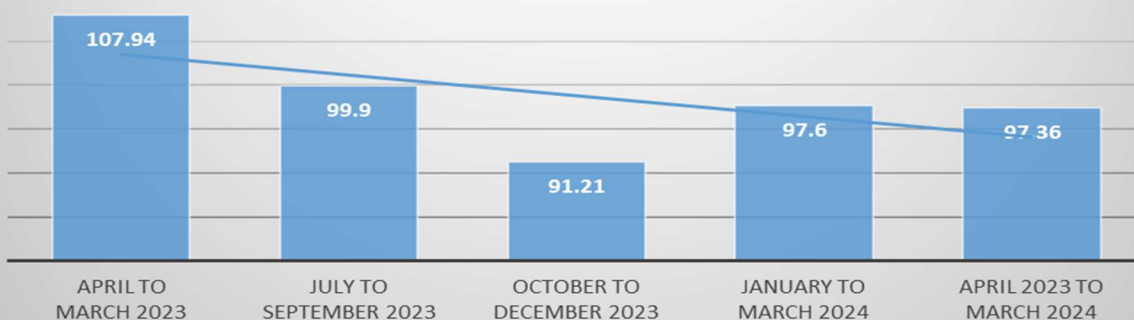




## THE SPECIALISED FAMILY COURTS OF JAMAICA

(APRIL 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024)

### SPECIALISED FAMILY COURTS OF JAMAICA FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 HIGHLIGHT CASE CLEARANCE RATE (%)



The case clearance rate measures a court's ability to manage its incoming cases effectively and is essential for preventing backlog.

The international benchmark for this rate is an annual average of 90% to 110%.

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## CHIEF JUSTICE'S MESSAGE FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024, FAMILY COURT

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The Family Courts are crucial to our legal system. They provide what is now termed therapeutic justice. They also serve as Children's Courts; while they possess jurisdiction over criminal matters involving juvenile defendants, their primary focus is assisting families in crisis through counseling and other methods, particularly in cases where the family unit has broken down. The Family Courts resolve issues relating to custody and maintenance.

The fully developed and mature Family Courts, such as those in Kingston and St. Andrew, and western Jamaica, offer comprehensive services, including counseling. In parishes without designated Family Courts, the Parish Courts address these matters.

Our goal is to establish a Family Court in every parish, ensuring that this essential service is accessible to a wider population.

It was noted that only one Family Court (Trelawny) performed above the projected case clearance rate. Two Family Courts (Trelawny and Corporate Area Family) disposed of more cases than they received, that is to say, achieved a case clearance rate exceeding 100%. All other Family Courts fell below a 100% case clearance rate. Three Family Courts, specifically, St. James, Hanover, and Manchester achieved case clearance rates between 90% and 100%, while Chapelton's Family court case clearance rate was below 78.09%.

A case clearance rate between 90% and 100% is considered acceptable. However, persistent case clearance rates below 100% will lead to a backlog, resulting in longer case disposition times. The data is being used to monitor courts with case clearance rates below 100% to determine whether this is a trend or a temporary decline.

Despite these challenges, the Specialised Family Courts (excluding Chapelton) have achieved a reasonable level of performance. Further analysis will be conducted to identify the factors contributing to case clearance rates below 100%.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the judges, staff, police, attorneys at law, litigants, probation officers, and all stakeholders for their continued support and dedication. We are committed to improving the Family Courts' service delivery, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

**The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD**  
**Chief Justice of Jamaica**

## Executive Summary

The Specialized Family Courts in Jamaica play a critical role in advancing key performance goals established by the Honourable Chief Justice, aimed at positioning the Jamaican judiciary among the world's most efficient and effective legal systems. A pivotal target in achieving the strategic vision of backlog-free courts is ensuring that the net case backlog rate remains under 5%. Meeting this benchmark is not only crucial for enhancing court excellence but also instrumental in fostering a more conducive environment for business growth, investment, and broader socio-economic development.

A judiciary that minimizes delays in case resolutions is central to maintaining public confidence in the legal system, improving access to justice, and ensuring timely legal outcomes. The emphasis on efficiency is in line with global judicial best practices, which highlight the importance of reducing case backlogs to promote fairness and economic stability. Courts that operate without significant delays are better equipped to manage the increasing complexities of family law, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure swift justice in matters related to children, domestic issues, and support cases.

Moreover, a judicial system that effectively manages its caseload attracts both local and international investment, as businesses often seek jurisdictions with transparent and predictable legal processes. Delays in court proceedings can lead to increased legal costs, business uncertainties, and hinder the enforcement of contracts, all of which can negatively affect the business climate. Thus, the Jamaican family courts' efforts to meet and exceed these targets align not only with improving judicial efficiency but also with the country's broader economic ambitions.

Achieving a net case backlog rate of less than 5% reflects the judiciary's commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to the needs of citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. As a service-based institution, the courts are key players in Jamaica's socio-economic development strategy, where efficient legal systems support stable governance and economic growth. In short, the success of specialized family courts in meeting these ambitious goals serves as a vital foundation for fostering court excellence, enhancing the rule of law, and creating a robust environment for investment and socio-economic progress.

In the fiscal period, April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024, the specialised Family Courts of Jamaica, recorded a total of 8992 new cases filed. Case activity that was either disposed or inactive amounted to 8755 producing an overall case clearance rate of 97.36% (9.03 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the specialised family courts of Jamaica). The Corporate Area Family Court accounted for the largest share of new cases filed for the 2023/2024 fiscal period with 2644 or 29.40%. St. James followed accounting for 2103 or 23.39% of new cases filed and Westmoreland with 1497 or 16.65%. The lowest share of new cases filed for the first quarter of 2024 were with the family courts of Trelawny (6.27%), Hanover (7.65%), Chapelton (8.01%) and Manchester (8.62%).

Classified among the most critical measures of court productivity and efficiency is the case clearance rate. Clearance rate measures the court's ability to manage its incoming case load effectively. This measurement is important in preventing case backlog; through, monitoring clearance rates, courts can identify and address potential backlogs before they escalate. If a court is disposing fewer cases than filed a severe backlog of

cases is certain; that is, a persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. In the first quarter of 2024, the highest ratio of new cases filed to cases disposed among the specialised family courts in Jamaica was recorded in the Trelawny Family Court producing a weighted average case clearance rate of 123.05%. The Corporate Area Family Court ranked second with 106.54%, followed by St. James with 97.00%, Westmoreland with 90.38%, and Manchester with 90.19%.

The current rate of case clearance is influenced by both the efforts of the courts in case management and factors outside of direct control of the courts. The overall weighted mean clearance rate for the 2023/2024 fiscal period satisfies the international minimum standard for this metric (90% - 100%). The actual average case clearance rate is 8.09 percentage points difference from the forecasted case clearance rate for the Specialised Family Courts.

Positioned towards reducing backlog, the family courts remain, determined to maintain at minimum disposing as many, as the number of new cases being filed. To this effect, the specialised Family Courts in Jamaica continue to engage external parties and stakeholders in an effort to reduce the general incidence of delays brought about by factors such as the absenteeism of applicants and or respondents for hearings, outstanding scientific reports, among other reasons.



**Table i. Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Family Court	Number of new cases	Gross number of disposed cases	Gross number of inactive cases	Weighted average case clearance rate
Corporate Area Family Court	2644	2703	114	106.54
St. James Family Court	2103	1963	77	97.00
Hanover Family Court	688	566	23	85.61
Westmoreland Family Court	1497	1300	53	90.38
Trelawny Family Court	564	680	14	123.05
Manchester Family Court	775	683	16	90.19
Chapelton Family Court	721	489	74	78.09
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>8992</b>	<b>8384</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>97.36</b>

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialized Family Courts in the fiscal year 2023/2024. It shows that a total of 8,992 new cases were filed in these courts, while 371 became inactive and 8,384 were disposed, leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 97.36%. The Trelawny Family Court recorded the highest overall weighted case clearance rate among the featured courts with 123.05%, followed by the Corporate Area Family Court with 106.54%, the St. James Family court with 97.00%, while the Westmoreland Family court recorded a clearance rate of 90.38% and the Manchester Family court followed behind with 90.19 to round off the top five specialized family courts in the fiscal year 23/24.

**Table ii. Comparative Analysis of Actual and Forecasted Case Clearance Rates**

<b>Parish Court</b>	<b>Actual 2023/2024 Average Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>	<b>Forecasted 2023/2024 Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>	<b>Residual</b>	<b>Squared Error</b>	<b>Absolute Percentage Error</b>
Corporate Area Family Court	106.54	110.91	-4.37	19.10	4.10
St. James Family Court	97.00	108.09	-11.09	122.99	11.43
Hanover Family Court	85.61	103.40	-17.79	316.48	20.78
Westmoreland Family Court	90.38	107.82	-17.44	304.15	19.30
Trelawny Family Court	123.05	104.56	18.49	341.88	15.03
Manchester Family Court	90.19	101.01	-10.82	117.07	12.00
Chapelton Family Court	78.09	102.34	-24.25	588.06	31.05
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>97.36</b>	<b>105.45</b>			

The above table summarizes the actual and forecasted clearance rates, along with residuals, squared errors and absolute percentage errors for each of the Specialised Family Courts of Jamaica for the 2023 / 2024 fiscal period.

The Residual values present the difference between actual and forecasted rates and are important in determining the quality of the model. The residual values also serve as an indicator of how well the forecast aligns with the actual performance. Negative residuals indicate that the actual clearance rate was below the forecast while positive residuals indicate the clearance rate was above the forecast. The Trelawny Family Court was the only court that exceed its forecast for the fiscal period 2023/2024 and by extension was also above the international standard for this metric.

The Chapelton Family Court had the largest negative residual. Other specialised family courts with actual case clearance rate considerably below the forecasted rate include Hanover and Westmoreland.

The square mean error provide insight as to the magnitude of the errors without considering the direction. Higher squared values indicate larger deviations from the forecast. The Chapelton Family Court had the highest squared error followed by the Trelawny Family Court; here despite having surpassed the forecasted rate, the positive residual was large, and the differences amplified reflecting the large deviation from the forecasted rate for the fiscal period 2023 /2024. Smaller squared errors were observed in the Corporate Area Family Court and Manchester Family Court, indicating closer alignment of the actual rates with the forecasted rates.

The absolute percentage error expresses the accuracy of the forecast as a percentage of the actual value. Consistent with its large negative residual and high squared error the Chapelton Family Court had the highest percentage deviation from the forecast of 31.05 per cent, along with the Hanover Family Court (20.78%) and Westmoreland Family Court (19.30%). The Corporate Area Family Court had the lowest absolute percentage deviation, this suggests that the actual clearance rate for this court was closest to the forecast. This is also true for the St. James Family Court (11.43%) and the Manchester Family Court (12.00%).

The overall forecast model is acceptably accurate and produced a good forecast of the case clearance rate for the Specialized Family Courts of Jamaica. The Corporate Area Family Court had the closest actual and forecasted rates, which produced an absolute percentage error of 4.10%, the result of a highly accurate forecasted case clearance rate for the Corporate Area Family Court.

The Chapelton Family Court, on the other hand, had the largest residual and squared error which produced an absolute percentage error of 31.05%. Though the model significantly over predicted the case clearance rate for the Chapelton Family Court, the absolute percentage error suggest that the model produced a reasonable forecasted case clearance rate for the Chapelton Family Court. The deviations between actual and predicted rates across the specialized family courts is indicative that, the courts' performance is different from what was expected. Likely due to factors, including unique circumstances or challenges specific to individual courts, not captured in the forecasting model.

## Methodology

The report covers the performance of the Corporate Area Family Court, Hanover Family Court, St. James Family Court, Westmoreland Family Court, Trelawny Family Court, Manchester Family Court, and Chapelton Family Court. Case data were categorised by type—criminal, family matters, domestic violence, child welfare, civil, and enforcement activities. The performance metrics are calculated using a weighted average approach, a measure of court performance based on caseload variations. In addition, the comparative analysis of forecasts with actual measures using squared error and absolute percentage error provides valuable insights into the accuracy and reliability of forecasting methods, facilitating a more comprehensive assessment of the forecasting model's performance.

## Disclaimer

The numbers that are reflected in the case activity summary in the annual report may vary slightly from those quoted in the individual quarterly reports throughout the year due to occasional constraints with timely access to all records and other mitigating factors. Methodological adjustments may also result in slight variations in comparative figures across periods.

## Introduction

Jamaica's specialized Family Courts function as comprehensive service centres within the judicial system, providing on-site counselling, off-site referrals, extensive open court hearings and adjudications, and logistical support for financial transactions, particularly in maintenance cases. These courts address a diverse range of matters, including criminal, civil, domestic violence, and family and child welfare cases, playing a crucial role in safeguarding family welfare, especially that of children.

The Judicature Family Court Act (1975) establishes the court's primary duty: preventing family breakdown and ensuring the welfare of family members, particularly children. This mandate is reflected in the court's multifaceted functions, which, as outlined in the Act, encompass adoption, custody, maintenance, affiliation, juvenile care and protection, and divorce. This broad jurisdiction underscores the Family Courts' importance in promoting family justice and societal cohesion.

Statistical reporting on the activities of these specialized courts not only enhances operational effectiveness but also promotes public understanding and appreciation of their vital role and services.

The importance of the rule of law and the judiciary in contributing to a high quality of life is reflected in Vision 2030 Jamaica National Goal 2: "The Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just." This statistical report emphasizes the value of empirical data in achieving the national vision: "Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business." This report provides insights into various case-related activities during the fiscal period of April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024, focusing on seven specialized Family Courts:

- The Corporate Area Family Court
- The Western Regional Family Courts
  - St. James Family Court
  - Hanover Family Court
  - Westmoreland Family Court
- The Trelawny Family Court
- The Manchester Family Court
- Chapelton Family Court

## Chapter 1.0: Corporate Area Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. It includes analyses of caseload, case type distribution and case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 1.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	56	39	6	80.36
Indictments	80	69	11	100.00
Summary	48	46	6	108.33
Petty Session	11	5	10	136.36
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>98.46</b>

The above table shows the sample of 195 criminal cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Of these, 80 or 41.03% were indictment matters, 56 or 28.72% were committal matters, 48 or 24.62% were summary matters and 11 or 5.64% were petty session matters. There were a total of 159 criminal cases disposed while 33 became inactive during the fiscal year April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. Of these, 69 indictment matters were disposed while 11 became inactive. In addition, there were 46 summary matters disposed while 6 became inactive and 39 committal matters disposed while 6 became inactive. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate of 98.46% for these types of cases which satisfies the international standard on this vital metric.

The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 11.8 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog (refer to the Appendix: Table A2.1) within the Corporate Area Family Court.

### **Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children’s Court)**

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Corporate Area Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 1.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Childcare protection	104	108	1	104.81
Uncontrollable Child	55	52	1	96.36
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>101.89</b>

There were 159 child welfare cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 104 or 65.41%, while the remaining portion were uncontrollable child cases with 55 or 34.59%. A total of 160 child welfare cases were disposed of during the fiscal year 2023/ 2024 and 2 became inactive. There were 108 childcare and protection cases disposed of during the report period, while 52 uncontrollable child cases were disposed and 1 each become inactive. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 104.81% for childcare and protection cases and 96.36% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 101.89%, which satisfies the international standard on this vital metric.



This estimated case clearance rate for child welfare in the report period was 8.2 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Corporate Area Family Court.

### **Family matters case activity summary for the Corporate Area Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 1.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Subtype</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Custody	561	618	22	114.08
Declaration of Paternity	309	305	12	102.59
Maintenance	800	779	39	102.25
Access	15	56	0	373.33
Adoption	3	3	0	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1688</b>	<b>1761</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>108.65</b>

The 1,688 new Family cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, disaggregated by case subtype recorded that maintenance matters, with 800 cases or 47.39%, accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by custody with 561 or 33.23%. There were 309 declaration of paternity cases or 18.31%. A total of 1,834 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the fiscal year 2023/2024. This is broken down into 1,761 disposed and 73 inactive cases. Maintenance cases accounted for 779 of the disposed cases and 39 inactive cases while custody accounted for 618 disposed cases and 22 inactive cases.

There were 305 disposed declaration of paternity cases while 12 became inactive. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 108.65% for the broad family case type, led by matters concerning Access with 373.33%, custody cases with 114.08%, declaration of paternity cases with 102.59%, maintenance case, with 102.25%, while adoption cases accounted for 100%. The estimated case clearance rate for the broad family case type in the report period satisfied the international standard for this metric and was 1.4 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Corporate Area, Family Court.

### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Corporate Area Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Corporate Area for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

**Table 1.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Order Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Protection Order	520	535	5	103.85
Occupation Order	82	88	1	108.54
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>104.49</b>

The data above shows that there was a total of 602 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Corporate Area Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 520 or 86.38%, while cases of occupation order with 82 or 13.62% accounted for the remaining proportion.

A total 629 Domestic Violence cases were either disposed of or became inactive in the report period. There were 535 protection order cases disposed of during the period while 5 became inactive; 88 occupation order cases were also disposed of in the period and 1 became inactive. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 108.54% for occupation order cases and 103.85% for protection order cases, which produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 104.49%, satisfying the international standards on this vital metric. This estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period was 5.55 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Corporate Area Family Court.

**Table: 1.5 distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Corporate Area Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	Inactive matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	172	182	8	110.47
Disobedience of Maintenance	62	116	67	295.16
Warrants of distress	0	2	0	undefined
<b>Total/ Weighted Average</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>160.26</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 172 or 73.50% of post disposal activity in the Corporate Area Family Court and the remaining 62 or 26.50% entered enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) during the 2023 / 2024 fiscal period. A total of 190 vary orders were either disposed of or became inactive in the report period, and 185 enforcements were either disposed of or became inactive in the period. This produced a gross case clearance rate of 160.26% for post disposal activity in the Corporate Area Family Court in the period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

## Chapter 2.0: St. James Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the St. James Family Court for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. This involves the analyses of caseload, case type distribution and clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 2.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	14	12	0	85.71
Indictments	50	30	2	64.00
Summary	46	31	1	69.57
Petty Session	7	7	1	114.29
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>71.79</b>

The above table shows the sample of 117 criminal cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Of these, 50 or 42.74% were indictment matters, 46 or 39.32% were summary matters, 14 or 11.97% were committal matters and the remaining 7 or 5.98% were petty session matters. There were a total of 80 criminal cases disposed of during the 2023/2024 fiscal period while 4 became inactive. Of these, 31 summary cases were disposed, while 1 became inactive, 30 indictments were disposed while 2 became inactive and 12 committal matters were disposed. No committal matters became inactive in the report period. There were 7 disposed petty session matters while 1 became inactive. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate of 71.79% for these types of cases, which is below the international standard on this vital metric.

The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 37.64 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the St. James Family Court.

### **Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children's Court)**

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the St. James Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 2.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Childcare protection	233	101	2	44.21
Uncontrollable Child	99	73	7	80.81
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>55.12</b>

There were 332 child welfare cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 233 or 70.18%, while cases of uncontrollable child with 99 or 29.82% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 174 child welfare cases were disposed while 9 became inactive during the period. There were 101 childcare and protection cases disposed of during the fiscal year 2023/2024, while 73 uncontrollable child cases were disposed. There were 7 inactive uncontrollable child cases which became inactive during the period while 2 childcare and protection cases became inactive.

These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 44.21% for childcare and protection cases and 80.81% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 55.12%. which is below international standards on this vital metric.

The estimated case clearance rate for welfare case activity in the report period was 54.31 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the St. James Family Court.

### **Family matters case activity summary for the St. James Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 2.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Subtype</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Custody	323	368	14	118.27
Declaration of Paternity	156	189	2	122.44
Access	48	36	0	75.00
Legal Guardianship	23	16	0	69.57
Maintenance	410	418	21	107.07
Adoption	8	8	0	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>110.74</b>

The 968 new family cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, disaggregated by case subtype recorded that maintenance matters accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed, with 410 cases or 42.36%.

This was followed by custody with 323 or 33.37% and declaration of paternity cases with 156 or 16.12%. For the report period there were also 48 new access cases, 23 new legal guardianship cases and 8 new adoption cases filed.

A total of 1,072 cases falling under this broad family category were either disposed of or became inactive in the period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024 (1035 disposed and 37 inactive cases). Maintenance cases accounted for 418 of the disposed cases and 21 inactive cases, custody cases accounted for 368 disposed cases and 14 inactive cases and cases of declaration of paternity accounted for 189 disposed and 2 inactive cases. Matters concerning declaration of paternity accounted for the highest case clearance of 122.44%, followed by custody cases with 118.27%, and maintenance cases with 107.07%. The broad family case type recorded an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 110.74% for the fiscal period, satisfying the international standards for this vital metric and 1.31 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the St. James Family Court.

## Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the St. James Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in St. James for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 2.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	490	468	15	98.57
Occupation Order	115	110	8	102.61
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>99.34</b>

The table above shows a total of 605 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the St. James Family Court. Protection order cases accounted for the larger proportion of with 490 or 80.99%, while occupation order cases accounted for the remaining proportion with 115 or 19%. A total of 578 domestic violence cases were disposed while 23 became inactive; of the matters disposed there were 468 protection cases and 110 occupation order cases. Of the matters that became inactive during the report period, 15 were protection order cases and 8 were occupation order cases. This produced estimated case clearance rates of 98.57% for protection order cases and 102.61% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 99.34%, which satisfies the international standard on this vital metric.

The estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period, was 10.09 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the St. James Family Court.



## Summary of case activity for civil matters at the St. James Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the St. James Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 2.5: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	weighted case clearance rate (%)
81	96	4	123.46

The data above shows that there were a total of 81 new civil cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024. There were also a total of 100 civil cases which were either disposed of or became inactive in the fiscal year at the St. James Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 123.46%, which satisfies the international standard on this metrics, and 14.03 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the St. James Family Court.

**Table 2.6: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the St. James Family Court for fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Post disposal activity/Enforcement</b>	<b>New entries</b>	<b>Disposed matters</b>	<b>Inactive matters</b>	<b>Estimated clearance rate (%)</b>
Vary Orders	173	166	83	143.93
Disobedience of Maintenance	59	55	41	162.71
Warrants of Distress	86	48	60	125.58
Warrants of Arrest	88	29	77	120.45
Judgement Summons	2	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>137.01</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 173 or 42.40% of post disposal activity in the St. James Family Court. The remaining 235 entered the enforcement stage by way of warrants of arrest (88 or %), warrants of distress (86 or %) disobedience of maintenance matters (59 or %), and judgement summons (2 or %) during the fiscal period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

In the report period there were 249 vary orders that were disposed or became inactive, and 96 enforcements were disposed or made inactive, this produced an estimated case clearance rate of 137.01% on these matters.

## Chapter 3.0: The Hanover Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Hanover Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. It includes analyses of caseload, case type distribution, and case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 3.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	8	4	0	50
Indictments	38	25	1	68.42
Summary	15	9	0	60
Petty Session	2	3	0	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>66.67</b>

The above table shows the sample of 63 criminal cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Indictments matters accounted for 38 or 60.32% while summary matters accounted for 15 or 23.81%. The remainder of new cases filed in the fiscal period were committal and petty session matters. There were 41 disposed cases and 1 inactive case during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024. Of this amount 25 indictment matters were disposed, while 1 became inactive. In addition, 9 summary matters, 4 committal matters, and 3 petty session matters were disposed. This produced a clearance rate of 66.67% for these types of cases, which is below the international standard on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 36.38 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Hanover Family Court.

### Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children’s Court)

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Hanover Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under the child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 3.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Childcare protection	63	47	2	77.78
Uncontrollable Child	19	24	2	136.84
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>91.46</b>

There were 82 child welfare cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 63 or 76.83%, while the remaining portion were uncontrollable child cases with 19 or 23.17%. A total of 71 child welfare cases were disposed of during the fiscal year 2023/2024 and 4 became inactive. There were 47 childcare and protection cases disposed of during the report period while 24 uncontrollable child cases were disposed; each case type recorded 2 inactive cases over the period. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 77.78% for childcare and protection cases and 136.84% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 91.46% which satisfies the international standard on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for child welfare in the report period was 11.59 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Hanover Family Court.

### Family matters case activity summary for the Hanover Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Hanover Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 3.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	129	96	1	75.19
Declaration of Paternity	19	23	2	131.58
Legal Guardianship	7	5	0	71.43
Maintenance	146	129	8	93.84
Access	15	5	0	33.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>85.13</b>

The 316 new cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, disaggregated by case subtype recorded that maintenance matters, with 146 cases or 46.20%, accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by custody matters with 129 or 40.82% and cases concerning declaration of paternity with 19 or 6.01%. There were also 15 cases or 4.75% of cases regarding legal guardianship. A total of 269 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the fiscal year 2023/2024. This when broken down saw maintenance cases accounted for 129 disposed cases and 8 inactive cases, while custody accounted for 96 disposed cases and 1 inactive case. There were 23 disposed declaration of paternity cases and 2 inactive cases.

This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 85.13% for the broad family case type, led by declaration of paternity cases with 131.58%, maintenance with 93.84% and custody cases with 75.19%. The estimated case clearance rate for the broad family case type in the report period did not satisfy the international standard for this metric and was 17.92 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Hanover Family Court.

**Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Hanover Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Hanover for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 3.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Order Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Protection Order	155	134	3	88.39
Occupation Order	26	28	4	123.08
Occupation and protection	11	5	0	45.45
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>90.63</b>

The data above shows that there was a total of 192 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Hanover Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 155 or 80.73%, and cases of occupation order with 26 or 13.54%. Occupation and protection orders accounted for the remaining 11 cases (or 5.73%). A total of 174 domestic violence cases were either disposed of or became inactive during the period.

There were 134 protection cases disposed of during the fiscal year 2023/2024 while 3 became inactive; 28 occupation order cases were also disposed and 4 became inactive in the period. In the fiscal period 2023/2024 five (5) occupation and protection orders were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 123.08% for occupation order cases; 88.39% for protection order cases and 45.45% for occupation and protection order cases. This produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 90.63%, satisfying the international standards on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period was 12.42 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Hanover Family Court.

**Summary of case activity for civil matters at the Hanover Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the Hanover Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 3.5: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
35	29	0	82.86

The data above shows that there was a total of 35 new civil cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024. There were also a total of 29 civil cases which were disposed of in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Hanover Family Court.

This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 82.86%, which is below the international standards on this metric, and 20.19 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Hanover Family Court.



## Chapter 4.0: The Westmoreland Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Westmoreland Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. It includes the analyses of caseload, case type distribution and case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 4.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	26	8	0	30.77
Indictments	60	36	1	61.67
Summary	31	18	6	77.42
Petty Session	50	21	10	62.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>59.88</b>

The above table shows the sample of 167 criminal cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Of these, 60 or 35.93% were indictments matters, 50 or 29.94% were petty session matters, summary matters accounted for 31 cases or 18.56% while committal matters accounted for 26 or 15.57%. There were a total of 100 criminal cases disposed of or became inactive during fiscal year ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 36 indictment matters were disposed while 1 became inactive, 21 petty session matters were disposed, while 10 became inactive. In addition, there were 18 summary matters disposed while 6 became inactive, and 8 committal matters were disposed of during the period. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate of 59.88% for these types of cases which is below the international standard on this vital metric.

The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 46.66 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Westmoreland Family Court.

### **Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children's Court)**

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Westmoreland Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under the child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 4.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Childcare protection	105	76	0	72.38
Uncontrollable Child	99	68	8	76.77
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>74.51</b>

There were 204 child welfare cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Childcare protection cases accounted for the greater share with 105 or 51.47%. The remaining proportion, 99 or 48.53%, of child welfare case activities were matters concerning uncontrollable child. A total of 144 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive during the fiscal period 2023/2024. There were 76 childcare protection cases disposed and none of these matters became inactive during the report period. For the uncontrollable child case type, 68 were disposed of while 8 became inactive. This produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 74.51%, which does not satisfy the international standards of 90% and above on this vital metric.

This estimated case clearance rate for child welfare in the report period was 32.03 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case clearance backlog within the Westmoreland Family Court.

### **Family matters case activity summary for the Westmoreland Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Westmoreland Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 4.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Subtype</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Custody	247	291	10	121.86
Declaration of Paternity	108	104	1	97.22
Access	47	14	0	29.79
Legal Guardianship	10	1	0	10.00
Maintenance	336	323	10	99.11
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.80</b>

The 748 new cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in fiscal year 2023/2024 revealed that maintenance matters with 336 cases or 44.92% accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by custody with 247 or 33.02% and declaration of paternity with 108 or 14.44%. A total of 754 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed or became inactive in the report period. Of the total number of cases reported as disposed or inactive, comprised of maintenance cases with 323 disposed and 10 inactive, custody cases with 291 disposed and 10 inactive.

Also 104 declaration of paternity cases were disposed and 1 became in active, 14 access matters were disposed of and 1 matter of legal guardianship was disposed of in the fiscal period 2023/2024. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 100.80% for the broad family case type, led by custody cases with 121.86%, maintenance cases with 99.11% and declaration of paternity cases with 97.22%. The estimated case clearance rate for the broad family case type in the report period satisfied the international standard for this metric and was 5.74 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Westmoreland Family Court.

#### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Westmoreland Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Westmoreland for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 4.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Order Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Protection Order	266	228	4	87.22
Occupation Order	41	27	1	68.29
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>84.69</b>

The data above shows that there was a total of 307 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Westmoreland Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection orders which accounted for 266 or 86.64%. The remaining portion were occupation orders with 41 or 13.36%. A total of 260 domestic violence cases were either disposed of or became inactive during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024.

During the report period 228 protection orders were disposed of while 27 occupation orders were disposed. The 5 domestic violence matters that became inactive, for the 2023/2024 fiscal period, comprised of 4 protection orders and 1 occupation order.

These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 87.22% for protection order cases and 68.29% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 84.69%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric. This estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period was 21.85 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Westmoreland Family Court.

### **Summary of case activity for civil matters at the Westmoreland Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the Westmoreland Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 4.5: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
71	85	2	122.54

The data above shows that there was a total of 71 new civil cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024. There were also a total of 87 civil cases which were either disposed of or became inactive in the fiscal year 23/24 at the Westmoreland Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 122.54%, satisfying the international standard on this metrics.

**Table 4.6: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Corporate Area Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Post disposal activity/Enforcement</b>	<b>New entries</b>	<b>Inactive matters</b>	<b>Disposed matters</b>	<b>Clearance rate (%)</b>
<b>Vary Orders</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>143</b>	108.89
<b>Disobedience of Maintenance</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>120</b>	215.00
<b>Warrants of Distress</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3</b>	74.24
<b>Warrants of Arrest</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>	69.86
<b>Weighted average/Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>118.36</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 135 or 38.14% of post disposal activity in the Corporate Area Family Cour and the remaining 219 or 61.86% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) during the 2023 / 2024 fiscal period. A total of 147 vary orders were either disposed of or became inactive in the period, and 272 enforcements were either disposed of or became inactive in the period. This produced a gross clearance rate of 118.36 for post disposal activity in the Westmoreland Family Court in the period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

## Chapter 5.0: The Trelawny Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Trelawny Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. It includes analyses of caseload, case type distribution and case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 5.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	16	23	2	156.25
Indictments	34	30	0	88.24
Summary	27	30	1	114.81
Petty Session	4	5	0	125.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>112.35</b>

The above table shows the sample of 81 criminal cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Of these, 34 or 41.98% were indictment matters, 27 or 33.33% were summary matters, 16 or 19.75% were committal matters and 4 or 4.94% were petty session matters. There were a total of 91 criminal cases that were either disposed of or became inactive during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate of 112.35% for these types of cases, which satisfies the international standard on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 5.12 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Trelawny Family Court.

## Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children's Court)

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Trelawny Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 5.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Childcare protection	84	59	0	70.24
Uncontrollable Child	4	11	1	300.00
<b>Total/ Weighted Average</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>80.68</b>

There were 88 new child welfare cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, the larger proportion of which were childcare protection cases which accounted for 84 or 95.45%, while the remaining proportion were cases of uncontrollable child with 4 or 4.55%. A total of 71 child welfare cases were disposed of during the fiscal year; of the cases disposed 59 were childcare protection cases, and 11 were uncontrollable child cases. During the period only 1 uncontrollable child case became inactive during the period. These results produced an estimated case clearance rate of 300% for cases concerning uncontrollable child and 70.24% for childcare protection cases; further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 80.68%, which is below the international standard of 90% and above on this vital metric. This estimated case clearance rate for child welfare in the report period was 26.55 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Trelawny Family Court.



### Family matters case activity summary for the Trelawny Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Trelawny Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 5.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	76	97	1	128.95
Declaration of Paternity	73	83	0	113.70
Access	16	26	2	175.00
Legal Guardianship	8	5	0	62.50
Maintenance	106	166	4	160.38
Adoption	2	2	0	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>137.37</b>

The 281 new cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 106 cases or 44.58%. Custody matters followed with 76 cases or 27.04% and declaration of paternity with 73 or 25.98%. A total of 379 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of during the period. This when broken down were 166 disposed maintenance cases, 97 disposed custody cases, 83 disposed declaration of paternity cases, 26 cases of access and 5 cases of legal guardianship. In the report period 7 cases became inactive 4 cases of maintenance, 2 cases and custody cases. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 137.37% for the broad family case type.

Access cases had the highest case clearance rate of 175%, followed by Maintenance cases with 160.38%, custody cases with 128%, declaration of paternity with 113.70% and adoption with 100%.

### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Trelawny Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Trelawny for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 5.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Protection Order	96	126	3	134.38
Occupation Order	17	24	1	147.06
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>136.28</b>

The data above shows that there was a total of 113 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Trelawny Family Court. The larger proportion of new cases filed were protection orders which accounted for 96 or 84.96%, while the remaining proportion of new cases filed were occupation orders with 17 or 15.04%. A total 154 Domestic Violence cases were either disposed of or became inactive during the period. There were 126 protection order cases disposed of and 3 inactive during the quarter, while 24 occupation order cases were disposed and 1 inactive case during the quarter. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 134.38% for protection order cases and 147.06% occupation order cases. This further yielded an overall clearance rate of 136.28% for domestic violence case activity, which satisfies the international standard on this vital metric.

This estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period was 29.05 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Trelawny Family Court.

### **Summary of case activity for civil matters at the Trelawny Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the Trelawny Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 5.5: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
18	17	0	94.44

The data above shows that there were a total of 18 new civil cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024. There were also a total of 17 civil cases which were disposed of in the period. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 94.44% for civil case activity in the fiscal year 2023/2024, which satisfies the international standard on this metrics and 12.79 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Trelawny Family Court.

**Table 5.6: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Trelawny Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	43	1	42	100.00
Disobedience of Maintenance	23	10	18	121.74
Warrants of Distress	74	0	0	undefined
Warrants of Arrest	79	33	41	93.67
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>66.21</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 43 or 19.63% of post disposal activity in the Trelawny Family Court and the remaining 176 or 80.37% entered enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) during the 2023/2024 fiscal period. A total of 43 vary orders were either disposed of or became inactive in the report, and 102 enforcements were either disposed of or became inactive in the period. This produced a gross case clearance rate of 66.21 % for post disposal activity in the Trelawny Family Court in the period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

## Chapter 6.0: St. Manchester Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Manchester Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. It includes analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 6.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed in the period	Overall Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases which became inactive in the period	Case clearance rate (%)
Summary	32	29	5	106.25
Committal	6	1	0	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>92.11</b>

The above table shows the sample of 38 criminal cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Summary Matters accounted for 32 or 84.21% of the new criminal cases filed in the fiscal year and committal accounted for the remaining 6 new cases filed or 15.79%. There were a total of 30 criminal cases disposed while 5 became inactive during the fiscal year April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. Of these 29 summary matters were disposed while 5 became inactive and 1 committal matter was reported as disposed with no committal reported as becoming inactive for the period. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate, for matters classified as criminal in the Manchester Family Court, of 92.11%, which satisfies the international standard for this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for criminal activity in the report period was 10.9 percentage points difference from the from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Manchester Family Court.

## Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children's Court)

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Manchester Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 6.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Childcare protection	27	30	0	111.11
Uncontrollable Child	43	26	7	76.74
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>90.00</b>

There were 70 child welfare cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024, the larger proportion of which were uncontrollable child cases which accounted for 43 or 61.43%, while cases classified as childcare protection accounted for the remaining proportion with 27 or 38.57%. A total of 63 child welfare cases were either disposed of or became inactive during the period. There were 30 childcare protection cases disposed of during the period, while 26 uncontrollable child cases were disposed and 7 cases concerning uncontrollable child became inactive. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 111.11% for childcare and protection cases and 76.74% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 90%, which satisfies the international standards on this vital metric. This estimated case clearance rate for child welfare in the report period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024, was 13.01 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog in Manchester Family Court.

### Family matters case activity summary for the Manchester Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Manchester Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 6.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Overall Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases within the period	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	92	114	0	123.91
Declaration of Paternity	27	29	0	107.41
Access	50	52	1	106.00
Legal Guardianship	0	1	0	undefined
Maintenance	435	347	2	80.23
Adoption	2	2	0	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>90.43</b>

The 606 new cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024 revealed that maintenance matters with 435 cases or 71.78% accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by custody matters with 92 or 15.18%. There were also 50 matters of access and 27 declaration of paternity cases. A total of 545 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed of in the period. Maintenance cases accounted for 347 of the disposed cases while custody cases accounted for 114 disposed cases. There were 52 disposed cases of access and 29 disposed declaration of paternity cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 90.43% for the broad family case type, led by custody cases with 123.91%, declaration of paternity cases with 107.41%, access matters with 106%, adoption matters with 100% followed and matters of maintenance with 80.23%.

The estimated case clearance rate for the broad family case type in the report period satisfied the international standard for this metric and was percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Manchester Family Court.

### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Manchester Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Manchester for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 6.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Order Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Protection Order	58	51	1	89.66
Occupation Order	2	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>86.67</b>

The data above shows that there was a total of 60 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Manchester Family Court. Protection orders accounted for 58 or 96.67% of new cases filed, while the remaining 2 or 3.33% were cases of occupation order. A total of 51 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of and 1 became inactive during the report period, all of which were protection orders. In the fiscal period 2023 / 2024 no occupation orders were disposed of or became inactive. These results produced an estimated overall case clearance rate of 86.67%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric.



The estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period was 16.34 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Manchester Family Court.

**Table 6.5: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
1	1	0	100.00

The data above shows that there was 1 new civil case filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 and 1 civil case was disposed of in the period. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 100%, which satisfies the international standard on this metrics and 3.01 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Manchester Family Court.

**Table 6.6: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Manchester Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	Inactive matters	Case clearance weight (%)
Vary Orders	41	43	0	104.88
Disobedience of Maintenance	52	32	7	75.00
Warrants of Distress	83	21	1	26.51
Warrants of Arrest	73	13	7	27.40
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>49.80</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 41 or % of post disposal activity in the Manchester Family Court the remaining 208 entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) for the 2023/2024 fiscal period. A total of 43 vary orders were disposed of in the report period and 81 enforcements were either disposed of or became inactive. This produced a gross case clearance rate of 49.80% for post disposal activity in the Manchester Family Court in the period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

## Chapter 7.0: The Chapelton Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Chapelton Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

### Case Activity Summary in the Criminal Section (A Division of the Children's Court)

**Table 7.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	30	1	0	3.33
Indictments	61	20	0	32.79
Summary	8	12	0	150.00
Petty Session	5	4	0	80.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35.58</b>

The above table shows the sample of 104 criminal cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. Of these, 61 or 58.65% were indictment matters, 30 or 28.85% were committal matters, 8 or 7.69% were summary matters and petty session cases accounted for 5 or 4.81%. There were a total of 37 matters disposed for the period; of the total criminal case activity disposed, 20 were indictments, 12 were summary, 4 were petty session and 1 committal. This produced an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 35.58% for these types of cases which is below the international standard on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 69.84 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Chapelton Family Court.

## Case Activity on Child Welfare Matters (A Division of the Children's Court)

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Chapelton Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 7.2: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Childcare protection	29	19	0	65.52
Uncontrollable Child	21	7	1	38.10
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>54.00</b>

There were 50 child welfare cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024. The larger proportion of which were childcare protection cases with 29 or 58%, while the remaining 21 or 42% were matters concerning uncontrollable child. A total of 26 child welfare cases were disposed of for the fiscal period 2023/2024 and 1 became inactive. There were 19 childcare protection cases disposed of, while 7 uncontrollable child cases were disposed and 1 made inactive. This yielded a weighted average case clearance rate of 54%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for criminal case activity in the report period was 51.42 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Chapelton Family Court.

### Family matters case activity summary for the Chapelton Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Chapelton Family Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access, and declaration of paternity.

**Table 7.3: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	86	62	10	83.72
Declaration of Paternity	45	43	3	102.22
Access	55	40	1	74.55
Maintenance	260	190	51	92.69
Legal Guardianship	2	1	0	50.00
Adoption	6	5	0	83.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>89.43</b>

The 454 new cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in the fiscal year 2023/2024 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 260 cases or 57.27%. This was followed by 86 or 18.95% which were custody cases and 55 or 12.11% which were cases of access. There were also 45 or 9.91% declaration of paternity cases, 6 adoption and 2 legal guardianship cases. A total of 396 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the period. This is broken down into 190 disposed maintenance cases, while 51 became inactive, 62 custody cases were accounted for while 10 became inactive, 43 declaration of paternity cases and 40 cases of access were disposed of during the period. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 89.43% for the broad family case type, led by

declaration of paternity cases with 102.22%, followed by, maintenance with 92.69%, custody with 83.72 and adoption cases with 83.33%. cases of access had a clearance weight of 74.55%.

### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Chapelton Family Court**

The subsection below provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Chapelton for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

**Table 7.4: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

<b>Order Type</b>	<b>Number of new cases filed</b>	<b>Number of cases disposed</b>	<b>Number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Protection Order	107	79	8	81.31
Occupation Order	4	4	0	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>81.98</b>

The data above shows that there was a total of 111 new domestic violence cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024 at the Chapelton Family Court. Protection order accounted for 107 or 96.40% of the cases while occupation order accounted for the remaining 4 or 3.60%. A total 91 Domestic Violence of these cases were either disposed or became inactive during the period. There were 79 protection order cases disposed of during the period and 8 inactive cases, while 4 occupation order cases were disposed. This result produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 81.98%, which does not satisfy international standards on this vital metric. The estimated case clearance rate for domestic violence case activity in the report period was 23.44 percentage points from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Chapelton Family Court.

**Table 7.5: Summary of civil case activity for cases in fiscal year 2023/2024**

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
2	2	0	100.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 2 new civil cases filed in the fiscal year 2023/2024. There were a total of 2 civil cases disposed of in the period. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 100%, which satisfies the international standard on this metrics and 5.42 percentage points difference from the minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the Chapelton Family Court.

**Table 7.6: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Chapelton Court for the fiscal year 2023/2024**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Clearance rate (%)
Vary Orders	62	9	58	108.06
Disobedience of Maintenance	114	6	82	77.19
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>88.07</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 62 or % of post disposal activity in the Chapelton Family Court. The remaining 114 entered the enforcement stage by way of disobedience of maintenance during the fiscal period April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

In the report period there were 58 vary orders disposed of and 9 became inactive. There were 82 enforcements disposed and 6 became inactive. This produced a gross case clearance rate of 88.07% on these matters for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

## Conclusion

During the fiscal year spanning April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, specialized family courts achieved an overall case clearance rate of 97.36%. This indicates that approximately 97 cases were resolved for every 100 new cases filed. Individual court performance varied, ranging from a high of 123.05% in the Trelawny Family Court to a low of 78.09% in the Chapelton Family Court.

The Chief Justice has set a target case clearance rate of at least 106.39% for Jamaica's specialized family courts over the next five years. This target aims to achieve a sustainable net backlog rate of under 5%. The projected weighted case clearance rate of 105.11% for the 2024/2025 fiscal year suggests continued improvements in productivity and efficiency within these courts. These efforts contribute significantly to the strategic objectives of the courts and align with national and global goals. Specifically, they support Jamaica's Vision 2030 National Goal 2, "The Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just," and, by extension, the 2030 Global Agenda Goal 16, "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions."



## Glossary of Terms

**Sampling Distribution:** A sampling distribution of a given population is the distribution of frequencies of a range of outcomes that could possibly occur for a statistic of a population. A population is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn.

**Range:** This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

**Standard deviation:** This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are around the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

**Outlier:** An outlier is a value that is too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

**Skewness:** This is a measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

**Clearance rate:** The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is  $110/100$  or 110%.

**Note:** The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%. A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90% - 110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system.<sup>i</sup>

**Disposal rate:** As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

**Note:** A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system.<sup>ii</sup>

**Case congestion rate:** The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

**Trial/hearing date certainty:** This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

**Case File Integrity Rate:** Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time,

impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%.

**Courtroom utilization rate:** The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

**Case backlog:** A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

The **gross backlog rate** measures the proportion of all cases filed within a given period which remain unresolved for a period of over two years.

The **net backlog rate** on the other hand measures the proportion of active cases filed in a given period which are unresolved for over two years.

**Continuance and Adjournment:** In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment'. Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates, but continuances do not.

**Percentile Rank:** This refers to the percentage of scores that are equal to or less than a given score. Percentile ranks, like percentages, fall on a continuum from 0 to 100. For example, a percentile rank of 45 indicates that 45% of the scores in a distribution of scores fall at or below the score at the 45th percentile. Percentile ranks are useful when you want to quickly understand how a particular score compares to the other scores in a distribution of scores. For instance, knowing a court disposed 300 cases in a given period doesn't tell you much. You don't know how many case disposals were possible, and even if you did, you wouldn't know how that court's score compared to the rest of the courts. If, however, you were told that the court scored at the 80th percentile, then you would know that this court did as well or better than 80% of the courts in case disposals.

**Difference between percentage and percentage points:** The difference between percentage and percentage points, the latter is strictly used to compare two percentages, for example, if the clearance rate in 2018 was 89% and the clearance rate in 2019 is 100%, then the appropriate expression to compare these would be "an 11 percentage points increase". However, if we are comparing two absolute numbers, say, 1000 cases were disposed in 2018, and 1500 in 2019, then there would be a 50% increase in cases disposed.

**Weighted Average:** Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance

rate than a smaller court. A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

**Exponential Smoothing:** Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older data, the less priority ("weight") the data is given; newer data is seen as more relevant and is assigned more weight. Smoothing parameters (smoothing constants) – usually denoted by  $\alpha$  – determine the weights of the observations.

Exponential smoothing is usually used to make short term forecasts, as longer-term forecasts using this technique can be quite unreliable.

- **Simple (single) exponential smoothing** uses a weighted moving average with exponentially decreasing weights.
- **Holt's trend-corrected double exponential smoothing** is usually more reliable for handling data that shows trends, compared to the single procedure.
- **Triple exponential smoothing** (also called the Multiplicative Holt-Winters) is usually more reliable for parabolic trends or data that shows trends and seasonality.

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<sup>i</sup> Source :

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Source :

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

## Appendix

**Table A1.1:**  
Forecast of Case Clearance Rates 2023/2024 – 2032/33 – Specialised Family Courts (%)

Family Court	2023/2024	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Corporate Area	110.91	109.90	109.98	107.71	107.89
St. James	108.09	107.81	106.67	105.67	106.78
Hanover	103.40	103.56	103.98	104.01	102.89
Westmoreland	107.82	105.45	106.01	104.67	105.34
Trelawny	104.56	104.48	105.59	104.67	105.67
Manchester	101.01	102.03	103.54	102.81	101.67
Chapelton	102.34	102.56	104.45	105.56	105.67

Family Court	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Corporate Area	106.61	106.78	105.51	105.67	106.03
St. James	107.56	106.76	106.78	105.88	104.67
Hanover	103.89	105.91	103.71	103.51	101.01
Westmoreland	103.71	104.04	105.05	103.04	103.76
Trelawny	106.67	107.71	105.71	105.87	105.98
Manchester	103.91	103.56	102.54	102.34	101.56
Chapelton	105.67	104.78	103.31	104.56	100.99

**Table A2.1:**  
Mean Case Clearance Rate required to maintain a net backlog rate of under 5%  
2023/2024 – 2032/33 – Specialised Family Courts

Family Court	Required Average Rate (%) (2023/2024 - 2032/33)	Expected Average Rate (%) (2023/2024 - 2032/33)	Variance
Corporate Area	110.04	107.699	2.341
St. James	109.43	106.667	2.763
Hanover	103.05	103.587	-0.537
Westmoreland	106.54	104.889	1.651
Trelawny	107.23	105.691	1.539
Manchester	103.01	102.497	0.513
Chapelton	105.42	103.989	1.431

Note: A positive variance implies that the required average case clearance rate exceeds the expected case clearance rate over the next 10 fiscal years. On the contrary, a negative variance implies that the expected average case clearance rate exceeds the required average case clearance rate.