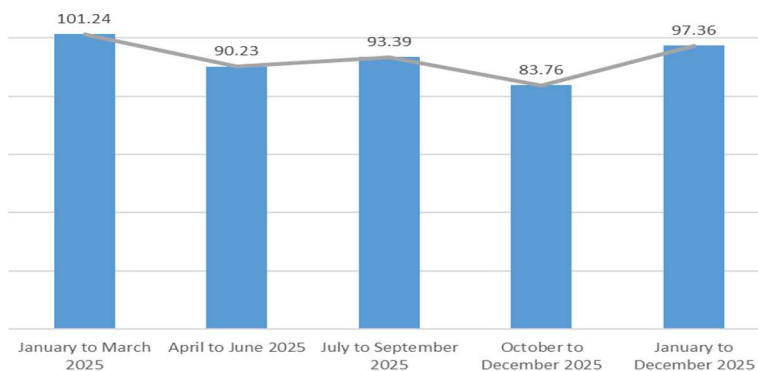


## THE SPECIALISED FAMILY COURTS OF JAMAICA

(January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025)

SPECIALISED FAMILY COURTS OF JAMAICA QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL 2025 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 ANNUAL MESSAGE, FAMILY COURT 2025**

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The specialised Family Courts remain one of the most important points of contact between the Jamaican people and their justice system. The statistics for 2025 demonstrate a jurisdiction that is making measurable progress in managing a sensitive and complex caseload, while also highlighting areas in which further improvement is both necessary and possible.

During the year, the specialised Family Courts received 9,895 new cases and disposed of 8,837 matters, with an additional 385 matters classified as inactive, yielding an overall case clearance rate of 93.20 per cent. This result lies within the international benchmark range of 90 to 110 per cent and reflects a system that, in aggregate, is broadly keeping pace with new filings and limiting the growth of backlog. Trelawny, Chapelton and Westmoreland recorded the highest overall clearance rates—121.24 per cent, 104.34 per cent and 95.22 per cent respectively—while Hanover, the Corporate Area and St James also met or exceeded the international minimum standard of 90 per cent. Manchester (87.17%) and St Ann (79.40%) fell below the international standards and very far below the clearance rates required to attain and maintain a backlog free status.

The 2024 – 2028 strategic business plan indicates that all specialised Family Courts need to attain a clearance rate of at least 103.98%. By this standard on two courts – Trelawny and Chapelton – had a clearance rate above 100%. The implication being that the majority of the specialised Family Court – should the current trend of under 100% clearance rate – are in danger of slipping into backlog. This report has precipitated an enquiry into the data from the Family Courts to determine whether the downturn in performance is based on some fundamental weakness in these courts operations.

Notwithstanding the down turn in performance the judges and staff of the specialised Family Courts, are to be commended for work down in a practice area that demands deep sensitivity. To litigants, attorneys-at-law, state agencies and civil society partners, the performance reflected in this report is both an account and a renewed commitment. The ultimate objective is that every child, every family and every person who appears in these courts can rely on a process that is fair, timely and compassionate. With sustained focus on these goals, the vision of a high-performing, backlog-free family justice system in Jamaica can be realised

**The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD  
Chief Justice<sup>1</sup> of Jamaica**

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<sup>1</sup> NB. This message was prepared with the assistance of AI.

## 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.

For the period January through December 2025, the specialized Family Courts of Jamaica, recorded a total of 9895 new cases filed. Case activity that was either disposed or inactive amounted to 9222 producing an overall case clearance rate of 93.20% (3.68 percentage points below the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the specialized family courts of Jamaica). The Corporate Area Family Court along with the St. James Family court accounted for the largest share of new cases filed for the period (January 1 to December 31, 2025) with 2675 or 27.03%, and 2458 or 24.84% of the sample respectively. Westmoreland Family followed accounting for 1443 or 14.58% of new cases filed and Manchester with 717 or 7.25%. The lowest share of new cases filed for the 2025 calendar year were with the family courts of Hanover 648 (6.55%) and Trelawny 419 (4.23%).

Classified among the most critical measures of court productivity and efficiency is the case clearance rate. Clearance rate measures the courts 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 2025, 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 121.24%. The Chapelton Family Court ranked second with 104.34%, followed by Westmoreland Family with 95.22%, rounding off the top three courts in 2025. The other clearance rates were as follows; Hanover Family court with 93.21%, Corporate Area with 91.48%, St. James with 91.29%, Manchester with 87.17% and St. Ann with 79.40%.

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 2025 (Jan.1-Dec.31) falls above the international minimum standard for this metric (90% - 100%).

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 specialized 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

<b>Family Court</b>	<b>Number of new cases</b>	<b>Gross number of disposed cases</b>	<b>Gross number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Weighted average case clearance rate (%)</b>
Corporate Area Family Court	2675	2386	61	91.48
St. James Family Court	2458	2181	63	91.29
Westmoreland Family Court	1443	1320	54	95.22
Chapelton Family Court	807	722	120	104.34
Hanover Family Court	648	580	24	93.21
Manchester Family Court	717	610	15	87.17
Trelawny Family Court	419	491	17	121.24
St. Ann	728	547	31	79.40
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>9895</b>	<b>8837</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>93.20</b>

The above table provides a summary for the 2025 calendar year. It shows that a total of 9895 new cases were filed in these courts, while 385 became inactive and 8837 were disposed, leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 93.20%, a 3.68 percentage points below the 96.88% recorded in the similar period of January to December 2024. The Trelawny Family Court recorded the highest overall weighted case clearance rate among the featured courts with 121.24% followed by the Chapelton Family Court with 104.34%, Westmoreland Family Court with 95.22%, while the Hanover Family Court recorded a clearance rate of 93.21% and the Hanover Family Court following behind with 91.48%, round off the top five courts in 2025.

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

<b>Family Court</b>	<b>Forecasted Annual 2025. Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>	<b>Actual Annual 2025 Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>	<b>RESIDUAL</b>	<b>SQUARED ERROR</b>	<b>Absolute percentage Error</b>
Corporate Area Family Court	103.99	91.48	-12.51	156.50	-13.68
St. James Family Court	94.92	91.29	-3.63	13.18	-3.98
Hanover Family Court	96.63	93.21	-3.42	11.70	-3.67
Westmoreland Family Court	108.22	95.22	-13	169.00	-13.65
Trelawny Family Court	96.86	121.24	24.38	594.38	20.11
Manchester Family Court	99.11	87.17	-11.94	142.56	-13.70
Chapelton Family Court	86.45	104.34	17.89	320.05	17.15
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>99.74</b>	<b>93.20</b>			

The above table summarizes the actual and forecasted clearance rates, along with residuals, squared errors and absolute percentage errors for each of the Specialized Family Courts of Jamaica for the year 2025.

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 and Chapelton Family Courts were the only courts that exceeded their forecast for the year and by extension were also above the international standard for this metric.

The Westmoreland Family Court had the largest negative residual. Other specialized family courts with actual case clearance rate considerably below the forecasted rate is the Corporate Area Family court and the Manchester Family Court.

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 Trelawny Family Court had the highest squared error followed by the Chapelton Family Court. The Westmoreland Family Court was also among the top three with the highest squared error. Smaller squared errors were observed in the Hanover Family Court, and the St. James 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 Trelawny Family Court had the highest percentage deviation from the forecast of 20.11 per cent, along with the Chapelton Family Court (17.15%) and Corporate Area Family Court (13.68%). The Hanover Family Court had the lowest absolute percentage deviation of 3.67%, 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 (3.98%).

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 Hanover Family Court had the closest actual and forecasted rates, which produced an absolute percentage error of 3.67%, the result of a highly accurate forecasted case clearance rate for the Hanover Family Court.

The Trelawny Family Court, on the other hand, had the largest residual and squared error which produced an absolute percentage error of 20.11%. Though the model over predicted the case clearance rate for the Westmoreland Family Court, the absolute percentage error suggest that the model produced a reasonable forecasted case clearance rate for the Westmoreland 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.

**Table iii Forecasted Case Activity for the year ended December 31 , 2026**

<b>Parish Court</b>	<b>Forecasted number of new cases</b>	<b>Forecasted number of disposed cases</b>	<b>Forecasted number of inactive cases</b>	<b>Forecasted case clearance rate (%)</b>
Hanover Family Court	519	455	18	91.24
Manchester Family Court	719	661	17	94.31
St. James Family Court	2425	2278	73	96.92
Corporate Area Family Court	2641	2494	84	97.63
Westmoreland Family Court	1145	1138	48	103.56
Trelawny Family Court	511	521	25	106.74
Chapelton	617	509	82	95.81
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>8577</b>	<b>8056</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>97.36</b>

The above table forecasts core activity for the specialized family courts across the island. The forecasts are generated using the method of exponential smoothing which uses weighted averages from past observations with weights declining exponentially as the observations get older. See further explanation of the mathematical science behind the method of exponential smoothing in the glossary of terms.

The data indicates that the overall forecasted case clearance rate for specialized family courts in 2026 (January - December 2026) is projected to reach 97.36%. This represents an increase of 4.16 percentage points compared to the actual case clearance rate of 93.20% recorded in 2025. Additionally, all family courts are expected to meet or exceed the minimum international standard case clearance rate of 90% at the end of 2026. This suggests that these courts are making noteworthy progress in effectively managing their caseloads and moving toward equilibrium.

## 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

The specialised Family courts, within the Jamaican judicial system, operate as comprehensive service hubs, offering on-site counselling, off-site referrals, extensive open court hearings, adjudication, and logistical support for payments and pay-outs, particularly in maintenance matters. Catering to diverse case types, including criminal, civil, domestic violence, and family and child welfare, these courts play a pivotal role in safeguarding the welfare of families, especially children.

The Judicature Family Court Act (1975), indicates the primary duty of the Family Court is to prevent family breakdowns and ensure the welfare of its members, particularly children, a mandate reflected in the multifaceted functions it performs. As outlined in the Act, the Family Court handles a wide range of family matters, including adoption, custody, maintenance, affiliation, juvenile care and protection, and divorce. This underscores the importance of the Family Courts in maintaining societal cohesion and promoting justice within families. Statistical reporting of the activities of the specialised family courts not only enhances this courts' productivity but also fosters public understanding and appreciation of its vital role and provisions.

The critical importance of the rule of law and the judiciary as principal components of a high quality of life is represented in Vision 2030 Jamaica National Goal 2 "The Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just". This statistics report underscores the invaluable use of empirical-based knowledge in creating the Jamaica we want: "Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business". The report, provides insights into various case-related activities during the third quarter of 2025 and offers detailed insights into seven specialised family courts in Jamaica namely:

- 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
- St. Ann Family Court

It should be noted that the St. Ann Family Court is the newest addition to the network, having commenced operations in November 2024. Despite its recent establishment, the court has demonstrated commendable levels of efficiency in its early stages of operation.

## Net and Gross Backlog

Net and gross case backlog rates serve as key indicators of court performance, as they are influenced by other operational metrics such as case clearance and disposal rates. Court backlog remains a significant issue affecting the efficiency of the judicial system. The gross backlog rate measures the proportion of both active and inactive cases that have exceeded a specific time threshold (e.g. 24 months), while the net backlog rate focuses exclusively on the active cases within the same period. Accordingly, gross backlog provides a broader view of accumulated caseloads, whereas net backlog offers a more precise reflection of ongoing case management. By international standards, a gross backlog rate below 10% and a net backlog rate of below 5% are considered desirable, this is in alignment with the strategic target of the Jamaica Judiciary. Together, these measures provide a comparative overview of the proportion of long standing matters within each court, offering valuable insights into case management efficiency, the extent of aged case accumulation, and areas requiring targeted intervention.

**Table IV: Net and gross Family case backlog as at the year ended December 31, 2025 for cases over 24 months**

<b>Family Court</b>	<b>Net Backlog (%)</b>	<b>Gross Backlog (%)</b>
Hanover	3.23	4.79
Manchester	0.58	1.33
St. Ann	1.09	1.17
St. James	9.79	11.09
Trelawny	1.35	4.40
Westmoreland	5.68	6.62
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>6.45</b>	<b>7.77</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>3.69</b>

The 24-month Family Court backlog figures show a mixed performance across the western courts. St. James has the highest backlog, with “9.79%” net and “11.09%” gross, indicating challenges in managing older cases and a comparatively lower disposal rate. Westmoreland also shows elevated percentages, suggesting similar pressures. In contrast, Manchester demonstrates strong case management with the lowest backlog at “0.58%” net and “1.33%” gross, reflecting timely disposal of matters. Hanover, St. Ann and Trelawny fall in the low-to-moderate range. The weighted average of 6.45% net suggest that, overall, most courts are performing reasonably well, though variation remains significant.

## Chapter 1.0: The Corporate Area Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	66	18	2	30.30
Indictments	112	84	9	83.04
Summary	40	44	5	122.50
Petty Session	12	14	1	125.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>76.96</b>

The above table shows the sample of 230 criminal cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in 2025. Of these, 112 or 48.70% were indictment matters, 66 or 28.70% were committal matters, 40 or 17.39% were summary matters. There was a total of 160 criminal cases disposed while 17 became inactive. Of these, 84 indictment matters were disposed while 9 became inactive. There were 44 summary matters disposed, while 5 became inactive. There were 18 committal matters disposed while 2 became inactive and petty session matters disposed of 14 matters while 1 became inactive. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 76.96% for these types of cases which is below the international standards on this vital metric. A decline of 19.02 percentage points below the 95.98% recorded in the similar 2024 period.

### 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 in 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 1.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	111	96	3	89.19
Uncontrollable Child	74	76	0	102.70
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>94.59</b>

There were 40 child welfare cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in 2025, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 111 or 60%, while the remaining proportion were uncontrollable child cases with 74 or 40%. A total of 172 child welfare cases were disposed of during the year. There were 3 inactive cases of child care and protection. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 89.19% for child care and protection cases and 102.70% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 94.59%, which satisfies international standard of 90% and above on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for The Corporate Area Family Court in the third quarter ended September 30, 2025

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	492	413	7	85.37
Declaration of Paternity	289	286	2	99.65
Maintenance	738	659	29	93.22
Legal Guardianship	1	0	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>91.84</b>

The 1520 new cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in 2025 revealed that Maintenance matters accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed (with 738 cases or 48.55%). This was followed by cases of custody with 492 or 32.37%. There were 289 declaration of paternity cases or 19.01%. A total of 1396 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in 2025. This is broken down into 1358 disposed and 38 inactive cases. Maintenance cases accounted for 659 of the disposed cases and 29 became inactive while custody accounted for 413 disposed cases and 7 inactive case. There were 286 disposed access of declaration of paternity, while 2 became inactive. This led to an overall estimated weighted average 91.84%. This is 17.09 percentage points below the 108.93% recorded in the similar 2024 period. Declaration of paternity cases with 99.65%, had the highest clearance rate followed by maintenance cases with 93.22% and Custody cases with 85.37%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases for the year ended December 31,2025, at the Corporate Area Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Corporate Area for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 1.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	665	630	2	95.04
Occupation Order	75	66	1	89.33
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>94.46</b>

The data shows that there was a total of 740 new domestic violence cases filed 2025 at the Corporate Area Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 665 or 89.86%, while cases of occupation order with 75 or 10.14% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 699 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of or became inactive in 2025. There were 630 protection order cases disposed of in 2025 while 2 became inactive, and 66 occupation order cases were also disposed of while 1 became inactive. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 95.04% for protection order cases and 89.33% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 94.46%, which satisfies international standards on this vital metric. This was 12.46 percentage points lower than 106.92% recorded in the similar period of 2024.

**Table 1.5: Sampling Distribution/Post Disposal Activity for the Corporate Area Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<b>Post disposal activity/Enforcement</b>	<b>New entries</b>	<b>Disposed matters</b>	<b>Inactive matters</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Vary Orders	372	313	14	87.90
Disobedience of Maintenance	191	343	124	244.50
Warrant of Arrest	7	10	5	214.29
Warrant of Distress	75	65	9	98.67
<b>Total/ Weighted Average</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>136.90</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that Vary Orders accounted for 372 or 57.67% of post disposal activity in the Corporate Area Family Court and the remaining 273 or 42.33% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) during the quarter. A total of 313 vary orders were disposed of while 14 became inactive in the period and 556 enforcements were either disposed of or became inactive producing a gross case clearance rate of 136.90% for these matters.

## Chapter 2.0: The St. James Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the St. James Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 2.1: Summary of Criminal Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	23	24	1	108.70
Indictments	53	38	4	79.25
Summary	37	48	2	135.14
Petty Session	18	18	0	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>103.05</b>

The above table shows the sample of 131 criminal cases filed at the St. James Family Court in 2025. Of these, 53 or 40.46% were indictment matters. Summary matters accounted for 37 cases each or 28.24%. Committal matters accounted for 23 or 17.56% while petty session accounted for 18 or 13.74%. There were a total of 135 criminal cases disposed of or became inactive during the year ended December 31, 2025. Of these, summary matters disposed of 48 while 2 became inactive, indictment matters accounted for 38 disposed matters while 4 became inactive. There were 24 committal matters disposed while petty session accounted for 18 matters. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 103.05% for these types of cases, 25.84 percentage points above the 77.21% recorded in the similar period of 2024.

## 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 2.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	125	154	5	127.20
Uncontrollable Child	96	84	7	94.79
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>113.12</b>

There were 61 child welfare cases filed at the St. James Family Court in 2025, the larger proportion of which were child care and protection cases which accounted for 125 or 56.56%, while cases of uncontrollable child with 96 or 43.44% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 238 child welfare cases were disposed while 12 became inactive during the year. There were 154 child care and protection cases were disposed of while 5 became inactive. For uncontrollable child cases 84 matters were disposed of while 7 became inactive during the period Jan.-Dec. 2025 at the St. James Family Court. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 94.79% for uncontrollable child cases and 127.20% for child care and protection cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 113.12%, which satisfies international standards on this vital metric.

## Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the St. James Family Court in the year ended December 31, 2025

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	391	326	3	84.14
Declaration of Paternity	199	168	5	86.93
Declaration of Maternity	0	3	0	undefined
Legal Guardianship	19	23	3	136.84
Maintenance	604	495	24	85.93
Adoption	17	17	0	100.00
Access	6	3	1	66.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>1236</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>86.65</b>

The 1236 new cases filed at the St. James Family Court in 2025 revealed that maintenance matters with 604 cases or 48.87% accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by Custody with 391 or 31.63%. There were 199 Declaration of Paternity cases or 16.10%, there were 19 legal guardianship cases, and 17 adoption cases. A total of 1035 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of while 36 became inactive in the year. Maintenance cases accounted for 495 of the disposed cases and 24 inactive cases while custody cases accounted for 326 disposed cases, while 3 became inactive. There were 168 disposed cases concerning declaration of paternity while 5 became inactive. legal guardianship cases and adoption each accounted for 23 and 17 cases respectively. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 86.65% for the broad family case type. The highest case clearance rate of family case activities in the St. James Family

court was for legal guardianship cases with 136.84%; followed by adoption cases with 100.00%, declaration of paternity cases accounted for 86.93%, to round off the top three.

### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the year ended December 31, 2025 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 year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 2.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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	586	440	3	75.60
Occupation Order	126	97	4	80.16
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>76.40</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 712 new domestic violence cases filed in 2025 at the St. James Family Court. Protection order cases accounted for the larger proportion with 586 or 82.30%, while occupation order cases accounted for the remaining proportion with 126 or 17.70%. A total of 537 domestic cases were disposed of while 7 became inactive during the year. There were 440 protection cases disposed of during the year while 3 became inactive. A total of 97 occupation order cases were disposed with 4 cases being inactive. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 75.60% for protection order cases and 80.16% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 76.40%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric.

### 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 2025.

**Table 2.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases filed in the year ended December 31, 2025**

Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
158	243	1	154.43

The data above shows that there were a total of 158 new civil cases filed in 2025. There were also a total of 243 civil cases which were disposed of in 2025 while 1 became inactive at the St. James Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 154.43%, which is above the international standard on this metric.

**Table 2.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the St. James Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	Inactive matters	Estimated clearance rate (%)
Vary Orders	273	162	11	63.37
Disobedience of Maintenance	127	87	24	87.40
Warrants of Distress	326	44	32	23.31
Warrants of Arrest	140	44	31	53.57
Judgement Summons	1	5	5	1000.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>51.33</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 273 or 31.49% of post disposal activity in the St. James family court while 594 or 68.51% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) in 2025. There were 162 vary orders disposed of in the period and 11 became inactive, while 180 enforcements were disposed of and 92 made inactive, producing an estimated case clearance rate of 51.33% on these matters.

## Chapter 3.0: The Hanover Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Hanover Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	7	5	1	85.71
Indictments	17	30	0	176.47
Summary	21	24	0	114.29
Petty Session	10	4	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>116.36</b>

The above table shows the sample of 55 criminal cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in 2025. Summary matters accounted for the largest share with 21 each or 38.18% of the total, followed by indictment matters with 17 cases or 30.91%. Petty session matters accounted for 10 or 18.18% while the remaining 7 was accounted for by matters of committal. There were 63 criminal cases disposed of in 2025 while 1 became inactive, resulting in a clearance rate of 116.36% which is above the international standard on this metric.

### 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 3.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	56	43	0	76.79
Uncontrollable Child	25	18	4	88.00
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>80.25</b>

There were 17 child welfare cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in 2025, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 56 or 69.13%, while the remaining proportion were cases of uncontrollable child with 25 or 30.86%. there were 65 child welfare case disposed of or became inactive in 2025 producing an estimated case clearance rate of 80.25%; an amount that does not satisfy the international standards on this vital metric.

#### **Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Hanover Family Court in the third quarter ended September 30, 2025**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	121	121	1	100.83
Declaration of Paternity	33	31	2	100.00
Maintenance	134	128	12	104.48
Legal Guardianship	3	5	0	166.67
Access	25	8	0	32.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>97.47</b>

The 316 new Family cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in 2025 disaggregated by case subtype showed maintenance matters accounted for the largest proportion with 134 cases each or 42.41%. This was followed by custody cases with 121 or 38.29% and declaration of paternity access with 33 or 10.44%. There were 25 new case filed in the period concerning cases of access and 3 cases of legal guardianship. A total of 308 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in 2025. For matters that were disposed of during the period, 128 were disposed maintenance cases, 121 disposed custody cases, 31 disposed declaration of paternity cases. There were 8 disposed cases of access and 5 disposed legal guardianship cases. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 97.47% for the broad family case type: the highest rate recorded was for legal guardianship cases with 166.67%, followed by maintenance cases with 104.48% and custody cases with 100.83%, while Declaration of paternity cases had a clearance rate of 100%.

### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the third quarter ended September 30, 2025 at the Hanover Family Court**

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Hanover for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 3.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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	164	133	4	83.54
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83.54</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 164 new domestic violence cases filed in 2025 at the Hanover Family Court. All cases were protection order cases. During the year, the Hanover Family court disposed a total of 133 Domestic Violence cases, while 4 became

inactive. This outcome produced case clearance rates of 83.54% for protection order cases which falls below international standards on this vital metric.

### Summary of Case Activity for Civil Matters at the Hanover Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the Hanover Family Court in 2025.

**Table 3.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases filed in the year ended December 31, 2025**

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
32	30	0	93.75

The data above shows that there were a total of 32 new civil cases filed in the year ended December 31, 2025. There were a total of 30 civil cases disposed of in 2025 at the Hanover Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 93.75%, a 0.89 percentage point above the 92.86% recorded in 2024. This clearance rate satisfies international standards for this metric.

**Table 3.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Hanover Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	inactive matters	Estimated Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	101	74	3	76.24
Disobedience of Maintenance	32	26	4	93.75
Warrants of Distress	268	47	191	88.81
Warrants of Arrest	181	50	120	93.92
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>88.49</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 101 or 17.35% of post disposal activity in the St. James family court while 481 or 82.65% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) during the quarter. There were 74 vary orders disposed of in the period, compared to the 63 recorded in 2024. There were 123 enforcements matters disposed while 315 made inactive, producing an estimated case clearance rate of 88.49% on these matters.

## 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	33	22	0	66.67
Indictments	78	76	2	100.00
Summary	92	61	21	89.13
Petty Session	39	50	1	130.77
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>96.28</b>

The above table shows the sample of 342 criminal cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in 2025. Of these, 92 or 38.02% were summary matters, 78 or 32.23% were indictment matters, while petty session matters accounted for 39 cases or 16.12%. committal matters accounted for the remaining 33 matters or 13.63%. There were a total of 233 criminal cases disposed of or became inactive during the year ended December 31, 2025. Of the total cases disposed indictment and summary matters accounted for 76 and 61 cases respectively, while petty session and committal matters accounted for 50 and 22 cases respectively. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate 96.28%, for the cases in the Westmoreland family court classified as criminal. This indicates a 15.1 percentage points increase up from the 81.18% recorded in the similar period of 2024.

### 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 4.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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>
Child care protection	93	71	2	78.49
Uncontrollable Child	80	91	12	128.75
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>101.73</b>

There were 173 child welfare cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in 2025, this amount is 44 fewer cases compared to the 217 reported cases in 2024. Child care protection cases continues to account for the greater share with 93 or 53.76% and the remainder were uncontrollable child cases 80 or 46.24%. A total of 176 child welfare cases were disposed or became inactive during the year. Cases concerning uncontrollable child accounted for 91 disposed cases the remaining 71 disposed cases were matters related to child care protection. The 17 inactive cases recorded in the period were classified as 12 uncontrollable child cases and 2 cases of child care and protection This result produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 101.73%, which satisfies international standards of this vital metric, and is 12.07 percentage points above the 89.86% recorded in 2024.

#### **family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Westmoreland Family Court in the year ended December 31, 2025**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Westmoreland Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	167	213	8	132.34
Declaration of Paternity	89	81	1	92.13
Access	28	30	0	107.14
Legal Guardianship	11	16	0	145.45
Maintenance	348	302	7	88.79
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>102.33</b>

The 643 new cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in 2025 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 348 cases or 54.12%. This was followed by custody cases, accounting for 167 or 25.97% and cases concerning declaration of paternity, 89 or 13.84%. There were also 28 or 4.35% access cases. A total of 658 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed or became inactive in the year. That is, 302 disposed and 7 inactive maintenance cases, 213 disposed custody cases and 8 became inactive, 81 disposed declarations of paternity cases while 1 became inactive and 16 disposed cases of legal guardianship, this produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 102.33% for the broad family case type. Cases classified as legal guardianship, recorded the highest case clearance rate of 145.45%, custody cases followed with 132.34%, and cases concerning legal guardianship recorded a clearance rate 107.14% to round off the top three clearance rates for the period.

#### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025 at the Westmoreland Family Court**

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Westmoreland for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 4.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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	319	224	0	70.22
Occupation and protection Order	28	30	0	107.14
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73.20</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 347 new domestic violence cases filed in 2025 at the Westmoreland Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases, accounting for 319 or 91.93%, while the remaining proportion were cases regarding occupation orders with 28 or 8.07%. A total of 254 domestic violence cases were disposed of in 2025. There were 224 protection cases disposed of in 2025, while the remaining 30 disposed cases were occupation orders. These outcomes produced estimated case clearance rates of 70.22% for protection order cases and 107.14% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 73.20%, which is below international standards on this vital metric.

#### **Summary of Case Activity for Civil Matters at the Westmoreland Family Court**

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the Westmoreland Family Court in 2025.

**Table 4.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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>
38	53	0	139.47

The data above shows that there were a total of 38 new civil cases filed in 2025. There were also a total of 53 civil cases which were disposed of in the period at the Westmoreland Family

Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 139.47%, which satisfies international standards on this metrics.

**Table 4.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Westmoreland Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	Inactive matters	Clearance rate (%)
Vary Orders	138	88	11	71.74
Disobedience of Maintenance	86	85	27	130.23
Warrants of Distress	147	16	1	11.56
Warrants of Arrest	99	18	1	19.19
Judgement Summons	1	2	3	500.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53.50</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 138 or 29.30% while 333 or 70.70% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) during the period. In the reporting period 88 vary orders were disposed of while 11 became inactive. While 152 enforcements were disposed or became inactive, this resulted in a case clearance rate of 5.350% on these matters.

## 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	14	19	1	142.86
Indictments	13	10	0	76.92
Summary	30	36	1	123.33
Petty	5	7	0	140.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>119.35</b>

The above table shows the sample of 62 criminal cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in 2025. Of these, summary matters accounted for the largest portion with 30 or 48.69%. committal matters followed with 14 or 22.58%. Indictments matters accounted for 13 cases or 20.97%. There were a total of 74 matters disposed of or became inactive in 2025, this produced an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 119.35% for criminal case activities in the Trelawny Family Court in 2025.

### 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 5.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	45	47	1	106.67
Uncontrollable Child	15	23	0	153.33
<b>Total/ Weighted Average</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>118.33</b>

There were 60 new child welfare cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in 2025, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 45 or 75%, while the remaining 15 were uncontrollable child matter. A total of 71 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive in 2025; 47 cases disposed were child care protection and 23 was uncontrollable child case. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 106.67% for child care protection cases and 153.33% for uncontrollable child, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 118.33%, which satisfies international standards on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Trelawny Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Trelawny Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	58	77	0	132.76
Declaration of Paternity	38	28	1	76.32
Access	23	24	1	108.70
Legal Guardianship	2	2	0	100.00
Maintenance	114	128	11	121.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>115.74</b>

The 235 new cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in 2025 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 114 cases or 48.51%. Custody matters followed accounting for 58 or 24.68% of new family cases filed. There were 38 declaration of paternity cases filed in 2025 while cases concerning access accounted for 23 or 9.79%. A total of 272 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in 2025. Of the total disposed cases, 128 were concerning maintenance, 77 custody cases, 28 cases of declaration of paternity and 24 cases of access, and 2 cases of legal guardianship. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 115.74% for the broad family case type. Custody cases had the highest case clearance rate of 132.76%, followed by matters classified as access with 108.70%, and legal guardianship with 100.00%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the year ended December 31, 2025 at the Trelawny Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Trelawny for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 5.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	58	77	1	134.48
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>134.48</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 58 new domestic violence cases filed in the second quarter of 2025 at the Trelawny Family Court. A total 78 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of during the period. All new cases filed were protection orders which accounted for 100% of the new cases filed. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 134.48% for the quarter; this result satisfies the international standards on this vital metric.

### Summary of Case Activity for Civil Matters at the Trelawny Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for civil matters at the Trelawny Family Court in 2025.

**Table 5.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases in the year ended December 31, 2025**

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	weighted case clearance rate (%)
<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>325</b>

The data above shows that there was 4 new civil case filed in 2025. There were a total of 13 civil cases which were disposed of in the year regardless of when the cases were filed. This resulted in a clearance rate of 325%.

**Table 5.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Trelawny Court for the Quarter Ended June 30, 2025**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	Inactive matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	69	58	20	113.04
Disobedience of Maintenance	54	36	18	100.00
Warrants of Distress	186	19	2	11.29
Warrants of Arrest	101	65	47	110.89
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>64.63</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 69 or 16.83% of post disposal activities in the Trelawny Family Court and the remaining 341 or 83.17% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) in 2025. There were 58 vary orders disposed while 20 became inactive, and 120 disposed cases by way of enforcement. This resulted in an overall case clearance rate of 64.63%.

## Chapter 6.0: The Manchester Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Manchester Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 6.1: Summary of Criminal Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

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 (%)
Committal	11	2	0	18.18
Summary	38	33	3	94.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>77.55</b>

The above table shows the sample of 49 criminal cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in 2025. Summary matters accounted for 38 cases files or 77.55%, while committal accounted for the remaining 11 new case filed or 22.45%. There were a total of 38 criminal cases disposed of or became inactive in 2025, summary matters accounted for 33 disposed matters, while the remaining 2 were accounted for by committal cases. This produced an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 77.55% for matters classified as criminal in 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 6.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	21	5	1	28.57
Uncontrollable Child	39	32	5	94.87
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>71.67</b>

There were 60 new child welfare cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in 2025, the larger proportion of which were uncontrollable child cases, accounted for 39 or 65%, while cases classified as child care protection accounted for the remaining proportion, 21 or 35%. A total of 43 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive during the period. There were 32 uncontrollable child cases disposed of in 2025, while 5 became inactive and 5 child care and protection cases disposed of while 1 became inactive. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 94.87% for uncontrollable child cases and 28.57% for child care protection cases. Further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 71.67%, which falls below international standards on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Manchester Family Court in the year ended December 31, 2025

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Manchester Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Overall Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases within the period	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	124	78	0	62.90
Declaration of Paternity	12	19	0	158.33
Access	42	30	0	71.43
Maintenance	272	326	5	121.69
Adoption	1	2	0	200.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>102.00</b>

The 451 new cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in 2025 showed that maintenance matters accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed with 272 cases or 60.31%; custody matters followed with 124 or 27.49% of new cases filed. There were also 42 matters of access and 12 declaration of paternity filed in the reporting period. A total of 450 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in 2025. Maintenance cases accounted for 326 of the disposed cases while custody cases accounted for 78. There were, 30 disposed cases related to access and 19 disposed declaration of paternity cases. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 102% for the broad family case type. Cases of adoption recorded the highest clearance rate of 200%. Declaration of paternity cases followed with 158.33%. maintenance access followed with 121.69% and cases of access with 71.43%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the year ended December 31, 2025 at the Manchester Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Manchester for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 6.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	128	66	0	51.56
Occupation Order	29	17	1	62.07
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>53.50</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 157 new domestic violence cases filed in 2025 at the Manchester Family Court. Protection order accounted for 128 or 81.53% of new cases filed while the remaining 29 or 18.47% was accounted for by occupation order. A total 84 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of or became inactive during the period of which protection order cases accounted for 66 cases and 17 for occupation order cases. These outputs produced an overall clearance rate of 53.50% which is below the international standards on this vital metric.

**Table 6.5: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Manchester Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	inactive matters	Case clearance weight (%)
Vary Orders	116	74	0	63.79
Disobedience of Maintenance	72	85	18	143.06
Warrants of Distress	147	2	0	1.36
Warrants of Arrest	91	42	8	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>53.76</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 116 or 27.23% of post disposal activities in the Manchester family court and the remaining 310 or 72.77% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) during the year 2025 in the Manchester Family Court. In the reporting period 74 vary orders were disposed and 155 enforcement matters were disposed or became inactive, this produced a case clearance rate of 53.76%the for these matters.

## Chapter 7.0: The Chapelton Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Chapelton Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 7.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	28	13	0	46.43
Summary	100	67	4	71.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>65.63</b>

The above table shows the sample of 128 criminal cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in 2025. Of these, 100 or 78.13% were summary matters, 28 or 21.88% were committal matters. There were a total of 84 criminal cases disposed of or became inactive in 2025. Of the total cases disposed summary and committal matters accounted for 67 and 13 cases respectively. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate of 65.63% for the cases in the Chapelton family court classified as criminal.

### 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 year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 7.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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>
Child care protection	44	63	0	143.18
Uncontrollable Child	15	17	0	113.33
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>135.59</b>

There were 59 child welfare cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in 2025, Child care protection cases accounted for the greater share with 44 or 74.58% and the remainder were uncontrollable child cases 15 or 25.42%. A total of 80 child welfare cases were disposed of in 2025. Cases concerning child care protection accounted for 63 disposed cases the remaining 17 disposed cases were matters related to uncontrollable child. This result produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 135.59%, which satisfies international standards of this vital metric.

#### **Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Chapelton Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Chapelton Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. 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 year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	102	134	13	144.12
Declaration of Paternity	44	52	3	125.00
Maintenance	264	285	71	134.85
Legal Guardianship	1	3	0	UNDEFINED
Access	37	44	7	137.84
Adoption	11	14	0	127.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>136.38</b>

The 459 new cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in 2025 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 264 cases or 57.52%. This was followed by custody cases, accounting for 102 or 22.22% and cases concerning declaration of paternity, 44 or 9.56%. There were also 37 or 8.06% access. There were 11 cases of adoption and 1 legal guardianship. A total of 626 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed or became inactive in the period. That is, 285 disposed and 71 inactive maintenance cases, 134 disposed custody cases and 13 became inactive, 52 disposed declarations of paternity while 3 became inactive. There were 44 cases of access and 14 disposed cases of adoption, this produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 136.38% for the broad family case type. Cases classified as Custody recorded the highest case clearance rate of 144.12%, access cases followed with 137.84%, maintenance cases with 134.85% and cases concerning adoption recorded a clearance rate of 127.27%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the year ended December 31, 2025 at the Chapelton Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in Chapelton for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 7.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	108	123	22	134.26
Occupation Order	53	32	9	77.36
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>115.53</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 161 new domestic violence cases filed in 2025 at the Chapelton Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases, accounting for 108 or 67.08%, while the remaining proportion were cases regarding occupation orders with 53 or 32.92%. A total of 155 domestic violence cases were disposed of or became inactive during the period. There were 123 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while the remaining 32 disposed cases were occupation orders. These outcomes produced estimated case clearance rates of 134.26% for protection order cases and 77.36% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 115.53%, which is below international standards on this vital metric.

**Table 7.5: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Chapelton Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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	79	60	23	105.06
Disobedience of Maintenance	147	80	56	92.52
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>96.90</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 79 or 34.96% while 147 or 65.04% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) in 2025. In the reporting period 60 vary orders were disposed of or became inactive while 80 enforcements were disposed and 56 became inactive, this resulted in a case clearance rate of 96.90% on these matters.

## Chapter 8.0: The St. Ann Family Court

This chapter will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the St. Ann Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Such will involve 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 8.1: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Summary	10	34	2	360.00
Committal	4	6	0	150.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>300.00</b>

The above table shows the sample of 14 criminal cases filed at the St. Ann Family Court in 2025. Of these, 10 were summary matters and 4 were committal matters. There were 42 cases that were disposed of or became inactive within the period, summary matters accounted for 34 cases while the remaining 6 were accounted for by committal matters. This led to a clearance rate of 300% for 2025.

### 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. Ann Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 8.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the year ended December 31, 2025**

<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>
Child care protection	51	42	2	86.27
Uncontrollable Child	14	11	0	78.57
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>84.62</b>

There were 65 child welfare cases filed at the St. Ann Family Court in 2025, Child care protection cases accounted for the greater share with 51 or 78.46% and the remainder were uncontrollable child case with 14 or 21.54%. A total of 53 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive of during the period. Cases concerning child care protection accounted for 42 disposed cases while 2 became inactive, the remaining 11 disposed cases were matters related to uncontrollable child. This result produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 84.62%, which does not satisfy international standards of this vital metric.

#### **Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the St. Ann Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. Ann Family Court for the year ended December 31, 2025. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are, maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 8.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	100	68	2	70.00
Declaration of Paternity	92	48	0	52.17
Access	38	24	2	68.42
Legal Guardianship	8	6	0	75.00
Maintenance	263	205	18	84.79
Adoption	4	1	0	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>74.06</b>

The 505 new cases filed at the St. Ann Family Court in 2025 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 263 cases or 52.08%. This was followed by custody cases, accounting for 100 or 19.81% and cases concerning declaration of paternity, 92 or 18.22%. There were also 38 or 7.52% cases of access and 8 cases of legal guardianship. A total of 374 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed or became inactive in the period. That is, 205 disposed and 18 inactive maintenance cases, 68 disposed custody cases while 2 became inactive, 48 disposed declarations of paternity cases and 24 disposed cases of access as well as 6 disposed legal guardianship cases, this produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 74.06% for the broad family case type. Cases classified as maintenance, recorded the highest case clearance rate of 84.79%, legal guardianship cases followed with 75%, custody cases with 70% and cases concerning access recorded a clearance rate of 68.42%.

#### **Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the year ended December 31, 2025 at the St. Ann Family Court**

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in St. Ann for the year ended December 31, 2025.

**Table 8.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the year ended December 31, 2025**

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	102	72	4	74.51
Occupation Order	42	30	3	78.57
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>75.69</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 144 new domestic violence cases filed in 2025 at the St. Ann Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases, accounting for 102 or 70.83%, while the remaining proportion were cases regarding occupation orders with 42 or 29.17%. A total of 109 domestic violence cases were disposed of during the period. There were 72 protection cases disposed of while 4 became inactive during the period, the remaining 30 disposed cases were occupation orders. These outcomes produced estimated case clearance rates of 74.51% for protection order cases and 78.57% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 75.69%, which is below international standards on this vital metric.

**Table 8.5: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the St. Ann Family Court for the year Ended December 31, 2025**

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed matters	Inactive matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	89	45	4	55.06
Disobedience of Maintenance	88	48	16	72.73
<b>Total/ Weighted Average</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>63.84</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 89 or 50.82% while 88 or 49.72% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters) in 2025. In the reporting period 45 vary orders were disposed of while

64 enforcements were disposed or became inactive by way of disobedience of maintenance, this resulted in a case clearance rate of 63.84% on these matters.

## Conclusion

The specialised family courts of Jamaica recorded an overall case clearance rate of 93.20% in the year ended December 31, 2025, indicating that approximately 93 cases were disposed of for every 100 new cases filed. This level of performance is within the internationally accepted benchmark range of 90%-110% and reflects the courts' ongoing efforts to manage caseloads efficiently and prevent backlog accumulation.

There was notable variation in performance across the specialised Family Courts. The Trelawny Family Court achieved the highest case clearance rate of 121.24%, followed by Chapelton with 104.34% and Westmoreland with 95.22%. Hanover, with a rate of 93.21%, Corporate Area with 91.48% and St. James with 91.29% remained within the internationally accepted benchmark range of 90%-110%. In contrast Manchester (87.17%) and St. Ann (79.40%) recorded case clearance rates below the minimum international standard, suggestive of operational constraints that could benefit from further assessment and targeted intervention.

Clearance rates by case type demonstrated a broad spectrum of outcomes. High clearance rates were consistently recorded in maintenance, custody and protection order matters. However, challenges remained in criminal and child welfare matters, as well as in enforcement and post-disposal activities, particularly in the issuance and execution of warrants and in maintenance enforcement.

These statistical outcomes serve as a measurement of progress toward the judiciary's strategic annual target, established by the Chief Justice, for the next five years. A sustained case clearance rate of  $\geq 106.39\%$  for the specialized Family Courts of Jamaica has been determined as necessary to achieve and maintain a sustainable net backlog rate of under 5%; a functional objective and essential pillar in the drive toward a backlog-free court system

and long term efficiency within the justice sector. The data reinforce the Judiciary's commitment to service excellence, timeliness, and continuous performance monitoring.

The specialized Family Courts, as frontline institutions for family justice, remain pivotal to ensuring access to justice for vulnerable populations. The 2025 performance metrics affirm the courts' potential to achieve and maintain international standards and highlight the critical role they play in safeguarding the rights and well-being of families across Jamaica.

In the Broader national and global context, the effective functioning of the courts directly supports Vision 2030 Jamaica-National Goal 2: "The Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just", and contributes to the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16: "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". The statistical insights from 2025 thus not only inform internal planning but also underscore the importance of a robust, accountable, and accessible justice system in advancing Jamaica's development priorities.

## 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 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 changes:** 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 2023/24 – 2032/33 – Specialised Family Courts (%)

Family Court	2023/24	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%  
2023/24 – 2032/33 – Specialised Family Courts

Family Court	Required Average Rate (%) (2023/24 - 2032/33)	Expected Average Rate (%) (2023/24 - 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.