



The Fourth Quarter Statistics Report on the Specialized
Family Courts of Jamaica - 2023

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This report covers core case activity summary for the specialized family courts for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. The data suggests that a total of 1954 new cases were filed in the combined specialized family courts of Manchester, Trelawny, Westmoreland, Hanover, St. James, Manchester, Clarendon (Chapelton) and the Kingston and St. Andrew Family Court (Corporate Area). The Kingston and St. Andrew Family Court accounted for the largest share of new cases filed with 712 or 36.44%, followed by the St. James Family Court with 450 or 23.03% and the Westmoreland Family Court with 281 or 14.38%. A total of 1890 cases were disposed in the quarter with the Kingston and St. Andrew Family Court accounting for the largest share with 690 or 36.51% and the, followed by the St. James Family Court with 506 or 26.77% and the Westmoreland Court with or 202 or 10.69%, rounding off the top three.

The specialised family courts recorded an impressive overall case clearance rate of 99.90% during the quarter, with Manchester Family Court leading the way with an outstanding 150.75%, followed by the St. James Family Court with 118.89% and the Trelawny Family Court with 117.16%. Upcoming reports will cover a more comprehensive range of metrics for the specialized family courts as most of these courts are currently undergoing significant data system transitions. Nevertheless, the results revealed in this report suggest that the specialized family courts have a good rate case turnover rate and are making notable strides in reducing case congestion to a sustainable level. In so doing these courts are making an appreciable contribution towards the fulfilment of the strategic plan of the judiciary to achieve an overall net backlog rate of under 5% and a consistent overall weighted mean case clearance rate of 100% or over. Below is a summary of case activity during the fourth quarter of 2023 for the specialized family courts featured in the report.

Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

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	712	690	18	99.44
Hanover Family Court	157	145	4	94.90
St. James Family Court	450	506	29	118.89
Westmoreland Family Court	281	202	4	73.31
Clarendon Family Court	153	94	2	62.75
Trelawny Family Court	134	155	2	117.16
Manchester Family Court	67	98	3	150.75
Total/Weighted Average	1954	1890	62	99.90

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialized Family Courts in the fourth quarter of 2023. It shows that a total of 1954 new cases were filed in these courts, while 62 became inactive and 1890 were disposed, leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 99.90%. The Manchester Family Court recorded the highest overall weighted case clearance rate among the featured courts with 150.75%, followed by the St. James Family Court with 118.89%, while the Trelawny Family court recorded a clearance rate of 117.16% and the Corporate Area Family court following behind with 99.44% to round off the top four courts in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Introduction

The specialized family courts are quite unique within the Jamaican court system, carrying out an array of functions on daily basis – in many ways functioning as a ‘one-stop shop.’ Among the primary functions carried out are on site counselling, filtering matters to offsite counselling locations, extensive open court hearings and adjudication and facilitating extensive operational logistics involving the collection of payments and pay-outs for matters such as maintenance. The Family Courts also tends to a number of distinct case types, namely criminal, civil, domestic violence and family and child welfare that includes maintenance, custody, adoption, declaration of paternity, guardianship, childcare and protection and uncontrollable child. In appreciation of the peculiar operational dynamics of the Family Court, this report seeks to provide a robust representation of both open court and non-court services, which the court offers to the public. According to the Judicature Family Court Act, the primary purpose of the Family Court is to prevent the breakdown of families and where this may be unavoidable to ensure that the welfare of its members and in particular children is safeguarded. The plethora of functions, both judicial and administrative which are performed by the Family Courts are therefore not surprising. In explain the structure of the handling of family matters in the Jamaican court system, the Judicature (Family Court) Act of 1975 outlines that: Matters concerning the family of which our statute laws take cognizance are adoption, custody, maintenance, affiliation, juveniles in need of care and attention, juvenile offenders and divorce...the Resident Magistrate’s Court (now parish courts) have jurisdiction in adoption, maintenance and affiliation. These courts along with the Supreme Court hear and determine matters relating to custody and guardianship. The

law relating to juveniles in need of care and protection and to offending juveniles is principally administered by the Juvenile Courts, whilst the Supreme Court exercises exclusive jurisdiction in divorces.

The Family Courts are indeed an important part of the fabric of the justice sector and nation building and statistical reporting of this nature will contribute positively to the productivity of this court and improve the public's understanding and appreciation of its role and provisions. Together, these throughputs will redound to the benefit of the Jamaican society in both the long and short runs.

This report includes case activity and performance measurements for seven of the eight specialized family courts in Jamaica, namely the three Western Regional Family Courts of Hanover, Westmoreland and St. James, Trelawny, Manchester and Chapelton. The newest specialized family court in St. Ann will be included in future reports.

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: Corporate Area Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table 1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	11	16	1	154.55
Indictments	30	8	3	36.67
Summary	15	16	1	113.33
Petty Session	0	2	0	Undefined
Total/Weighted Average	56	42	5	83.93

The above table shows that the sample of 56 criminal cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 30 or 53.57% were indictment matters, 15 or 26.79% were Summary, 11 or 19.64% were committal matters. There was a total of 42 criminal cases disposed of which 5 became inactive during the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 16 summary and committal cases were disposed while 1 became inactive. There were 8 indictment matters disposed while 3 became inactive, there were 2 petty session matters disposed. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 83.93% 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 Corporate Area Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	19	32	0	168.42
Uncontrollable Child	13	15	0	115.38
Total Weighted Average	32	47	0	146.88

There were 32 child welfare cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 19 or 59.38%, while cases of uncontrollable child with 13 or 40.62% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 47 child welfare cases were disposed of during the quarter. There were 32 child care and protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 15 uncontrollable child cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 168.42% for child care and protection cases and 115.38% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 146.88%, which satisfies the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the Corporate Area Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Corporate Area Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	149	152	6	106.04
Declaration of Paternity	87	70	2	82.76
Maintenance	236	227	5	98.31
Total	472	449	13	97.88

The 472 new cases filed at the Corporate Area Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that maintenance matters with 236 cases or 50% accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by Custody with 149 or 31.57%. There were 87 Declaration of Paternity cases or 18.43%. A total of 462 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the quarter. This is broken down into 449 disposed and 13 inactive cases. Maintenance cases accounted for 227 of the disposed cases and 5 inactive cases while custody accounted for 152 disposed cases and 6 inactive cases. There were 70 disposed declaration of paternity cases while 2 became inactive. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 97.88% for the broad family case type, led by Custody with 106.04%, and maintenance cases with 98.31%, while maintenance cases accounted for 82.76%.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	135	134	0	99.26
Occupation Order	17	18	0	105.88
Total/Weighted Average	152	152	0	100.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 152 new domestic violence cases filed in the fourth quarter of 2023 at the Corporate Area Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 135 or 88.82%, while cases of occupation order with 17 or 11.18% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total 152 Domestic Violence cases were either disposed in the quarter. There were 134 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 18 occupation order cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 105.88% for occupation order cases and 99.26% for protection order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 100%, which satisfies the international standards on this vital metric.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Corporate Area Court for the quarter ended December 31, 2023

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Case Clearance Rate
Vary Orders	104	4	83	83.65
Disobedience of Maintenance	35	33	51	240.00
Total/ Weighted Average	139	37	6	30.94

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that a combined total of 139 cases entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) and the vary orders during the quarter. Of these 43 were either disposed of or became inactive in the period, producing a gross case clearance rate of 30.94% on these matters.

Chapter 1.0: St. James Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the St. James Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table 1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	1	1	0	100.00
Indictments	12	11	0	91.67
Summary	8	7	0	87.50
Petty Session	0	1	0	undefined
Total/Weighted Average	21	20	0	95.24

The above table shows that the sample of 21 criminal cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 12 or 57.14% were indictment matters summary matters accounted for 8 or 38.10% each. Committal matters accounted for the remaining 1 or 4.76%. There was a total of 20 criminal cases disposed of during the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 11 indictment cases were disposed, 7 summary matters and 1 committal and summary matter was disposed of during the quarter. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 95.24% 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	65	25	0	38.46
Uncontrollable Child	20	16	1	85.00
Total Weighted Average	85	41	1	49.41

There were 85 child welfare cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023, the larger proportion of which were childcare and protection cases which accounted for 65 or 76.47%, while cases of uncontrollable child with 20 or 23.53% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 41 child welfare cases were disposed while 1 became inactive during the quarter. There were 25 child care and protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 16 uncontrollable child cases were disposed. There was 1 inactive uncontrollable child cases which became inactive during the quarter. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 38.46% for child care and protection cases and 85.00% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 49.41%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the St. James Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	57	68	5	128.07
Declaration of Paternity	28	44	1	160.71
Access	9	6	0	66.67
Legal Guardianship	4	1	0	25.00
Maintenance	87	92	8	114.94
Total	185	211	14	121.62

The 185 new cases filed at the St. James Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that maintenance matters with 87 cases or 47.02% accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by Custody with 57 or 30.81%. There were 28 Declaration of Paternity cases or 15.14%, there were 9 access cases, 4 legal Guardianship cases. A total of 225 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the quarter. This is broken down into 211 disposed and 14 inactive cases. Maintenance cases accounted for 92 of the disposed cases and 8 inactive cases while custody cases accounted for 68 disposed cases and 5 inactive cases. There were 44 disposed and 1 inactive declaration of paternity cases, 6 disposed access cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 121.62% for the broad family case type, led by declaration of paternity 160.71%,

and custody cases with 128.07%, maintenance cases with 114.94%, access with 66.67%, and legal guardianship with 25%.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	112	160	6	148.21
Occupation Order	35	48	4	148.57
Total/Weighted Average	147	208	10	148.30

The data above shows that there was a total of 147 new domestic violence cases filed in the fourth quarter of 2023 at the St. James Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 112 or 76.19%, while cases of occupation order with 35 or 23.81% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 208 domestic cases were disposed while 10 became inactive during the quarter. There were 160 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 48 occupation order cases were disposed. There were 6 protection order cases which became inactive and 4 occupation order cases during the quarter. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 148.21% for protection order cases and 148.57% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 148.30%, which does not satisfy 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 the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Table 1.0: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
12	26	4	250.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 12 new civil cases filed in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. There were also a total of 26 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter while 4 became inactive at the St. James Family Court. This produces an estimated case clearance rate of 250%, which is above the international standard on this metrics.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the St. James Family Court for the quarter ended December 31, 2023

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Estimated clearance rate (%)
Vary Orders	53	1	72	137.74
Disobedience of Maintenance	20	4	19	115.00
Warrants of Distress	42	35	45	190.48
Warrants of Arrest	51	50	4	105.88
Total/Weighted Average	166	90	140	138.55

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that a combined total of 166 cases entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) and the vary orders during the quarter. There were 140 cases disposed while 90

cases became inactive in the period, producing a gross case clearance rate of 138.55% on these matters.

Chapter 3.0: The Hanover Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Hanover Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table 1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Indictments	9	1	0	11.11
Summary	2	1	0	50.00
Total	11	2	0	18.18

The above table shows that the sample of 11 criminal cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 9 or 81.81% were Indictments and summary matters, 2 or 18.18% were committal matters. There were a total of 2 criminal cases disposed during fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 1 Indictments case was disposed, and 1 summary matter was disposed. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 18.18% for these types of cases. This is below the international standard on this vital metrics.

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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	22	13	0	59.09
Uncontrollable Child	8	5	0	62.50
Total Weighted Average	30	18	0	60.00

There were 30 child welfare cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 22 or 73.33%, while cases of uncontrollable child with 8 or 26.66% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 18 child welfare cases were disposed of in the quarter. There were 13 child care protection disposed of during the quarter, while 5 uncontrollable child cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 59.09% for child care and protection cases and 62.50% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 60%, which does not satisfy the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the Hanover Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the St. James Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	29	27	0	93.10
Declaration of Paternity	5	6	0	120.00
Legal Guardianship	2	3	0	150.00
Maintenance	34	38	4	123.53
Total	70	74	4	111.43

The 70 new cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 34 cases or 48.54%. This was followed by 29 or 41.42% which were custody cases and 5 or 7.14% which were declaration of paternity cases. There were also 2 cases of legal guardianship. A total of 78 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the quarter. This is broken down into 74 disposed maintenance cases while 4 became inactive. There were 38 maintenance cases disposed, 27 disposed custody cases, 6 disposed cases of declaration of paternity and 3 disposed legal guardianship cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 111.43% for the broad family case type, led by legal guardianship cases with 150%, Maintenance with 123.53%, declaration of paternity cases with 120%, and cases of custody with 93.10%.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31,2023

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	30	37	0	123.33
Occupation Order	8	12	0	150.00
Total/Weighted Average	38	49	0	128.95

The data above shows that there was a total of 38 new domestic violence cases filed in the fourth quarter of 2023 at the Hanover Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 30 or 78.95%, while cases of occupation order with 8 or 21.05% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total 49 Domestic Violence of these cases were disposed during the quarter. There were 37 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 12 occupation order cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 123.33% for protection order cases and 150% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 128.95%, which satisfies the 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Table 1.0: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
8	2	0	25.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 8 new civil cases filed in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. There were also a total of 2 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter at the Hanover Family Court. This produces an estimated case clearance rate of 25%, which is does not satisfy the international standard.

Chapter 4.0: The Westmoreland Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Westmoreland Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	4	1	0	25.00
Indictments	9	12	0	133.33
Summary	8	2	0	25.00
Petty Session	2	1	0	50.00
Total/Weighted Average	23	16	0	69.57

The above table shows that the sample of 23 criminal cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 9 or 39.13% were indictment matters, 8 or 34.78% were summary matters, while committal proceedings accounted for 4 cases or 17.39%. There were 2 cases of petty session matters. There was a total of 16 criminal cases disposed of during the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 12 indictment matters were disposed, 2 summary cases were disposed, and 1 petty session and 1 committal proceedings

were disposed of during the quarter. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 69.57% 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 Westmoreland Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	40	16	0	40.00
Uncontrollable Child	18	15	4	105.56
Total Weighted Average	58	31	4	60.34

There were 58 child welfare cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023, this was accounted for by 40 or 68.97% child care protection cases and 18 or 31.03% Uncontrollable Child cases. A total of 35 child welfare cases were disposed of became inactive during the quarter. This was broken down into 31 childcare cases disposed and 16 uncontrollable child care cases disposed while 4 became inactive. This result led to a weighted average case clearance rate of 60.34%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the Westmoreland Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Westmoreland Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	46	52	0	113.04
Declaration of Paternity	21	19	0	90.48
Legal Guardianship	1	1	0	100.00
Maintenance	49	47	0	95.92
Total/Weighted Average	117	119	0	101.71

The 117 new cases filed at the Westmoreland Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 49 cases or 41.88%. This was followed by 46 or 39.32% which were custody cases and 21 or 17.95% which were cases of declaration of paternity. A total of 119 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed in the quarter. This is broken down into 47 disposed maintenance cases, 52 disposed custody cases, 19 disposed declaration of paternity cases and 1 disposed legal guardianship matter. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 101.71% for the broad family case type, led by Custody cases with 113.04%, legal guardianship cases with 100% maintenance cases with 95.92% and cases of declaration of paternity with 90.48%.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	58	23	0	39.66
Occupation Order	7	3	0	42.86
Total/Weighted Average	65	26	0	40.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 65 new domestic violence cases filed in the fourth quarter of 2023 at the Westmoreland Family Court. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 56 or 89.23%, while cases of occupation order with 7 or 10.77% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 26 domestic cases were disposed of during the quarter. There were 23 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 3 occupation order cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 39.66% for protection order cases and 42.86% for occupation order cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 40%, which is below the 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Table 1.0: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted Case Clearance Rate (%)
18	10	0	55.56

The data above shows that there was a total of 18 new civil cases filed in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. There were also a total of 10 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter at the Westmoreland Family Court. This produces an estimated case clearance rate of 55.56%, which does not satisfy the international standard on this metrics.

Chapter 5.0: The Trelawny Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Trelawny Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table 1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	6	6	0	100.00
Indictments	23	14	0	60.87
Summary	3	9	0	300.00
Petty Session	0	3	0	undefined
Total/Weighted Average	32	32	0	100.00

The above table shows that the sample of 32 criminal cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 23 or 71.88% were indictment matters, 6 or 18.75% were committal matters, there were 3 cases of petty session. There was a total of 32 disposed cases during the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 100% 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 Trelawny Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	26	14	0	53.85
Uncontrollable Child	0	3	0	undefined
Total/ Weighted Average	26	17	0	65.38

There were 26 child welfare cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023, the larger proportion of which were child care protection cases which accounted for 26 or 100%. A total of 17 child welfare cases were disposed of during the quarter. There were 14 child care protection cases, and 3 uncontrollable child cases disposed of during the quarter. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 53.85% for uncontrollable child and 200% for child protection cases. further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 200%, which satisfies the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the Trelawny Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Trelawny Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	17	18	0	105.88
Declaration of Paternity	14	24	0	171.43
Access	1	5	1	600.00
Legal Guardianship	2	2	0	undefined
Maintenance	21	31	0	147.62
Total	55	80	1	147.27

The 73 new cases filed at the Trelawny Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 21 cases or 61.76%, custody matters with 17 cases or 30.91%. This was followed by declaration of paternity matters 14 or 25.45%. A total of 81 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed or became inactive in the quarter. This is broken down into 31 disposed maintenance cases, 24 disposed declaration of paternity cases, 18 disposed custody cases, 5 cases of access and 2 legal guardianship cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 147.27% for the broad family case type, led by access cases with 600%, declaration of paternity cases with 171.43%, maintenance cases with 147.62% and custody with 105.88%.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	19	21	1	115.79
Occupation Order	4	5	0	125.00
Total/Weighted Average	23	26	1	117.39

The data above shows that there was a total of 23 new domestic violence cases filed in the fourth quarter of 2023 at the Trelawny Family Court. A total 27 Domestic Violence cases were either disposed or became inactive during the quarter. The larger proportion of which were protection order cases which accounted for 19 or 82.61%, while cases of occupation order with 4 or 17.39% accounted for the remaining proportion. There were 26 protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 1 occupation order case was disposed. There was 1 protection order case that became inactive during the quarter. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 115.79% for protection order cases and 125%, and an overall clearance rate of 117.39% which is above 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 the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Table 1.0: Summary of civil case activity for cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	weighted case clearance rate (%)
2	5	0	250

The data above shows that there was a total of 2 new civil cases filed in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. There were also a total of 5 civil cases which were disposed of in the quarter. This produces an estimated case clearance rate of 250%, which is above the international standard on this metrics.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Trelawny Family Court for the quarter ended December 31, 2023

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Vary Orders	20	1	21	110
Disobedience of Maintenance	10	7	14	210
Warrants of Distress	35	0	0	0
Warrants of Arrest	26	17	21	146.15
Total/Weighted Average	91	25	56	89.01

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that a combined total of 91 cases entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) and the vary orders during the quarter. There were 25 cases disposed while 56

cases became inactive in the period, producing a gross case clearance rate of 89.01% on these matters.

Chapter 5.0: St. Manchester Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Manchester Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table 1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Summary	9	11	0	122.22
Committal	1	1	0	100.00
Total	10	12	0	120.00

The above table shows that the sample of 10 criminal cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. There were 9 summary matters and 1 committal case. There was a total of 12 criminal cases disposed of during fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 120% 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 Manchester Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	5	7	0	140.00
Uncontrollable Child	7	4	2	85.71
Total Weighted Average	12	11	2	108.33

There were 12 child welfare cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023, the larger proportion of which were uncontrollable child cases which accounted for 7 or 58.33%, while cases of child care protection with 5 or 41.67% accounted for the remaining proportion. A total of 13 child welfare cases were disposed of or became inactive during the quarter. There were 7 child care protection cases disposed of during the quarter, while 4 uncontrollable child cases were disposed. These results led to estimated case clearance rates of 140% for child care and protection cases and 85.71% for uncontrollable child cases, further yielding a weighted average case clearance rate of 108.33%, which satisfies the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the Manchester Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Manchester Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	24	47	0	195.83
Declaration of Paternity	5	9	0	180.00
Access	8	15	0	187.50
Maintenance	118	89	0	75.42
Total	155	160	0	103.23

The 155 new cases filed at the Manchester Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that maintenance matters with 118 cases or 76.13% accounts for the largest proportion of cases filed. This was followed by custody matters with 24 or 15.48%. There were also 8 matters of access and 5 declaration of paternity cases. A total of 160 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed in the quarter. Maintenance cases accounted for 89 of the disposed cases while custody cases accounted for 47 disposed cases. There were 15 disposed cases of access while and 9 disposed declaration of paternity cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 103.23% for the broad family case type, led by custody cases with 195.83%. Access cases with 187.50%, and declaration of paternity with 180% followed.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	16	19	1	125.00
Total/Weighted Average	16	19	1	125.00

The data above shows that there was a total of 16 new cases of Domestic Violence. There was a total of 19 disposed cases which led to a clearance rate of 125% which satisfies the international standard on this metrics.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Manchester Family Court for the quarter ended December 31, 2023

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Case clearance rate (%)
Vary Orders	7	9	0	128.57
Disobedience of Maintenance	13	14	4	138.46
Warrants of Distress	17	0	1	5.88
Warrants of Arrest	21	5	2	33.33
Total/Weighted Average	58	28	7	60.34

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that a combined total of 58 cases entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters, distress and arrest warrants) and the vary orders during the quarter. There were 28 cases disposed while 7 cases became inactive in the period, producing a gross case clearance rate of 60.34% on these matters.

Chapter 6.0: The Clarendon Family Court

This chapter of the document will examine a summary of selected output and performance measurements for matters in the Clarendon Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Such will involve analyses of caseload, case type distribution, case clearance rates for the different business lines of the family court.

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

Table 1.0: Summary of criminal case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case clearance rate (%)
Committal	15	0	0	undefined
Indictments	3	4	0	133.33
Summary	2	1	0	50.00
Total	20	5	0	25.00

The above table shows that the sample of 20 criminal cases filed at the Clarendon Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 15 or 75% were indictment matters, 3 or 20% were indictment matters, and summary matters accounted for 2 or 10%. There was a total of 5 criminal cases disposed during fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Of these, 4 indictment matters were disposed and 1 summary matter were disposed of during the quarter. This led to an estimated weighted clearance rate of 25% 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 Clarendon Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under the child welfare subdivision are uncontrollable child and childcare and protection cases.

Table 1.0: Summary of child welfare case activity for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Child care protection	0	3	0	undefined
Uncontrollable Child	11	4	0	36.36
Total Weighted Average	11	7	0	63.64

There were 11 child welfare cases filed at the Clarendon Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. All of which were cases of the child care protection. A total of 7 child welfare cases were disposed of in the quarter. This result, further yielded a weighted average case clearance rate of 63.64%, which is below the international standards on this vital metric.

Family matters case activity summary for the Clarendon Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

This section examines case activity for matters classified under the broad category of family matters in the Clarendon Family Court for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023. Matters falling under this broad case category which are included in this report includes maintenance, custody, legal guardianship, access and declaration of paternity

Table 1.0: Summary of Family case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023

Case Subtype	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Case Clearance Rate (%)
Custody	18	16	0	88.89
Declaration of Paternity	6	3	1	66.67
Access	21	7	0	33.33
Maintenance	61	40	1	67.21
Legal Guardianship	1	0	0	0.00
Total	107	66	2	63.55

The 107 new cases filed at the Hanover Family Court in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 revealed that the largest proportion were maintenance matters with 61 cases or 57%. This was followed by 21 or 19.63% which were access cases and 18 or 16.82% which were cases of custody. There were also 6 declaration of paternity cases and 1 of legal guardianship. A total of 68 cases falling under this broad family category were disposed of or became inactive in the quarter. This is broken down into 40 disposed maintenance cases, 16 custody cases ,7 access and 3 declaration of paternity cases. This led to an overall estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 63.55% for the broad family case type, led by custody cases with 88.89%, maintenance with 67.21%, declaration of paternity cases with 66.67%, and access cases with 33.33%.

Summary of Case Activity for Domestic Violence Cases in the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023 at the Clarendon 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 fourth quarter ended December 31, 2023.

Table 1.0: Summary of domestic violence case activity for cases for the fourth quarter ended December 31,2023

Order Type	Number of new cases filed	Number of cases disposed	Number of inactive cases	Weighted case clearance rate (%)
Protection Order	15	16	0	106.67
Total/Weighted Average	15	16	0	106.67

The data above shows that there was a total of 15 new domestic violence cases filed in the fourth quarter of 2023 at the Clarendon Family Court. A total 16 Domestic Violence cases were disposed of during the quarter. Protection order accounted for 100% of the cases. This result led to a weighted average case clearance rate of 106.6%, which is above the international standards on this vital metric.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution Enforcement/Post disposal activity for the Clarendon Family Court for the quarter ended December 31, 2023

Post disposal activity/Enforcement	New entries	Inactive matters	Disposed matters	Case clearance rate(%)
Vary Orders	18	3	13	88.89
Disobedience of Maintenance	44	1	21	50.00
Total/Weighted Average	62	4	34	61.29

Apart from substantive case activity, it is important to note that a combined total of 62 cases entered the enforcement stage (by way of disobedience of maintenance matters) and the vary orders during the quarter. There were 4 cases disposed while 34 cases became inactive in the period, producing a gross case clearance rate of 61.29% on these matters.

Conclusion

The specialized family courts made ended 2023 with an overall case congestion rate of under 120% and an overall net case backlog rate of less than 5%, having registered an overall weighted case clearance rate of roughly 100% in the 4th quarter ended December 31, 2023, suggesting that as many cases were disposed as new cases that were filed in the period. Collectively, these results suggest that the specialized family courts are poised to make an appreciable contribution to the new strategic business plan which is being engineered by the judiciary as the courts continue to position itself as a leader in statistical reporting and productivity in the Caribbean and Latin American region.

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.

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. ⁱ

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. ⁱⁱ

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%.

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 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.

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%

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Source:

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

ⁱ *Source:*

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

