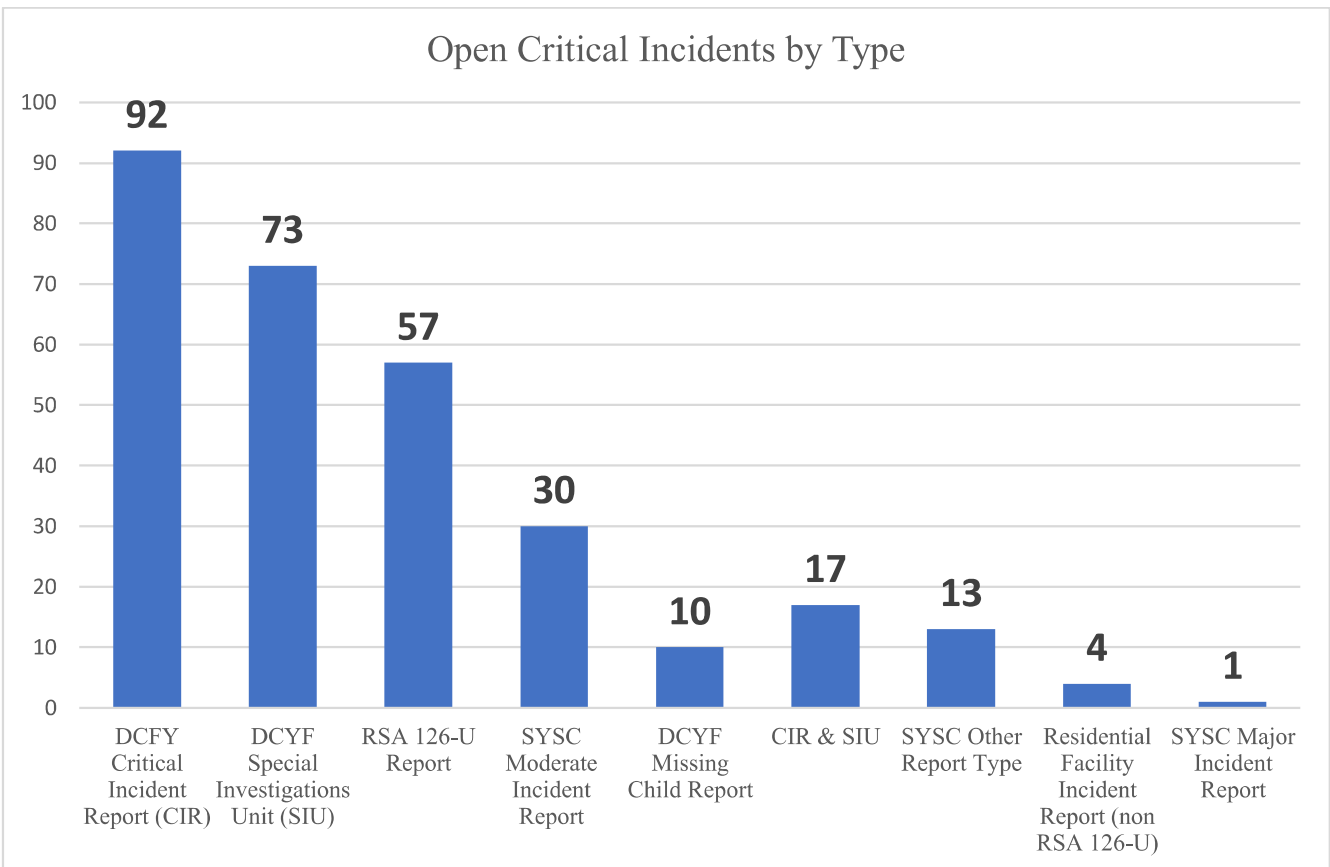
- Inquiries to the OCA include phone calls, emails, and cases opened from in-person meetings with children, caregivers, providers, and stakeholders.
- Incidents include all critical incident reports from DCYF (serious injury to children, child fatalities, parent fatalities, media coverage of DCYF involvement,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

**Current OCA Caseload**  
As of 09/30/2024

**Total Open OCA Inquiries: 117**



**Total Open OCA Critical Incidents: 297**





**Facility/Child visits**

- 9/25/24 – MPA Hampton (site visit and meeting with children)
- 9/30/24 – Pine Haven Boys Home (meeting with leadership)
- 10/3/24 – Nashua Children’s Home (meetings with children)
- 10/8/24 – SYSC (meeting with a specific child)
- 10/8/24 – MPA Hampton (meeting with a specific child)

**OCA Outreach/ DCYF District Office visits**

- 10/1 – 10/29/24 – Attend Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meetings @ Manchester District Office
- 10/14/24 – Team meeting with Choose Love Program, virtual
- 10/15/24 – Meeting with foster parent group

**Conferences/Events Attended**

- 9/23/24 – **The Kids We Lose screening and panel discussion, hosted by OCA and Waypoint, Concord NH (pictured below)**
- 9/27/24 – LITB Children’s Mental Health Advocacy Conference, virtual

- 10/4/24 – Communities that Care Conference, Alton, NH
- 10/5/24 – **DCYF Caregiver Summit, Manchester NH (pictured above)**
- Webinar: Meaningfully Engaging Young People: Principles, Strategies, and Success Stories
- Webinar: Scaling a Marketing Program – How?
- Webinar: Leveraging Community & Creator-Led Marketing at Scale

**Upcoming Visits & Events**

- 11/18-11/19/24 – Presenting New Ombudsman Training at US Ombudsman Association Annual Conference, Oceanside, CA
- 11/20-11/22/24 – Attending and presenting at US Ombudsman Association Annual Conference, Oceanside, CA

**Other Work**

- 9/24/24, 10/1/24 – Meetings with DHHS policy team regarding implementation of SB 417
- 9/27/24 – Quarterly APPLA meeting
- 10/7, 10/9 – Meetings with DCYF leadership regarding updates to the child abuse & neglect definitions (HB 1499/ SB 459 study committee)
- 10/7 – Meeting with BCBH leadership regarding implementation of HB 1573
- 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

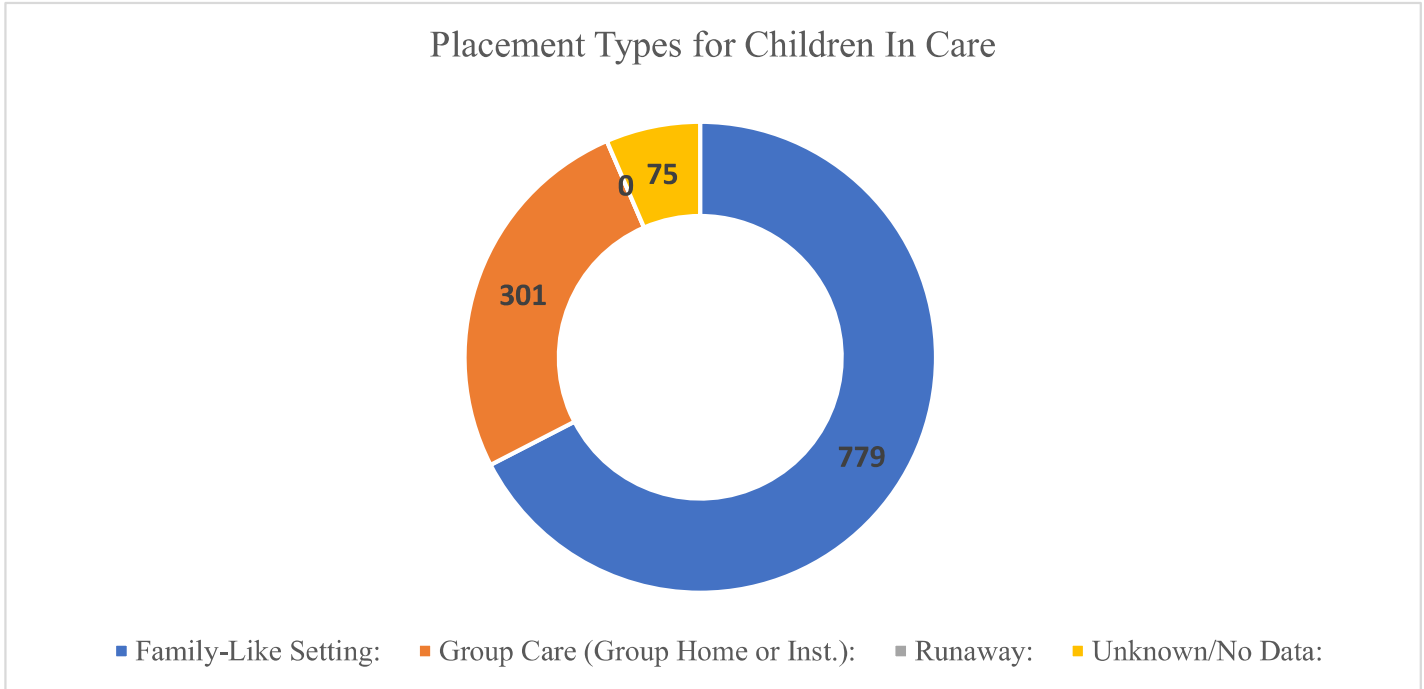


Ongoing: Model Court/CIP Executive Committee Meetings  
 Ongoing: Family Treatment Court (FTC) Oversight Team meetings  
 Ongoing: Child Fatality Review Committee meetings  
 Ongoing: Monthly meetings with management team at Hampstead Hospital  
 Ongoing: Monthly meetings with BCBH leadership  
 Ongoing: Children’s System of Care Advisory Committee  
 Ongoing: Monthly meeting with Attorney General’s Office  
 Ongoing: Quarterly Community Collaboration Meetings regarding Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ Youth  
 Ongoing: NH Queer Consortium monthly meetings

**Other Issues**

- DHHS quarterly report on HB1573 (10/1/24)
- BCBH certification process, education/oversight of facilities, and follow up on identified issues still inadequate
  - OCA recommendation: BCBH to make information publicly available on their website – list of all facilities certified and/or contracted, site review reports, last site visit date, certification date/renewal date, and number of children placed
  - Escorts not being logged as restraint at many facilities – 126-U language
  - Pine Have seclusion/case specific issue – OCA emailed BCBH on this issue, will be meeting on this
    - Dates of site visit were January 17 & 18, 2024. Date of Report: September 20, 2024
- OCA concern for DCYF unethical actions/misrepresentations to the Court
  - 4 case examples provided to DCYF leadership
    - Updated response from DCYF received on 10/16/24
- Institutional Abuse & neglect (SB 459)
  - Changes to RSA 169-C have been agreed upon by OCA and DCYF
  - New definition provided for “trauma-informed care”
  - Removal of institutional child abuse additions that were previously proposed
- DCYF Central Intake
  - 27.61% of calls to central intake between 4/1/24 - 10/1/24 were abandoned
    - I have asked for detailed monthly breakdown – DCYF noted staffing as a primary issue over the summer, but noted a number of positions were to be filled late summer/early fall
- Continued concerns for the Caregiver Coordinator Unit (CCU)
  - Continuing to hear frustrations at SB 566 hearings and inquiries to the OCA from foster parents about lack of support
  - 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
- DCYF culture
  - Not acknowledging issues – common response is *there is no need for change*, although we know the system is not working to properly protect children. This also makes it difficult for the OCA to collaborate with DCYF on system reforms
  - Caseloads are at an all-time low, but OCA continues to receive a high number of complaints about DCYF not following policies, procedures, and best practice

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	779	67%	660	5	114
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	301	26%	129	44	128
Runaway:	0	0%	0	0	0
Unknown/No Data:	75	6%	65	1	9
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1155</b>		<b>854</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>251</b>



**Family-Like Settings:**

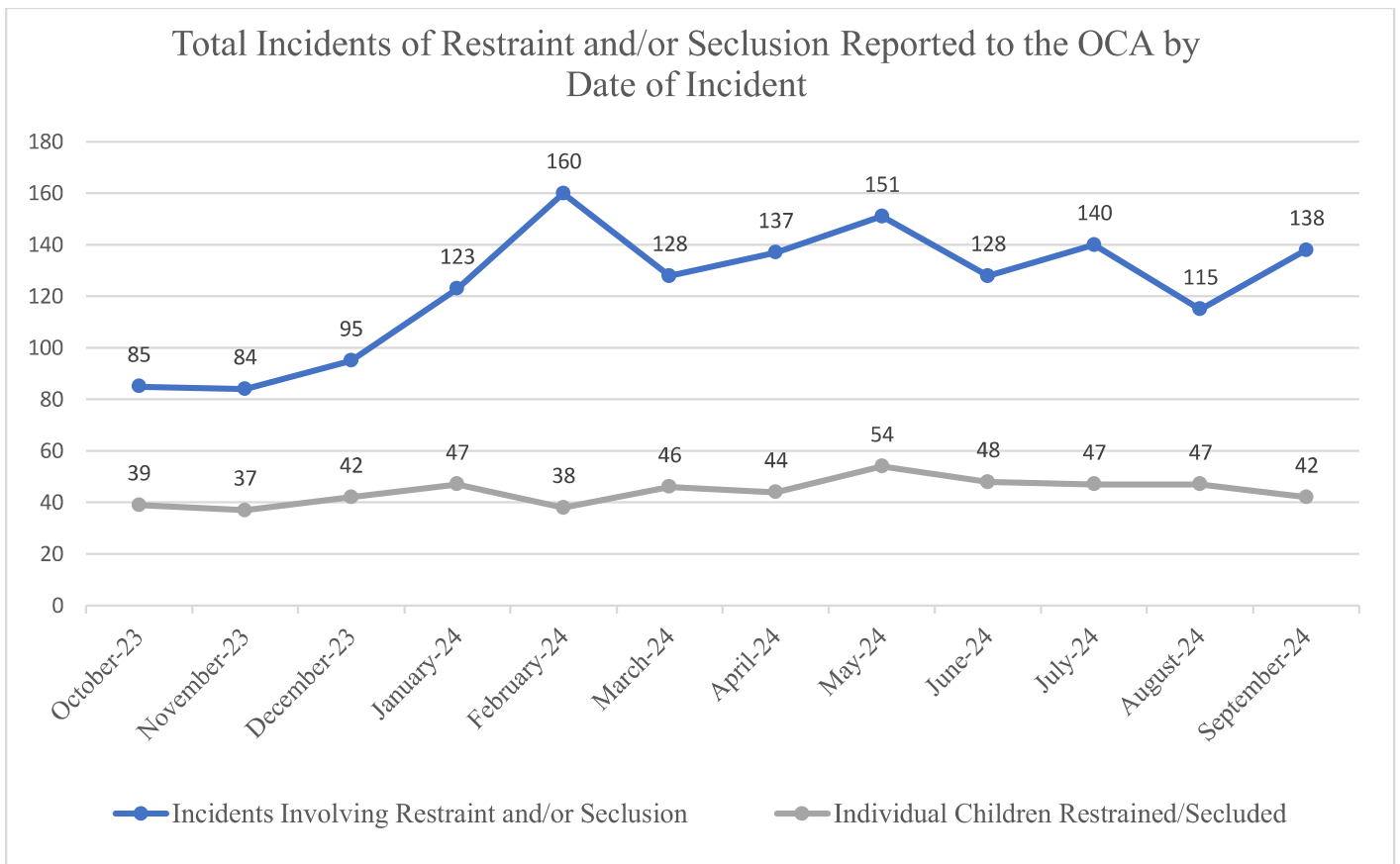
Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	421	54%
Relative Foster Home:	309	40%
Supervised Independent Living:	49	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>779</b>	

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

Location	Total Children	%	Children Outside New England	
New Hampshire:	245	81%	Alabama	1
New England (Outside NH):	46	15%	Arkansas	1
Outside of New England:	10	3%	Florida	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>301</b>		Oklahoma	1
			<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>

**Restraints & Seclusion Incidents Reported to the OCA from Residential Facilities**  
Rolling 12 Month: 10/01/23 – 9/30/24

Month	Incidents Reported to OCA Involving:			Total Incidents	Number of Children
	Restraints	Seclusions	Restraints & Seclusions		
October-23	69	1	15	85	39
November-23	80	1	3	84	37
December-23	85	3	7	95	42
January-24	112	6	5	123	47
February-24	142	5	13	160	38
March-24	108	7	13	128	46
April-24	130	2	5	137	44
May-24	142	4	5	151	54
June-24	118	5	5	128	48
July-24	130	3	7	140	47
August-24	102	7	6	115	47
September-24	115	7	16	138	42
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1484</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

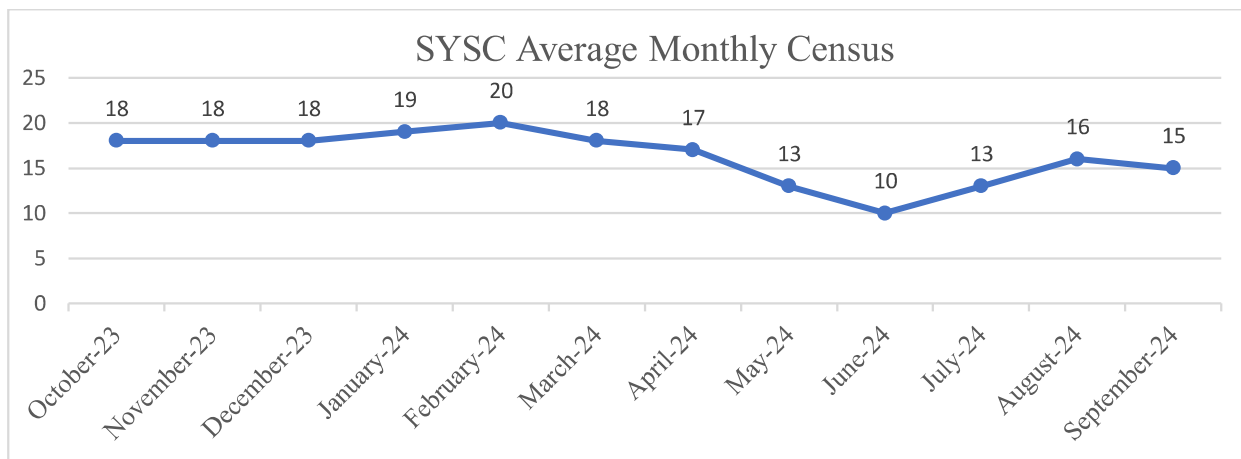
Rolling 12 Month: 10/01/23 – 9/30/24

Month	Major Incidents	Mod Incidents	Minor Incidents	Other Incidents	Total
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
September-24	36	30	3	42	111
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>1128</b>

### SYSC Incidents Involving Restraints or Seclusions by Month

10/01/23 – 9/30/24

Month	Incidents Inv. Restraint or Seclusion	Individual Children
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
September-24	13	6
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>145</b>	

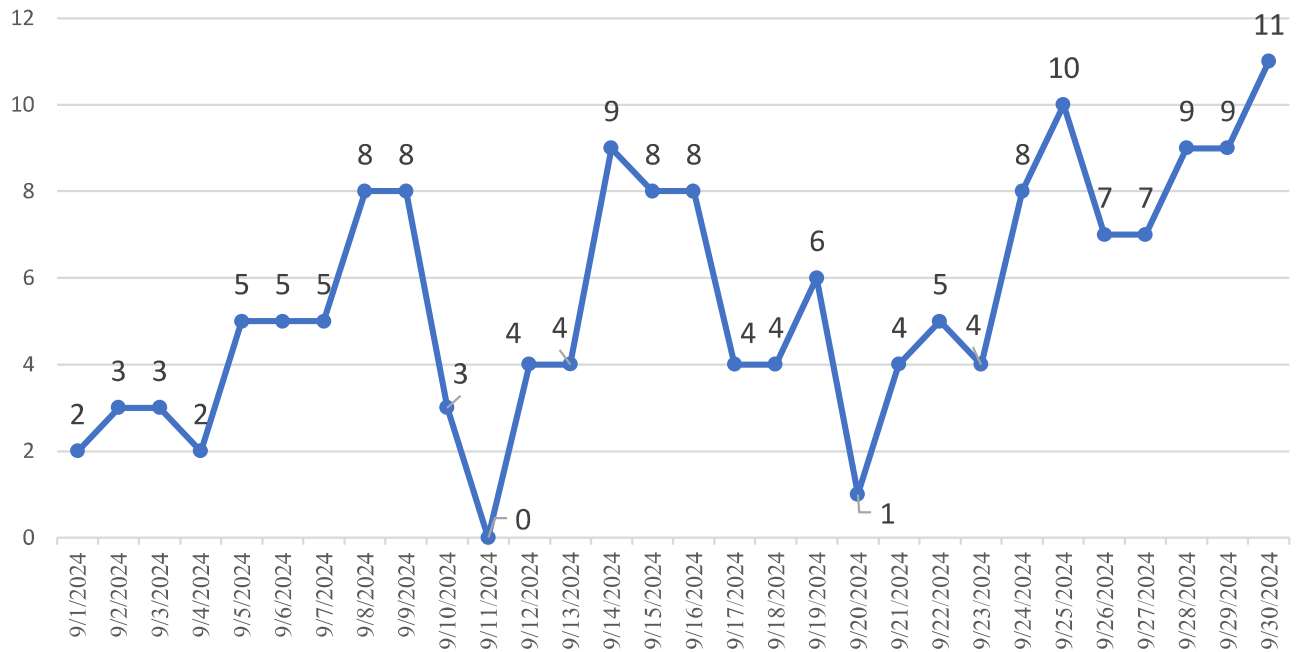


### SYSC Explanation

- 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 September 2024 (Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

### September 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 September:</b>	<b>124</b>		
<b>Not Accepted</b> (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	<b>17</b>	14%	
<b>Accepted:</b>	<b>107</b>	86%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	<b>13</b>	10%	12%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	<b>13</b>	10%	12%
Admitted	<b>81</b>	65%	76%

### 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.

