

## THE SPECIALISED FAMILY COURTS OF JAMAICA

(January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024)

### SPECIALISED FAMILY COURTS OF JAMAICA QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHT CASE CLEARANCE RATE (%)



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

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

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## CHIEF JUSTICE'S MESSAGE FIRST QUARTER, FAMILY COURT 2024

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It is now accepted that courts need to be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively. It is also now accepted that efficient courts regardless of the type of cases that they deal with need to have a clearance rate of at least 100%. How far the clearance rate needs to be above 100% will be influenced by the extent of and persistence of the backlog. In addition, the number of cases disposed within the reporting period irrespective of the date when they were originally filed, relative to the sum of new and pending cases, provides the base to determine if the court is effectively managing its case load. The case disposal rate measures the proportion of new cases filed which were disposed in given period, such as a year or quarter while the case clearance rate takes account of all cases disposed in such period, regardless of when they were filed, relative to the number of incoming cases. Both measures are vital indicators of the overall state of efficiency of the court.

Importantly to litigants is the disposition of a case, it signifies the just resolution to a matter. Unnecessary lengthy times for matters to be heard is never an indicator high quality justice and should be avoided at all costs. Nowhere is this truer than in the Family Courts. It is always important for family matters to be dealt with as quickly as possible while allowing enough time for the procedural necessities to take place. The fact that the Family Courts are subject to empirical assessment does not mean that they are incapable of doing justice. On the contrary, without empirical assessment it would not be possible to determine whether the Family Courts are fulfilling their mandate. We have to reject the idea that efficiency undermines quality. All the evidence based assessments done on courts, points to better quality of justice where there is greater efficiency.

The Family Courts continue to perform well statistically. The judiciary wishes to improve the qualitative aspect of service delivery. To assist with this objective, the Family Court judges have formed an association to examine laws, rules, regulations, and practices to ensure that all judges in that part of the judiciary are fully aware of the law and appropriate practices for that court. It has been recognized that the family court jurisdiction is unique in that, it is the only part of the judiciary dedicated to assisting families in crisis and working towards making decisions that are in the best interest of children, where they are involved in these matters.

The judges and staff have done an exemplary job in the face of difficult working conditions. The continued cooperation of our vital stakeholders is essential to maintaining and improving the productivity and quality of these courts. This quarterly report confirms that the Family Courts are moving in the right direction.

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

## Executive Summary

The specialised family courts in Jamaica continue to contribute towards the realization of several key quantitative targets set out by the Honourable Chief Justice towards the Jamaican judiciary being among the best and most efficient in the world. One primary target in attaining the strategic objective of having backlog free courts is maintaining a net case backlog rate of less than 5%. Accomplishing such a goal as a service based institution is essential in building on court excellence and by extension an important addition in improving the environment for business, investment and socio-economic development. In the first quarter of 2024 ended March 31, 2024, the specialised Family Courts of Jamaica, recorded a total of 2503 new cases filed. Case activity that were either disposed or inactive amounted to 2443 producing an overall case clearance rate of 97.60% (8.79 percentage points difference from the overall minimum established to eliminate case backlog within the specialised family courts of Jamaica).

The Corporate Area Family Court accounted for the largest share of new cases filed for the period (January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024) with 679 or 27.13%. St. James followed accounting for 602 or 24.05% of new cases filed and Westmoreland with 462 or 18.48%. The lowest share of new cases filed for the first quarter of 2024 were with the family courts of Hanover (5.99%), Trelawny (6.69%), Manchester (7.39%) and Chapelton (10.39%). 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 the first quarter of 2024, the highest ratio of new cases filed to cases disposed among the specialised family courts in Jamaica was recorded in the Hanover Family Court producing a weighted average case clearance rate of 122%. The Corporate Area Family Court ranked second with 108.98%, followed by Manchester with 98.38%, St. James with 96.35%, and Westmoreland with 95.02%.

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 this quarter falls below 100% and is also 2.3 percentage points lower than the previous quarter.

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

**Table i. Aggregate Case Flow Performance Estimates for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Family Court	Number of new cases	Gross number of disposed cases	Gross number of inactive cases	Weighted average case clearance rate (%)
Corporate Area Family Court	679	711	29	108.98
St. James Family Court	602	561	19	96.35
Hanover Family Court	150	183	0	122.00
Westmoreland Family Court	462	406	33	95.02
Trelawny Family Court	165	144	0	87.27
Manchester Family Court	185	180	2	98.38
Chapelton Family Court	260	165	10	67.31
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>2503</b>	<b>2350</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>97.60</b>

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialised Family Courts in the first quarter of 2024. It shows that a total of 2503 new cases were filed in these courts, while 93 became inactive and 2350 were disposed, leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 97.60%. The Hanover Family Court recorded the highest overall weighted case clearance rate among the featured courts with 122%, followed by the Corporate Area Family Court with 108.98%, Manchester Family Court with 98.38%, while the St. James Family Court recorded a clearance rate of 96.35% and the Westmoreland Family Court following behind with 95.02% to round off the top five courts in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.



**Forecasted Case Activity Statistics for Second Quarter Ended June 30, 2024.**

<b>Family 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>
Corporate Area Family Court	672	683	28	105.80
St. James Family Court	541	517	21	99.45
Hanover Family Court	162	171	5	108.64
Westmoreland Family Court	385	337	18	92.21
Trelawny Family Court	146	168	3	117.12
Manchester Family Court	161	151	4	96.27
Chapelton Family Court	197	129	12	73.60
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>2264</b>	<b>2156</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>99.43</b>

The above table forecasts core activity for the specialised 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 above data shows that the overall forecasted case clearance rates for the specialised family courts in quarter two (Apr.-Jun. 2024.) is 99.43%, which would be 1.83 percentage points higher than that of the 97.60 recorded in quarter one (Jan-Mar.2024). Six family courts are forecasted to satisfy the international standard on case clearance rate of 90% or more in quarter two of 2024. Two of the seven specialised family courts are forecasted to exceed the required average case clearance rates specific to the named court. The Trelawny Family Court is forecasted to exceed the required average rate with 117.12% (-9.89 variance) and the Hanover Family Court is also forecasted to exceed the required average case clearance rate with 108.64% (-5.59 variance). The forecasted exceedance of required average case clearance rates by these courts for quarter 2 (April – June 2024) indicates that cases in these courts are being resolved at a faster pace than anticipated. This implies that these courts are effectively managing its caseload and are making significant strides in reducing any backlog of cases that may have accumulated over time.

## 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 principle 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 first quarter of 2024 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



**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.

## 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. It includes analyses of caseload, case type distribution and case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

**Table 1.1: Summary of Criminal Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Committal	24	9	2	45.83
Indictments	20	27	1	140.00
Summary	18	8	3	61.11
Petty Session	5	1	2	60.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>79.10</b>

The above table shows the sample of 67 criminal cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 24 or 35.82% were committal matters, 20 or 26.85% were indictment, 18 or 26.87% were summary matters. There was a total of 45 criminal cases disposed while 8 became inactive during the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 27 indictment matters were disposed while 1 became inactive. There were 9 committal matters disposed while 2 became inactive, there were 8 summary matters disposed while 1 became inactive. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 79.10% for these types of cases which does not satisfy international standards on this vital 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 Corporate Area Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 1.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	30	18	1	63.33
Uncontrollable Child	22	13	0	59.09
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>61.54</b>

There were 52 child welfare cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 30 or 57.69%, while the remaining proportion were uncontrollable child cases with 22 or 42.31%. A total of 31 child welfare cases were disposed of during the quarter and 1 became inactive. There were 18 child care and protection cases disposed of during the quarter and one became inactive, while 13 uncontrollable child cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 63.33% for child care and protection cases and 59.09% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 61.54%, which does not satisfy international standards on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for The Corporate Area Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are, maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 1.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	137	151	4	113.14
Declaration of Paternity	81	97	5	125.93
Maintenance	189	200	9	110.58
Access	7	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>112.56</b>

The 414 new cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 revealed that maintenance matters accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed (with 189 cases or 45.65%). This was followed by Custody with 137 or 33.09%. There were 81 Declaration of Paternity cases or 19.57%. A total of 466 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the quarter. This is broken down into 448 disposed and 18 inactive cases. Maintenance cases accounted for 200 of the disposed cases and 9 inactive cases while custody accounted for 151 disposed cases and 4 inactive cases. There were 97 disposed declaration of paternity cases while 5 became inactive. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 112.56% for the broad family case type, led by declaration of paternity with 125.93%, and custody cases with 113.14%, while maintenance cases accounted for 110.58%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 1.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Order Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	125	157	2	127.20
Occupation Order	21	30	0	142.86
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>129.45</b>

The data shows that there was a total of 146 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the Corporate Area Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 125 or 85.62%, while cases of occupation order with 21 or 14.38% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total 189 Domestic Violence cases were either disposed or inactive in the quarter. There were 157 protection order cases disposed of during the quarter, while 2 became inactive; 30 occupation order cases were also disposed of in the period. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 142.86% for occupation order cases and 127.20% for protection order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 129.45%, which is above international standards on this vital metric.

**Table 1.5: Sampling Distribution/Post Disposal Activity for the Corporate Area Court for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

<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	68	99	4	151.47
Disobedience of Maintenance	27	65	34	366.67
Warrants of distress	0	2	0	undefined
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>214.74</b>

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that Vary Orders accounted for 68 or 71.58% of post disposal activity in the Corporate Area Family Court and the remaining 27 or 28.42% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) during the quarter. A total of 103 vary orders were disposed of or became inactive in the period and 101 enforcements were either disposed of or became inactive producing a gross case clearance rate of 214.74% 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. 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 First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Committal	5	7	0	140.00
Indictments	17	7	0	41.18
Summary	17	9	0	52.94
Petty Session	3	4	1	166.67
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>66.67</b>

The above table shows the sample of 42 criminal cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 17 or 40.48% were indictment matters and summary matters. Committal matters accounted for 5 or 11.90% and the remaining 3 or 7.14% were petty session matters. There were a total of 27 criminal cases disposed of during the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 while 1 became inactive. Of these, 9 summary cases were disposed, both committal and indictment matters each accounted for 7 disposed case. There were 4 disposed cases of petty session matters while 1 became inactive. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 66.67% for these types of cases.



### 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 2.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	52	55	0	105.77
Uncontrollable Child	36	33	4	102.78
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>104.55</b>

There were 88 child welfare cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 52 or 59.09%, while cases of uncontrollable child with 36 or 40.91% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 88 child welfare cases were disposed while 4 became inactive during the quarter. There were 55 child care and protection cases disposed of during the quarter in the St. James Family Court. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 105.77% for child care and protection cases and 102.78% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 104.55%, which satisfies international standards on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the St. James Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 2.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	113	125	5	115.04
Declaration of Paternity	38	50	0	131.58
Access	6	0	2	33.33
Legal Guardianship	6	6	0	100.00
Maintenance	127	142	3	114.17
Adoption	2	2	0	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>114.73</b>

The 292 new cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 revealed that maintenance matters with 127 cases or 43.49% accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by Custody with 113 or 38.70%. There were 38 Declaration of Paternity cases or 13.01%, there were 6 access and legal guardianship cases each and 2 adoption cases. A total of 335 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of (325) or became inactive (10) in the quarter. Maintenance cases accounted for 142 of the disposed cases and 3 inactive cases while custody cases accounted for 125 disposed cases and 5 inactive cases. There were 50 disposed cases concerning declaration of paternity and 6 legal guardianship cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 114.73% for the broad family case type. The highest case clearance rate of family case activities in the St. James Family court was for declaration of paternity 131.58%; followed by custody cases with 115.04%, maintenance cases with 114.17%; legal guardianship and adoption each had a clearance rate of 100%, while cases of access recorded a 33.33% clearance rate for the quarter.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 at the St. James Family Court

The below subsection provides a basic summary of case activity for Domestic Violence cases filed at the Family Court in St. James for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 2.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	130	74	3	59.23
Occupation Order	31	20	1	67.74
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>60.87</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 161 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the St. James Family Court. Protection order cases accounted for the larger proportion with 130 or 80.75%, while occupation order cases accounted for the remaining proportion with 31 or 19.25%. A total of 94 domestic cases were disposed while 4 became inactive during the quarter. There were 74 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 20 occupation order cases were disposed. During the quarter 3 protection order cases and 1 occupation order case became inactive. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 59.23% for protection order cases and 67.74% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 60.87%, which does not satisfy 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 the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 2.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
19	27	0	142.11

The data above shows that there were a total of 19 new civil cases filed in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. There were also a total of 27 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter at the St. James Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 142.11%, which is above international standard on this metrics.

**Table 2.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the St. James Family Court for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Post Disposal Activity/Enforcement	New Entries	Disposed Matters	Inactive Matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	60	91	5	160.00
Disobedience of Maintenance	15	21	5	173.33
Warrants of Distress	18	0	0	0.00
Warrants of Arrest	23	19	9	121.74
Judgement Summons	2	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>127.12</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 60 or 50.85% of post disposal activity in the St. James family court and the remaining 58 or 49.15% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, arrest warrants and judgement summons) during the quarter. There were 96 vary orders disposed or became inactive in the period, and 54 enforcements were disposed or made inactive, producing an estimated case clearance rate of 127.12% 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. 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 First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Committal	2	0	0	0.00
Indictments	5	0	0	0.00
Summary	5	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

The above table shows the sample of 12 criminal cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. There were no criminal cases disposed or inactive in first quarter ended March 31, 2024, resulting in a clearance rate of 0.00.

### 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 3.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>Number of New Cases Filed</b>	<b>Number of Cases Disposed</b>	<b>Number of Inactive Cases</b>	<b>Case Clearance Rate (%)</b>
Child care protection	14	1	0	7.14
Uncontrollable Child	2	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6.25</b>

There were 16 child welfare cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 14 or 87.50%, while the remaining proportion were cases of uncontrollable child with 2 or 12.50%. For the period January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024, 1 child welfare case was disposed of producing an estimated case clearance rate of 6.25%; considerably below international standards on this vital metric.

#### **Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Hanover Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are, maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 3.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	33	16	0	48.48
Declaration of Paternity	3	0	0	0.00
Legal Guardianship	1	1	0	100.00
Maintenance	36	19	0	52.78
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>49.32</b>

The 73 new Family cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 disaggregated by case subtype showed maintenance matters accounted for the largest proportion with 36 cases or 49.32%. This was followed by custody cases with 33 or 45.21% and declaration of paternity with 3 or 4.11%. There was also 1 new case filed in the quarter concerning legal guardianship. A total of 36 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of in the quarter. For matters that were disposed during the period, 19 were disposed maintenance cases, 16 disposed custody cases and 1 disposed case of legal guardianship. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 49.32% for the broad family case type; The highest rate recorded was for legal guardianship cases with 100%, followed by maintenance with 52.78% and custody cases with 48.48%.



## Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 3.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Order Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	29	15	0	51.72
Occupation and protection	10	4	0	40.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48.72</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 39 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the Hanover Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 29 or 74.36%, the remaining proportion of new cases filed were occupation orders with 10 or 13.70%. During the first quarter of the 2024 calendar year the Hanover Family court disposed a total 19 Domestic Violence cases; 15 were protection orders and the remaining 4 cases disposed were of occupation and protection orders. These outcomes produced case clearance rates of 51.72% for protection order cases and 40% for occupation and protection order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 48.72%, which does not satisfy 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 the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 3.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
10	2	0	20.00

The data above shows that there were a total of 10 new civil cases filed in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. There were also a total of 2 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter at the Hanover Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 20%, which is below international standards for this metric.

## 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. 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 quarter ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Committal	10	1	0	10.00
Indictments	16	9	0	56.25
Summary	10	10	6	160.00
Petty Session	27	15	10	92.59
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>80.95</b>

The above table shows the sample of 63 criminal cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 27 or 42.86% were petty session matters, 16 or 25.40% were indictment matters, while summary matters and committal proceedings accounted for 10 cases each or 15.88%. There were a total of 51 criminal cases disposed of or became inactive during the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of the total cases disposed 15 were petty session matters, 9 were indictments, 10 were summary matters and 1 committal. In the first quarter period 10 inactive cases were petty session and 6 inactive cases were summary matters. This produced an estimated weighted clearance rate of 80.95% for the cases in the Westmoreland 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 Westmoreland Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 4.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	37	21	0	56.76
Uncontrollable Child	29	19	4	79.31
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>66.67</b>

There were 66 child welfare cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, Child care protection cases accounted for the greater share with 37 or 56.06% and the remainder were uncontrollable child cases 29 or 43.94%. A total of 44 child welfare cases were disposed or became inactive during the quarter. Cases concerning childcare and protection accounted for 21 of cases disposed the remaining 19 disposed cases were matters related to uncontrollable child care. The 4 inactive cases recorded in the period were classified as uncontrollable child. This result produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 66.67%, which does not satisfy international standards of this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Westmoreland Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Westmoreland Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are, maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 4.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	85	83	3	101.18
Declaration of Paternity	36	39	0	108.33
Access	13	14	0	107.69
Legal Guardianship	6	0	0	0.00
Maintenance	87	90	5	109.20
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>103.08</b>

The 227 new cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 87 cases or 38.33%. This was followed by custody cases, accounting for 85 or 37.44% and cases concerning declaration of paternity, 36 or 15.86%. There were also 13 or 5.73% access cases and 6 or 2.64% cases regarding legal guardianship. A total of 234 cases falling under the broad family category were disposed or became inactive in the quarter. That is, 90 disposed and 5 inactive maintenance cases, 83 disposed and 3 inactive custody cases, 39 disposed declarations of paternity cases and 14 disposed access cases. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 103.08% for the broad family case type. Cases classified as maintenance, recorded the highest case clearance rate of 109.20%, declaration of paternity cases followed with 108.33%, access cases with 107.69% and cases of concerning custody recorded a clearance rate of 101.18%, no matters classified as legal guardianship were disposed or became inactive in the report period.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 4.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Order Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	73	63	4	91.78
Occupation Order	12	10	1	91.67
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>91.76</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 85 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the Westmoreland Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases, accounted for 73 or 85.88%, while the remaining proportion were cases regarding occupation orders with 12 or 14.12%. A total of 78 domestic violence cases were disposed of or inactive during the quarter. There were 63 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while the remaining 10 disposed cases were occupation orders. These outcomes produced estimated case clearance rates of 91.78% for protection order cases and 91.67% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 91.76%, which satisfies 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 the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 4.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
21	32	0	152.38

The data above shows that there were a total of 21 new civil cases filed in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. There were also a total of 32 civil cases which were disposed in the quarter at the Westmoreland Family Court. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 152.38%, which is above international standards on this metrics.

**Table 4.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Westmoreland Family Court for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Post Disposal Activity/Enforcement	New entries	Disposed Matters	Inactive Matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	29	55	1	193.10
Disobedience of Maintenance	22	42	16	263.64
Warrants of Distress	31	2	26	90.32
Warrants of Arrest	47	3	42	95.74
Total/Weighted Average	129	102	85	144.96

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that vary orders accounted for 29 or 22.48% of post disposal activities in the Westmoreland Family Court and the remaining 100 or 77.52% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress, and arrest warrants) during the quarter. In the report period 56 vary orders were disposed or became inactive and 131 enforcements were disposed or became inactive, this resulted in a case clearance rate of 144.96% 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. 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 First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Committal	1	7	0	700.00
Indictments	5	3	0	60.00
Summary	9	6	0	66.67
Petty Session	0	2	0	undefined
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>120.00</b>

The above table shows the sample of 15 criminal cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 9 or 60% were summary matters, 5 or 33.33% were indictment matters. Committal matters accounted for 1 case or 6.66% of new cases filed. There were a total of 18 disposed cases during the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, this produced an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 120% for criminal case activities in the Trelawny Family Court.

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

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Trelawny Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 5.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	37	17	0	45.95
Uncontrollable Child	1	1	0	100.00
<b>Total/ Weighted Average</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47.37</b>

There were 38 new child welfare cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 37 or 97.37%, while the remaining proportion was 1 uncontrollable child matter. A total of 18 child welfare cases were disposed of during the quarter; 17 of the cases disposed were child care protection, and 1 disposed uncontrollable child case. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 100% for cases concerning uncontrollable child and 45.95% for child care protection cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 47.37%, which does not satisfy international standards on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Trelawny Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Trelawny Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 5.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	15	20	0	133.33
Declaration of Paternity	23	24	0	104.35
Access	6	5	0	83.33
Legal Guardianship	2	2	0	100.00
Maintenance	37	28	0	75.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95.18</b>

The 83 new cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 37 cases or 44.58% and declaration of paternity matters with 23 cases or 27.71%. Custody matters followed accounting for 15 or 18.07% of new family cases filed. A total of 79 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of during the quarter. Of the total disposed cases 28 were concerning maintenance, 24 declaration of paternity cases, 20 custody cases, 5 cases of access and 2 cases of legal guardianship. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 95.18% for the broad family case type. Custody cases had the highest case clearance rate of 133.33%, followed by matters classified as declaration of paternity with 104.35%, legal guardianship with 100%, access with 83.33% and maintenance with 75.68%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 5.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	25	26	0	104.00
Occupation Order	8	8	0	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>103.03</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 33 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the Trelawny Family Court. A total 34 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of during the quarter. The larger proportion of new cases filed were protection orders which accounted for 25 or 75.76%, while the remaining proportion were occupation orders accounting for 8 or 24.24%. There were 26 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 8 occupation order cases were disposed. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 104% for protection order cases and 100%, an overall case clearance rate of 103.03% which satisfies 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 the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 5.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
4	3	0	75.00

The data above shows that there were a total of 4 new civil cases filed in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. There were also a total of 3 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 75%, which does not satisfy international standards on this metrics.

**Table 5.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Trelawny Court for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Post Disposal Activity/Enforcement	New Entries	Disposed Matters	Inactive Matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	23	21	0	91.30
Disobedience of Maintenance	13	4	3	53.85
Warrants of Distress	39	0	0	0.00
Warrants of Arrest	53	20	16	67.92
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50.00</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 23 or 17.97% of post disposal activities in the Trelawny Family Court and the remaining 105 or 82.03% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) during the quarter. There were 21 vary orders disposed, while 43 enforcements were disposed or became inactive in the period, producing a gross case clearance rate of 89.01% on these matters.

## 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. 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 First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Summary	8	5	0	62.50
Committal	4	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41.67</b>

The above table shows the sample of 12 criminal cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Summary matters accounted for 8 cases files or 66.67%, while committal cases accounted for the remaining 4 new cases filed or 33.33%. There were a total of 5 criminal cases disposed of during first quarter ended March 31, 2024. This produced an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 41.67% 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 6.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	8	5	0	62.50
Uncontrollable Child	16	7	2	56.25
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>58.33</b>

There were 24 new child welfare cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024, the larger proportion of which were uncontrollable child cases, accounted for 16 or 66.67%, while cases classified as child care protection accounted for the remaining proportion, 8 or 33.33%. A total of 14 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive during the quarter. There were 7 uncontrollable child cases disposed of during the quarter, while 2 uncontrollable child matters became inactive. There were 5 child care protection cases disposed in the report period. These results produced estimated case clearance rates of 62.50% for child care and protection cases and 56.25% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 58.33%, which does not satisfy international standards on this vital metric.



### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Manchester Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Manchester Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are, maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 6.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Overall Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases within the period	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	15	28	0	186.67
Declaration of Paternity	8	7	0	87.50
Access	11	14	0	127.27
Maintenance	101	99	0	98.02
Adoption	2	2	0	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>109.49</b>

The 137 new cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 showed that maintenance matters accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed with 101 cases or 73.72%; custody matters followed with 15 or 10.95% of new cases filed. There were also 11 matters of access, 8 matters of declaration of paternity and 2 adoption cases filed in the report period. A total of 150 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of in the quarter. Maintenance cases accounted for 99 of the disposed cases while custody cases accounted for 28 disposed cases. There were, 14 disposed cases related to access and 7 disposed declaration of paternity cases. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 109.49% for the broad family case type. Custody cases recorded the highest clearance rate in the quarter of 186.67%. Access cases followed with 127.27%, adoption with 100%, maintenance matters with 98.02% and declaration of paternity with 87.50%.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 6.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Order Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	12	13	0	108.33
Occupation Order	2	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>108.33</b>

The data above shows that there were a total of 14 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the Trelawny Family Court. A total 13 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of during the quarter, protection orders accounted for all 13 cases disposed. These outputs produced an overall clearance rate of 108.33% which satisfies international standards on this vital metric.

**Table 6.5: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Manchester Court for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Post Disposal Activity/Enforcement	New Entries	Disposed Matters	Inactive Matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	21	16	0	76.19
Disobedience of Maintenance	24	12	1	54.17
Warrants of Distress	23	13	0	56.52
Warrants of Arrest	34	5	1	17.65
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>47.06</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity, vary orders accounted for 21 or 20.59% of post disposal activities in the Manchester family court and the remaining 81 or 79.41% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) during the quarter in the Manchester Family Court. In the report period 16 vary orders were disposed and 32 enforcement matters were disposed or became inactive, this produced a case clearance rate of 47.06%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 first quarter ended March 31, 2024. It includes analyses of caseloads, case type distribution, and case clearance rates across the various 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 First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Committal	4	0	0	0.00
Indictments	44	4	0	9.09
Summary	3	0	0	0.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7.84</b>

The above table shows the sample of 51 criminal cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these, 44 or 86.27% were indictment matters, 4 or 7.84% were committal matters, and summary matters accounted for 3 or 5.89% of new cases filed. There were a total of 4 committal cases disposed during first quarter ended March 31, 2024. This produced an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 7.84% for criminal cases in the Chapelton Family Court.

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

This section examines case activity for matters classified as child welfare in the Chapelton Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under child welfare are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

**Table 7.2: Summary of Child Welfare Case Activity for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	16	6	0	37.50
Uncontrollable Child	4	3	0	75.00
<b>Total Weighted Average</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45.00</b>

There were 20 child welfare cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Of these 16 or 80% were cases of child care protection and the remaining 4 or 7.5% were uncontrollable child cases. A total of 9 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive in the quarter. This yielded a weighted average case clearance rate of 45%, which does not satisfy international standards on this vital metric.

### Family Matters Case Activity Summary for the Chapelton Family Court in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Chapelton Family Court for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. Matters falling under this broad case category included in this report are, maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity.

**Table 7.3: Summary of Family Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Case Subtype	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	32	17	0	53.13
Declaration of Paternity	14	10	0	71.43
Access	13	15	0	115.38
Maintenance	90	79	10	98.89
Legal Guardianship	1	1	0	100.00
Adoption	1	1	0	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>88.08</b>

The 151 new cases filed at the Chapelton Family Court in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 showed that the largest proportion of cases filed were maintenance matters with 90 cases or 59.60%. This was followed by custody cases with 32 or 21.19% and cases of declaration of paternity which accounted for 14 cases filed or 9.27%. Additionally, there were 13 access cases and 1 legal guardianship and adoption case filed in the quarter. A total of 123 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of during the report period. Of the total cases disposed 79 were maintenance cases, 17 custody cases 15 access cases, 10 declaration of paternity cases and 1 adoption and legal guardianship case. During the report period 10 maintenance cases became inactive. This produced an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 88.08% for the broad family case type. Access cases recorded the highest case clearance rates of 115.38%, followed by legal guardianship and adoption each recording a case clearance rate of 100%. Matters concerning maintenance had a case clearance rate of 98.89% and declaration of paternity cases with 71.43% for the first quarter of the 2024 calendar year.

### Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024 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 Clarendon for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024.

**Table 7.4: Summary of Domestic Violence Case Activity for Cases for the First Quarter Ended March 31,2024**

Order Type	Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
Protection Order	33	25	0	75.76
Occupation Order	3	2	0	66.67
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75.00</b>

Table 7.4 shows that there were a total of 36 new domestic violence cases filed in the first quarter of 2024 at the Chapelton Family Court. Protection orders accounted for 33 or 91.67% of the cases while occupation order accounted for the remaining 3 or 8.33%. A total of 27 domestic cases were disposed during the quarter; 25 of the matters disposed were protection orders, the remaining 2 matters disposed of were occupation orders. This output produced a weighted average case clearance rate of 75%, which does not satisfy international standards on this vital metric.

**Table 7.5: Summary of Civil Case Activity for Cases in the First Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Number of New Cases Filed	Number of Cases Disposed	Number of Inactive Cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
2	2	0	100.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 2 new civil cases filed in the first quarter ended March 31, 2024. A total of 2 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter, this produced an estimated case clearance rate of 100%, which satisfies international standards on this metric.

**Table 7.6: Sampling Distribution Enforcement/Post Disposal Activity for the Manchester Court for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2024**

Post Disposal Activity/Enforcement	New Entries	Disposed Matters	Inactive Matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	11	0	15	136.36
Disobedience of Maintenance	32	0	32	100.00
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>109.30</b>

It is important to note that, apart from substantive case activity vary orders accounted for 11 or 25.58% of post disposal activities in the Manchester family court and the remaining 32 or 77.42% entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters) and vary orders during the quarter. In the quarter 15 vary orders became inactive, 32 enforcements also became inactive, which produced a case clearance rate of 109.30%.



## Conclusion

The specialised family courts commenced 2024 with an overall case clearance rate of 97.60% in the 1st quarter ended March 31, 2024. This suggests that for every 100 new cases that were filed approximately 98 cases were disposed in the period. The rates ranged from a high of 122% in the Corporate Area Family court to a low of 67.31% in the Chapelton Family Court. The target for the next 4-5 years established by The Chief Justice for the specialised family courts of Jamaica is a case clearance rate  $\geq 106.39$  towards achieving a sustainable net backlog rate of under 5%. The forecasted number of new cases in the second quarter of 2024 for the specialised family court is 2264, while the forecasted number of cases disposed or inactive is 2251, producing a predicted weighted case clearance rate of 99.43% for the specialised family courts of Jamaica. These results suggest that the specialised family courts will continue to make strides in improvements in productivity and efficiency; thereby making appreciable contributions to achieving the strategic objectives of the courts and advancing the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Goal 2 "The Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just" and by extension the 2030 Global Agenda Goal 16 "Peace Justice and Strong Institutions".

## Glossary of Terms

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

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

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

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

**Skewness:** This is 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 percentile 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.