



The Chief Justice's Annual Statistics Report on the Rural Circuit Courts 2020

	ANNUAL	
	2019	2020
Case Clearance Rate (%)	92.81	85.24
Case Disposal Rate (%)	34.23	23.59
Trial date certainty rate (%)	58.19	77.73
Average time to disposition (days)	190	413

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Executive Summary

The Rural Circuit Courts are an important facet of the Jamaican Court system, allowing for serious charges to be heard in the parish of origin by Supreme Court Judges. In most parishes, Circuit Court hearings take place in three separate Terms throughout the year and includes cases filed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court. The 2020 results on case activity in these courts were quite insightful and shows significant resilience amidst the COVID-19 pandemic which caused a general decline in Open Court activity. Over 1000 new cases were entered across the Rural Circuit Courts in 2020 as these courts as a whole recorded an estimated weighted average case clearance rate of 85.24%, a fall of 7.57 percentage points when compared to 2019 but quite commendable outcome under the circumstances. Notably, six of the parishes met or exceeded the prescribed international standard of between 90% and 110% on the clearance rate measurement in 2020. These were the Hanover, St. Ann, St. Mary, Trelawny, Westmoreland and Portland Rural Circuit Courts. Roughly 40% of case activity in this report were strictly speaking matters in the High Court Division of the Gun Court operating as a subset of the Rural Circuit Courts or in regions like in the western parishes as a separate entity. The overall case disposal rate in the Rural Circuit Courts in 2020 was a modest 23.39%, a decline of 10.84 percentage points when compared to 2019. The Rural Circuit Courts however fared well on the measurement of trial date certainty, with a proportion of 77.73%, an impressive 19.54 percentage points higher than 2019. The distribution of times taken to dispose of cases resolved in the Rural Circuit Courts in 2020 are also quite encouraging with cases disposed across these courts taking on average of 14 months. Although this is an increase when compared to 2019, it is half the time taken in the Home Circuit Court and well within the two-year yardstick that is used to define a case backlog. The judiciary continues to implement policies to enhance stakeholder cooperation and to redress internal inefficiencies which cause delay in the Rural Circuit Courts. These efforts are expected to bring continuous improvements over the coming years as the court system as a whole works towards becoming the best in the Caribbean Region within the next 2-3 years and among the bests in the world in 4-5 years.

Summary of Key Performance Metrics for 2020.

Parish Court	Case disposal rates (%)	Case clearance rates (%)	Trial certainty rates (%)	Average time taken to dispose of cases (days)
Western Regional Gun Court	14.14	60.69	80.27	599.48
St. James Circuit Court	9.80	21.57	84.71	530.77
Hanover Circuit Court	58.06	100	100	580.66
Manchester Circuit Court	9.62	55.77	65.71	179.86
Portland Circuit Court	12	128	86.84	817.47
St. Ann Circuit Court	38.46	261.54	63.18	216.35
St. Catherine Circuit Court	23.01	89.38	60.87	307.54
St. Elizabeth Circuit Court	36.84	84.21	80.49	327.51
St. Mary Circuit Court	48.44	137.50	72.22	379.43
Trelawny Circuit Court	21.21	127.27	100	427.71
Westmoreland Circuit Court	54.32	151.85	57.56	391.04
St. Thomas Circuit Court	31.58	85.24	80.95	201
Average/Weighted Average	23.59	85.24	77.73	413.24

Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases	Approximate number of Disposed cases (of those originating in the year)	Approximate number of inactive cases (regardless of year of origin)	Approximate Disposal rate (%)	Approximate number of disposed cases (regardless of year of origin)	Approximate number of inactive cases (regardless of year of origin)	Case Clearance Rate (%)
1030	234	9	23.59%	878	46	85.24

Note: The Circuit Court in Clarendon is not included in the above tables due to logistical issues but will be fully represented in future reports.

METHODOLOGY

Guaranteeing the reliability and validity of the data used to produce the periodic statistical reports for the Jamaican Courts is of utmost importance as we seek to produce a data driven enterprise for policymaking and operational decisions. As a result, a robust and verifiable system of data production has been created in both the parish courts and the Supreme Court. At the parish courts, a data capture system for criminal matters, called the CISS (Case Information Statistical System) has been operational in all courts for the past two years. This system captures a wide range of data on the progression of criminal cases from initiation to disposition and is manned by at least one dedicated Data Entry Officer in each court. The Data Entry Officers update the system on a daily basis so that the data produced is as close as possible to real time. The electronic data sheets for each parish court are then validated and backed-up to the network at the end of each month and the data submitted to a centralized, secure medium for processing by the Statistics Unit at the Supreme Court. A robust data validation mechanism is in place to periodically sample criminal case files in all parish courts on a quarterly basis. A representative sample of case files are taken in each case and crosschecked against the electronic data to detect and eliminate errors of omission and commission.

Monthly statistical data is processed using the data submissions, culminating in Quarterly Reports and eventually the Annual Report of this nature. All Quarterly and Annual Parish Court reports are published on the website of the Supreme Court; however, interim data required by stakeholders may be requested through the Office of the Chief Justice.

Disclaimer

The numbers that are reflected in the case activity summaries in the annual statistics 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.

Chapter1.0: The Western Regional Gun Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide catering to cases which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily presides over cases which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in three separate Terms throughout the calendar year. Similarly, serious gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court, depending on the dynamics of the case. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes. This chapter of the report is focused on case activity in the Western Regional Gun Courts in the parish of St. James for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the chapter provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates as well as the trial date certainty rate.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Western Regional Gun Court during the year ended December 31, 2020. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard, the case disposal rate and the distribution of the types of charges brought before the named court during the year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Western Regional Gun Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Number of Traversed Cases	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%)
290	41	249	14.14

It is seen in the above table that in the Western Regional Gun Court for the year ended December 31, 2020, 290 new cases were filed during the year, of which 41 cases were disposed or became inactive, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 14.14%, which is 9.67 percentage points below the case disposal rate recorded in 2019. This rate suggests that between 1 and 2 in every 10 cases filed were disposed during the year. There were 249 active traversed cases at the end of the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling Distribution of the most frequent charges filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illegal possession of firearm	379	39.56
Illegal possession of ammunition	150	15.66
Assault at common law	116	12.11
Shooting with Intent	90	9.39
Wounding with intent	53	5.53
Sub-total	788	82.25

Sample Size (n)= 958

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Western Regional Gun Court in the 2020 calendar year. As shown, Illegal possession of firearm with 379 or 39.56%, illegal possession of ammunition with 150 or 15.66% and assault at common law with 116 or 12.11% of the sample round off the leading three charges heard in the Western Regional Gun Court during the year. Shooting with intent with 90 or 9.39% and wounding with intent with 53

or 5.53% round off the top charges in the year. The charges listed above account for 82.25% of a sample of 958 charges.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution persons charged in relation to new matters entered before the Gun Court in 2020.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	1857	98.99
Female	19	1.01
Total	1876	100.00

A sample of 1876 matters heard in the Western Regional Gun Court in 2020 revealed that 98.99% were male and 1.01% were female.

Table 4.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of persons charged on matters heard in the Western Regional Gun Court during the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	266
Mean	27.9887
Std. Error of Mean	.49745
Median	26.0000
Mode	31.00
Std. Deviation	8.11311
Skewness	1.343
Std. Error of Skewness	.149
Range	51.00
Minimum	16.00
Maximum	67.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 266 matters heard at the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James over the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was roughly 28 years, while the median age was 26 years and the most frequently occurring age was 31 years. The standard deviation of 8 years is an indication that there is a small variation in the individual ages in the distribution, while the positive skewness shown indicates that a larger proportion of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 67 years and the lowest is 16 years.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Warrant Issued	45	95.74
Warrant Issued But Stayed	2	4.26
Total	47	100.00

Using a sample of 47 matters heard in the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James during the 2020 calendar year, it is seen in 45 or 95.74% of the matters, warrants were issued, while warrants were issued, but stayed in 2 or 4.26% of the matters.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 6.0a: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment for matters heard in the Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To complete file	611	44.15
Subpoena	108	7.80
Not before court	73	5.27
Investigating officer unavailable	57	4.12
Complainant absent	41	2.96
Sub-total	890	64.31

NB: Sample size for reasons for adjournment/continuance (n)= 1384

A sample of 1384 incidences of adjournments and continuances for matters heard during the 2020 calendar year in the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James revealed that 611 or 44.15% of the matters were adjourned to complete files. The issuance of subpoenas with 108 or 7.80% and adjournments for files not before court with 73 or 5.27% rank next. Adjournments due to the investigating officer being unavailable with 57 or 4.12% and the absence of complainants with 41 or 2.96% complete the top 5 reasons for adjournment for the year. The reasons for adjournments listed above accounted for 64.31% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 6.0b: Sampling distribution of common reasons for continuance for matters heard in the Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sentencing	138	9.97
Plea and Case Management Hearing	79	5.71
Bail application	73	5.27
Sub-total	290	20.95

NB: Sample size for reasons for adjournment/continuance (n)= 1384

The analysis of adjournments makes a distinction between those incidences, which may be considered avoidable due to either internal or external factors, and those, which are intrinsic to

the progression of a case. The above table highlights the primary reasons for adjournment gleaned from the sample, which may be considered as simply intrinsic to the progression of some cases. These reasons are classified as reasons for 'continuance.' As seen in the above table, adjournments for sentencing with 138 or 9.97%, plea and case management hearings with 79 or 5.71% and bail applications with 5.27% featured prominently among such reasons. The reasons for continuance listed above accounted for 20.95% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Further Evidence Offered - Discharged	89	33.46
Guilty	81	30.45
No Evidence Offered - Discharged	55	20.68
Not Guilty - Discharged	16	6.02
Guilty Plea	6	2.26
Transferred	6	2.26
Sub-total	253	95.11

Sample size (N)= 266

A sample of 266 matters disposed in the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James in the 2020 calendar year revealed that matters discharged due to no further evidence being offered accounted for the largest share with 89 or 33.46%, while guilty verdicts with 81 or 30.45% of the sample was next. Matters discharged due to no evidence being offered with 55 or 20.68%, matters discharged by way of not guilty verdicts with 16 or 6.02% and those resolved by guilty pleas and transfer with 6 or 2.26% each, rounds off the list. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 32.71%.

Table 8.0: Descriptive Statistics on time to disposition for matters completed in the Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	251
Mean	599.4781
Std. Error of Mean	39.02945
Median	376.0000
Mode	1106.00
Std. Deviation	618.34279
Skewness	1.122
Std. Error of Skewness	.154
Range	2499.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	2500.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Western Regional Gun Court over the year is 599 days or roughly 20 months. The median time is 376 days, and the mode is 1106 days. The standard deviation of 618 days indicates a large variation in the scores in the data set, while the positive skewness suggests that proportionately more of the scores fell below the series mean. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 2500 days or roughly 6.9 years, while the minimum time is 1 day. These estimations suggest that a large proportion of cases is being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 251 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%)	Approximate number of cases heard in the year
290	176	60.69	830

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Western Regional Gun Court for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 290 new cases were filed, while 176 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 60.69%, which is 18.89 percentage points above the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 6 cases were disposed. The table also shows that overall 830 cases were heard during the year at the Western Regional Gun Court.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
147	29	80.27

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 147 trial dates set in the year, of which 29 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of 80.27% for the year, which is 11.7 percentage points above the recorded rate for 2019. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, roughly 8 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age of active matters as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Western Regional Gun Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	1568
Mean	439.7200
Std. Error of Mean	10.76328
Median	338.0000
Mode	213.00
Std. Deviation	426.20430
Skewness	3.512
Std. Error of Skewness	.062
Range	7029.00
Minimum	13.00

Maximum	7042.00
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A sample of 1568 active matters at the end of the 2020 calendar year in the Western Regional Gun Court revealed an average age of 440 days or roughly 14.7 months, while the most frequently occurring age was 213 days. The high standard deviation observed is indicative of a large fairly wide dispersion of the individual case ages around the mean. The positive skewness further indicates that there are significantly more scores falling below the overall mean. The maximum observed age of active cases is 7042 days or roughly 20 years, while minimum observed age of active cases heard in the period is 13 days.

Chapter 2.0: The St. James Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court preside over all such cases, typically onsite in the relevant parishes.

This section is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of St. James for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance as well as case disposal rates among other information.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the St. James Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. James Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%)	Traversed cases
51	5	9.80	46

It is seen in the above table that in the St. James Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020, 51 new cases were heard during the year, of which 5 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 9.80%, which is 32.31 percentage points below the case disposal rate recorded in 2019. This rate suggests that roughly 1 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year. There were 46 traversed cases, which were all active at the end of the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling Distribution on the most frequent charges filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possession of identity information	20	19.80
Rape	17	16.83
Murder	14	13.86
Possession of access device	12	11.88
Grievous sexual assault	10	9.90
Sub-total	73	72.28

NB: Sample size (n)= 101

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. James in the 2020 calendar year. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, possession of identity information with 20 or 19.80%, rape with 17 or 16.83% and murder with 14 or 13.86% of the sample account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the St. James Circuit Court. Possession of access device with 12 or 11.88% and grievous sexual assault with 10 or 9.90% complete the list of the top 5 charges. The leading charges listed above account for 72.28% of the total sample of 101 charges.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of offenders involved in matters heard over the 2020 calendar year in the St. James Circuit Court.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	507	90.86
Female	51	9.14
Total	558	100.00

A sample of 558 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James during the 2020 calendar year, revealed that 90.86% of these matters involved males, while 9.14% were female.

Table 4.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of persons charged in matters heard at the St. James Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	290
Mean	28.8621
Std. Error of Mean	.55454
Median	27.0000
Mode	21.00
Std. Deviation	9.44342
Skewness	1.301
Std. Error of Skewness	.143
Range	49.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	64.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 290 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. James over the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was roughly 29 years, while the median age was 27 years and the most frequently occurring age was 21 years. The moderate standard deviation of 9 years is an indication that there is some variation in the individual ages in the distribution, while the positive skewness shown reveals indication that a larger proportion of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 64 years and the lowest is 15 years.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in St. James Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	377	72.50
Remanded into Custody	100	19.23
Bail Offered	39	7.50
Warrant Issued	2	0.38
Warrant Issued But Stayed	2	0.38
Total	520	100.00

Using a sample of 520 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James during the 2020 calendar year, it is seen in 377 or 72.50% of the matters, bail was extended, while the accused was remanded into custody in 100 or 19.23% of the matters. Bail was offered in 39 or 7.50% of the matters while warrants issued, and warrants issued but stayed each accounted for 0.38% of the matters.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 6.0a: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment for matters heard at the St. James Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subpoena crown witness	125	36.13
Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding	24	6.94
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	13	3.76
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) result outstanding	12	3.47
File to be completed	8	2.31

Medical report unavailable	8	2.31
Sub-total	190	54.92

NB: Sample size for reasons for adjournment/continuance (n)= 346

A sample of 89 incidences of adjournments and continuance heard during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James revealed that 125 or 36.13% of the matters were adjourned to subpoena crown witness. Adjournments due to Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding with 24 or 6.94% of the sample rank next. Adjournments for defendant not appearing leading to a warrant being issued with 13 or 3.47%, Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) result outstanding with 12 or 3.47% and files to be completed and medical report unavailable with 8 or 2.31% each of the sample rounds off the list. The reasons for adjournment listed above accounted for 54.92% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 6.0b: Sampling distribution of common reasons for continuance for matters heard at the St. James Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Plea and Case Management Hearing	53	15.32
Sentencing	30	8.67
Bail application	11	3.18
Continuance (Procedural events)	5	1.45
Sub-total	99	28.61

NB: Sample size for reasons for adjournment/continuance (n)= 346

The analysis of adjournments makes a distinction between those incidences, which may be considered avoidable due to either internal or external factors, and those, which are intrinsic to the progression of a case. The above table highlights the primary reasons for adjournment gleaned from the sample, which may be considered as simply intrinsic to the progression of some cases. These reasons are classified as reasons for 'continuance.' As seen in the above table, adjournments for plea and case management hearings with 53 or 15.32% and sentencing with 30 or 8.67% featured prominently among such reasons. Adjournments for bail applications

accounted for 11 or 3.18% and for other procedural events, broadly termed as “continuance” accounted for 5 or 1.45% of the sample. The reasons for continuance listed above accounted for 28.61% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed at the St. James Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	29	25.44
Guilty	23	20.18
Guilty Plea	22	19.30
Nolle Prosequere	17	14.91
Not Guilty	14	12.28
Sub-total	105	92.11

Sample size (n)= 114

A sample of 105 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James in the 2020 calendar year revealed that matters being discharged due to no evidence being offered with 29 or 25.44% of the sample, guilty verdicts with 23 or 20.18% accounted for the highest proportion of the sample of disposals. This was followed by guilty pleas with 22 or 19.30%, Nolle Prosequere entered with 17 or 14.91% of the sample and not guilty verdicts with 14 or 12.28%. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 39.48%. Strictly speaking Nolle Prosequere are inactive cases but for statistical purposes they are included here.

Table 8.0: Descriptive Statistics on time to disposition for matters completed at the St. James Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	96
Mean	530.7708
Std. Error of Mean	34.83029
Median	455.5000
Mode	318.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	341.26574
Skewness	.946
Std. Error of Skewness	.246
Range	1819.00
Minimum	12.00
Maximum	1831.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. James over the year is 531 days or roughly 1.5 years. The median time is 455.5 days, while the most frequently occurring time is 318 days or roughly 10.6 months. The standard deviation indicates a modest variation of the scores in the data set and the positive skewness suggests that a slightly more of the times to disposition fell below the overall mean time. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1831 days or 5.1 years, while the minimum time taken was 12 days. These estimations suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; a large proportion are being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 96 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard in the year
51	11	21.57	155

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the St. James Circuit Court for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 51 new cases were filed, while 11 cases were disposed during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 21.57%, which is 92.47 percentage points below the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 2 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 155 cases overall were heard during the year at the St. James Circuit Court.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
170	26	84.71

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 170 trial dates set in the year, 26 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of 84.71% for the year, which is about 7.54 percentage points below the 2019 trial certainty rate. This result means that for every 10 trial dates set in the year, about 8 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the St. James Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	390
Mean	642.7923
Std. Error of Mean	19.74963
Median	609.0000
Mode	465.00
Std. Deviation	390.02402
Skewness	.846
Std. Error of Skewness	.124
Range	1743.00
Minimum	77.00
Maximum	1820.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James for the 2020 calendar year. A sample of 390 active matters at the end of the year revealed that the estimated average age of active cases before this court is 643 days or roughly 1.8 years. The most frequently occurring age of active cases is 465 days. Additionally, the moderate standard deviation observed is an indication of some dispersion of the individual scores around the mean and the positive skewness is an indication that slightly more of the scores in the data set that fall below the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1820 days or 5.1 years, while the minimum is 77 days.

Chapter 3.0: The Hanover Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious gun related charges are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court, depending on the dynamics of the case. The Judges of the Supreme Court preside over all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This section is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of Hanover for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance as well as case disposal rates among other information.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the Hanover Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Hanover Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases
31	18	58.06	13

It is seen in the above table that in the Hanover Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020, 31 new cases were heard over the year, of which 18 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 58.06%, which is 6.65 percentage points below the case disposal rate recorded in 2019. This rate suggests that approximately 6 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year. There were 13 traversed cases, which were all active at the end of the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling Distribution on the most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rape	18	33.33
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	10	18.52
Possession of identity information	8	14.81
Incest	3	5.56
Causing Death by Dangerous Driving	2	3.70
Murder	2	3.70
Sub-total	43	79.63

NB: Sample size (n)= 54

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in Hanover in the 2020 calendar year. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, rape with 18 or 33.33%, sexual assault with a person under 16 with 10 or 18.52% and possession of identity with 8 or 14.81% account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the Circuit Court. Incest with 3 or 5.56%, causing death by dangerous driving and murder each with 2 or 3.70% rounds off the top charges for the year. The top 5 charges listed above account for 3.70% of the total sample of 54 charges.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of persons charged in relation to matters heard at the Hanover Circuit Court in 2020.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	151	97.42
Female	4	2.58
Total	155	100.00

A sample of 155 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover during the 2020 calendar year revealed that 97.42% of these matters involved males and 2.58% involved females.

Table 4.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of persons charged in relation to matters heard at the Hanover Circuit Court during the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	119
Mean	31.5294
Std. Error of Mean	.99728
Median	30.0000
Mode	23.00
Std. Deviation	10.87901
Skewness	.858
Std. Error of Skewness	.222
Range	46.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	61.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 119 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover over the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was roughly 32 years, while the median age was 30 years and the most frequently occurring age was 23 years. The

moderate standard deviation of 11 years is an indication that there is some variation in the individual ages in the distribution, while the modest positive skewness shown reveals indication that a slightly larger proportion of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 61 years and the lowest is 15 years.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance for matters heard in the Hanover Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continuance (Procedural events)	68	57.14
Sentencing (Continuance)	27	22.69
Crown witness unavailable	5	4.20
Legal representative to be settled	4	3.36
Plea and Case Management Hearing (Continuance)	4	3.36
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	4	3.36
Sub-total	112	94.12

NB: Sample size for reasons for adjournment/continuance (n)= 119

A sample of 119 adjournments and continuance heard during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover revealed that 68 or 57.14% of the matters were adjourned due to for other procedural events, broadly termed as “continuance”. Continuances (delays intrinsic to the progression of some cases) for sentencing with 27 or 22.69% of the sample rank next. Adjournments due to the crown witness being unavailable with 5 or 4.20%, adjournments for legal representative to be settled, continuances for plea and case management hearing, and

adjournment for psychiatric evaluation to be done each accounting for 4 or 3.36% of the sample ranked next on the list. The reasons for adjournments/continuances listed above accounted for 94.12% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled for 2020.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the Hanover Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guilty Plea	16	34.78
Not Guilty	16	34.78
Guilty	10	21.74
Not Guilty - Discharged	4	8.70
Total	46	100.00

A sample of 46 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover in the 2020 calendar year revealed that guilty pleas and not guilty verdicts with 16 or 34.78% each accounted for the highest proportion of the sample of disposals. This was followed by guilty verdicts with 10 or 21.74% and matters discharged as a result of not guilty verdicts with 4 or 8.70% of the sample. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 56.52%.

Table 7.0: Descriptive Statistics on time to disposition for matters completed in the Hanover Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	41
Mean	580.6585
Std. Error of Mean	167.37544
Median	144.0000
Mode	144.00
Std. Deviation	1071.72575
Skewness	4.627
Std. Error of Skewness	.369
Range	6567.00
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	6575.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover over the year is 581 days or roughly 1.6 years. The median time and the most frequently occurring time were both 144 days or 4.8 months. The standard deviation indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set and the high positive skewness suggests that a significant proportion of the times to disposition fell below the overall mean time. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 6575 days or 18.3 years, while the minimum time taken was 8 days. These estimates suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; a large proportion is being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 41 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 8.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard in the year
31	31	100	74

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Hanover Circuit Court for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 31 new cases were filed, while 31 cases were disposed during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 100%, which is 68.63 percentage points below the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, an equivalent number were disposed. The table also shows that overall 74 cases were heard during the year at the Hanover Circuit Court.

Table 9.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
7	0	100

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 7 trial dates set in the year, none was adjourned. This reveals as estimated trial date certainty rate of 100% for the year. This result means that the trial dates sampled all proceeded on schedule in 2020 at the Hanover Circuit Court.

Table 10.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Hanover Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	95
Mean	471.4421
Std. Error of Mean	29.73911
Median	402.0000
Mode	297.00
Std. Deviation	289.86100
Skewness	1.039
Std. Error of Skewness	.247
Range	1721.00
Minimum	24.00
Maximum	1745.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover for the 2020 calendar year. A sample of 95 active matters at the end of the year revealed that the estimated average age of active cases before this court is 471 days or roughly 1.3 years. The most frequently occurring age of active cases is 297 days. Additionally, the moderate standard deviation observed is an indication of some dispersion of the individual scores

around the mean and the positive skewness is an indication that relatively more of the scores in the data set that fall below the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1745 days or 4.8 years, while the minimum is 24 days.

Chapter 4.0: The Manchester Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of Manchester for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates among other data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate for cases brought before the Manchester Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Manchester Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard (Circuit and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive (Circuit and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Disposal Rate (%) (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Number of traversed cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases heard-Gun Court	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%) -Gun Court
208	20	9.62	188	67	5	10.45

It is seen in the above table that in the Manchester Circuit Court as a whole for the year ended December 31, 2020, 208 new cases were heard in the during the year, of which 20 were disposed or became inactive, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 9.62%, 3.85 percentage points higher than 2019. This rate suggests that about 1 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year. There were 188 Circuit Court cases traversed as at the end of 2020. As a subset of total Circuit Court activity, the table also shows that there were 67 new Gun Court cases heard in the year, of which 5 were disposed or became inactive. This led to an estimated case disposal rate of 10.45% for the year for these cases.

Table 2.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illegal possession of firearm	113	16.57
Illegal possession of ammunition	76	11.14
Robbery with aggravation	68	9.97
Rape	52	7.62
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	45	6.60
Sub-total	354	51.91

NB: Sample size (n) = 682

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in Manchester for the 2020 calendar year. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, illegal possession of a firearm with 113 or 16.57%, illegal possession of ammunition with 76 or 11.14% and robbery with aggravation with 68 or 9.97% account for the three leading offences heard in the year. The list is rounded off by rape with 52 or 7.62% and sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 45 or 6.60%. The top charges listed above account for 51.91% of the total sample of 682 charges.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of persons charged in relation to matters heard in the 2020 calendar year.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution of matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	1114	96.03
Female	46	3.97
Total	1160	100.00

A sample of 1160 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester during the 2020 calendar year, revealed that 96.03% of these matters involved males and 3.97% involved females.

Table 4.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of persons charged for matters heard in the Manchester Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	786
Mean	30.8359
Std. Error of Mean	.37691
Median	27.0000
Mode	22.00
Std. Deviation	10.56685
Skewness	.965
Std. Error of Skewness	.087
Range	51.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	66.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 786 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 31 years, while the median age was 27 years and the most frequently occurring age was 22 years. The standard deviation of roughly 11 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the age distribution of accused persons brought before the Manchester Circuit Court. The positive skewness shown is an indication that a larger proportion of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 66 years and the lowest is 15 years.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in Manchester Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	46	45.10
Warrant Issued	27	26.47
Not Before the Court	12	11.76
Remanded into Custody	10	9.80
Warrant Issued but Stayed	7	6.86
Total	102	100.00

Using a sample of 102 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester during the 2020 calendar year, bail was extended in 46 or 45.10% of the matters. Warrants issued with 27 or 26.47% ranked next followed by matters not before court with 12 or 11.76% of the sample. The list is rounded off by the accused being remanded into custody with 10 or 9.80% and warrants issued but stayed with 7 or 6.86% of the sample.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 6.0a: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment for matters heard in the Manchester Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subpoena crown witness	129	16.06
Legal representative to be settled	99	12.33
Legal aid assignment	26	3.24
Investigating officer unavailable	21	2.62
Warrant to issue	19	2.37
Sub-total	294	36.61

Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance (n)= 803

A sample of 803 adjournments and continuances heard during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester revealed that 129 or 16.06% of the matters were adjourned to subpoena crown witness. Adjournments for legal representative to be settled with 99 or 12.33% of the sample and adjournments for legal aid assignment with 26 or 3.24% rank next. Adjournments due to investigating officer unavailable with 21 or 2.62% and warrant to issue with 19 or 2.37% each complete the top 5 reasons for adjournments for the term based on the sample. The reasons for adjournment listed above accounted for 36.61% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 6.0b: Sampling distribution of common reasons for continuance for matters heard in the Manchester Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continuance	233	29.02
Plea and Case Management Hearing	105	13.08
Bail application	45	5.60
Sentencing	21	2.62
Sub-total	404	50.31

Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance (n)= 803

The analysis of adjournments makes a distinction between those incidences, which may be considered avoidable due to either internal or external factors, and those, which are intrinsic to the progression of a case. The above table highlights the primary reasons for adjournment gleaned from the sample, which may be considered as simply intrinsic to the progression of some cases. These reasons are classified as reasons for ‘continuance.’ As seen in the above table, adjournments for other procedural events, broadly termed as “continuance” accounted for 233 or 29.02% of the sample. Adjournments for plea and case management hearings with 105 or 13.08%, bail applications with 45 or 5.60% and for sentencing with 21 or 2.62% also featured

among such reasons. The reasons for continuance listed above accounted for 50.31% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 7.0: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Manchester Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guilty Plea	72	30.00
No Evidence Offered - Discharged	61	25.42
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty - Discharged	23	9.58
Dismissed	18	7.50
No Further Evidence Offered - Discharged	17	7.08
Sub-total	191	79.58

Sample size (n)= 240

A sample of 191 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester in 2020 revealed that guilty pleas accounted for the largest proportion with 72 or 30% of the sample. Matters discharged due to no evidence being offered accounted 61 or 25.42% of the sample, while matters discharged formal verdict of not guilty with 23 or 9.58% was next. Matters dismissed with 18 or 7.50% and matters discharged due to no further evidence offered with 17 or 7.08% complete the top 5 methods of disposition during the year. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 31.25%

Table 8.0: Sampling distribution of the times to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	98
Mean	179.8571
Std. Error of Mean	18.60143
Median	93.0000
Mode	93.00
Std. Deviation	184.14472
Skewness	1.697

Std. Error of Skewness	.244
Range	786.00
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	794.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester in 2020 is roughly 180 days. The median time and the most frequently occurring time are both 93 days. The high standard deviation indicates a large variation of scores in the data set, with the skewness indicating that the bulk of the scores fell below the mean. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 794 days and the minimum time taken is 8 days. The average time taken to dispose of 31 Gun Court cases in the year was 151 days or roughly 5 months.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)		Approximate number of new cases filed-Gun Court	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%)- Gun court
208	116	55.77	432		67	121	180.60

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Manchester Circuit Court as a whole and for a subset of Gun Court cases in the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 208 new cases were filed, while 116 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 55.77%, which is 10.58 percentage points above the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year,

roughly 6 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 432 cases overall were heard during the year at the Manchester Circuit Court. As a subset of overall Circuit Court activity, it is further shown that 67 new gun court cases were filed during the year, while 121 were disposed or became inactive, leading to an estimated case clearance rate of 180.60% for these cases.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
70	24	65.71

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 70 trial dates set in the year, 24 were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of 65.71% for the year, which is 6.45 percentage points higher than the 2019 trial date certainty rate. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 7 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Manchester Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	475
Mean	299.7137
Std. Error of Mean	8.82848
Median	234.0000
Mode	234.00
Std. Deviation	192.41236
Skewness	.183
Std. Error of Skewness	.112
Range	942.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	955.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over the 2020 calendar year. A sample of 475 active matters at the

end of the year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 300 days or roughly 10 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case and the median age are both 234 days. The moderate standard deviation is an indication of some variation in the individual scores around the mean. The modest positive skewness indicates that slightly more of the scores fell above the overall mean. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 955 days or roughly 2.7 years, while the minimum is 13 days.

Chapter 5.0: The Portland Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges presides over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious Gun related cases are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of Portland for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance, case disposal rates and trial date certainty rate.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the Portland Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Portland Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate Number of new cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Overall Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)		Approximate Number of new cases heard-Gun Court	Number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Case Disposal Rate (%)- Gun court
25	3	12.00	22		5	0	0

It is seen in the above table that in the Portland Circuit Court as a whole for the year ended December 31, 2020, 25 new cases were heard during the year, of which 3 were disposed, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 12%, which is 29.79 percentage points below 2019. This rate suggests that roughly 1 in every 10 cases filed were disposed during the year. There were 22 active Circuit Court cases traversed at year end. As a subset of total Circuit Court activity, the table also shows that there were 5 new Gun Court cases heard in the year, however, none were disposed so a disposal rate is not reportable.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2020

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Jury trial	39	100
Total	39	100

A sample of 39 new cases heard in 2020 in the Circuit Court in Portland, revealed that all were jury trial.

Table 3.0: Sampling distribution of the most frequent charges filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	7	18.42
Rape	5	13.16
Illegal possession of firearm	4	10.53
Possession of identity information	4	10.53
Murder	3	7.89
Wounding with intent	3	7.89
Extortion	2	5.26
Forgery	2	5.26
Illegal possession of ammunition	2	5.26
Sub-total	32	84.21

NB: Sample size (n) = 38

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland in 2020. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. It is shown that sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 7 or 18.42%, rape with 5 or 13.16% and illegal possession of firearm and possession of identity information each with 4 or 10.53% account for the largest proportion.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of offenders involved in matters heard over the 2020 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	165	95.93
Female	7	4.07
Total	172	100.00

A sample of 172 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland over the year, revealed that 165 or 95.93% of these matters involved males, while 7 or 4.07% involved females.

Table 5.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of persons charged for matters heard in the Portland Circuit Court during the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	78
Mean	33.3205
Std. Error of Mean	1.61015
Median	28.5000
Mode	25.00
Std. Deviation	14.22043
Skewness	.664
Std. Error of Skewness	.272
Range	54.00
Minimum	14.00
Maximum	68.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 78 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Portland over the year ended December 31, 2020, the average age of accused persons was 33 years, while the median age was 28.50 years and the most frequently occurring age was 25 years.

The standard deviation of roughly 14 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the individual age distribution. The positive skewness shown is an indication that there were marginally more ages that fall below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 68 years and the lowest is 14 years.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland in the year ended December 31, 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance for matters heard in the Portland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment/ continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Legal representative to be settled	9	20.93
Attorneys absent	7	16.28
Investigating officer unavailable	4	9.30
File to be completed	3	6.98
Legal aid assignment	3	6.98
Subpoena	3	6.98
Warrant	3	6.98
Sub-total	32	74.42

NB: Sample size for reasons for adjournment/continuance (n)= 43

A sample of 43 adjournments and continuances heard during the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Portland Circuit Court revealed that 9 or 20.93% of the matters were adjourned for the legal representative to be settled. Attorneys absent with 7 or 16.28% and adjournments due to the unavailability of the investigating officer with 4 or 11.76% rank next.

Table 7.0: Sampling Distribution of the Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Portland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Guilty – Discharged	21	42.86
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	11	22.45
No Further Evidence Offered – Discharged	5	10.20
Nolle Prosequere	5	10.20
Guilty	4	8.16
Guilty Plea	2	4.08
Transferred	1	2.04
Total	49	100.00

A sample of 49 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in 2020 revealed that matters discharged due to not guilty outcomes with 21 or 42.86% and matters discharged due to no evidence being offered with 11 or 22.45% accounted for the largest proportion. Matters discharged due to no further evidence being offered and Nolle Prosequere entered with 5 or 10.20% each rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 12.24%. Strictly speaking, Nolle Prosequere entered renders a case as inactive but are included here for statistical purposes.

Table 8.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	45
Mean	817.4667
Std. Error of Mean	86.24870
Median	779.0000
Mode	502.00
Std. Deviation	578.57386
Skewness	.746
Std. Error of Skewness	.354
Range	2134.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	2149.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of 45 matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Portland during the year is 817 days. The median time is 779 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 502 days. The standard deviation of 579 days indicates some variation of scores in the data set. The positive skewness suggests that a slightly more of the scores in the data set fall below the average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 2149 days, while the minimum is 15 days.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of court cases filed-Gun Court	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%) - Gun court
25	32	128.00	97	5	5	100

The table above provides a summary of the gross case clearance rates in the Portland Circuit Court as a whole and for the subset of Gun Court cases for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 25 new cases were filed in the Circuit Court as a whole, while 32 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate gross case clearance rate of 128%, an increase of 41.43 percentage points. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 13 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 97 cases overall were heard during the year at the Portland Circuit Court. As a subset, the table further shows that 5 new gun court cases were filed in the year and an equivalent number disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an estimated clearance rate of 100% for gun court cases.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
38	5	86.84

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 38 trial dates set during the year, 5 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of 86.84% for the year, a result

means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 9 preceded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Portland Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	98
Mean	466.3571
Std. Error of Mean	37.09837
Median	430.0000
Mode	430.00
Std. Deviation	367.25511
Skewness	1.019
Std. Error of Skewness	.244
Range	1358.00
Minimum	66.00
Maximum	1424.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland over the 2020 calendar year. A sample of 98 active matters at the end of the year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 466 days or roughly 15.5 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case and the median age are both 430 days. The moderate standard deviation is an indication of some dispersion in the individual scores around the mean. The positive skewness is an indication that proportionately more of the scores in the data set were below the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1424 days or roughly 4 years, while the minimum is 66 days.

Chapter 6.0: The St. Ann Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious Gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court, depending on the dynamics of the case. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of St. Ann for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates as well as the trial date certainty rate.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the Portland Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Ann Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined heard	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined	Approximate Overall Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases(Circuit Court and Gun Court combined		Approximate number of new cases heard-Gun Court	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%)—gun court
39	15	38.46	24		21	11	52.38

It is seen in the above table that in the St. Ann Circuit Court as a whole for the year ended December 31, 2020, 39 new cases were heard, of which 15 were disposed or became inactive, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 38.46, which is 1.26 percentage points below the corresponding figure in 2019. This rate suggests that about 4 in every 10 cases filed were disposed during the year. There were a combined 24 active traversed cases at the end of Circuit Court in 2020. As a subset of total Circuit Court activity, the table also shows that there were 21 new Gun Court cases heard in the year, of which 11 were disposed. This led to a case disposal rate of 52.38% for the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2020

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Electing Judge / Jury	92	100
Total	92	100

A sample of 92 new matters heard in 2020 in the Circuit Court in St. Ann over the year, revealed that all were electing judge or jury.

Table 3.0: Sampling distribution of the most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illegal possession of firearm	25	27.47
Possession of identity information	15	16.48
Illegal possession of ammunition	11	12.09
Shooting with intent	11	12.09
Assault with the intent to rob	4	4.40
Murder	4	4.40
Sub-total	70	76.92

NB: Sample size (n) = 91

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Ann in 2020. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, illegal possession of firearm with 25 or 27.47%, possession of identity information with 15 or 16.48% and shooting with intent and illegal possession of ammunition with 11 or 12.09% each account for the highest proportion of charges heard in the year in the St. Ann Circuit Court. Assault with intent to rob and murder with 4 or 4.40% each rank next. The charges listed account for 76.92% of the total sample.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of offenders involved in matters heard over the 2020 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	697	93.06
Female	52	6.94
Total	749	100.00

A sample of 749 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann over the year ended December 31, 2020, revealed that 93.06% of these matters involved male males and 6.94% involved females.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in St. Ann Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	383	60.22
Remanded into Custody	223	35.06
Warrant Issued But Stayed	20	3.14
Warrant Issued	10	1.57
Total	636	100.00

Using a sample of 636 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann during the 2020 calendar year, bail extended with 383 or 60.22% accounted for the largest proportion of the 'warrant statuses'. The Accused being remanded into custody accounted for 223 or 35.06% followed by warrants issued but stayed with 3.14% and warrants issued with 1.57%.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the St. Ann Circuit Court in St. James in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, trial certainty rate and age of active cases.

Table 6.0: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in 2020

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subpoena investigating officer	199	38.27
Continuance (procedural events)	122	23.46
Subpoena	63	12.12
Subpoena complainant	45	8.65
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) result outstanding	26	5.00
Sub-total	455	87.50

Sample size (n)= 520

A sample of 520 adjournments during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann revealed that 199 or 38.27% of the matters were adjourned to subpoena investigating officer. This was followed by continuance (procedural events) with 122 or 23.46% and by adjournments for subpoenas being issued with 63 or 12.12% of the reasons. Adjournments to subpoenas issued to complainants with 45 or 8.65% and Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) result outstanding with 5% round off the top five reasons for adjournment in 2020.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the Portland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Guilty	36	24.00
Transferred	26	17.33
No Further Evidence Offered – Discharged	24	16.00
Dismissed	21	14.00
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	18	12.00
Sub-total	125	83.33

Sample size (n) = 150

A sample of 150 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann in 2020 revealed that matters with a not guilty verdict accounted for the largest share with 36 or 24%, while matters transferred with 26 or 17.33% of the sample rank next. Matters discharged due to no further evidence being offered with 24 or 16%, those dismissed with 21 or 14% of the sample and matters discharged due to no evidence being offered with 12% rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 8.67%.

Table 8.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	146
Mean	216.3493
Std. Error of Mean	15.41263
Median	158.5000
Mode	266.00
Std. Deviation	186.23147
Skewness	1.017
Std. Error of Skewness	.201
Range	899.00
Minimum	6.00
Maximum	905.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann over the year is 216 days or roughly 7.2 months. The median time is 158.5 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 266 days or about 8.9 months. The standard deviation of 186 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The positive skewness suggests that a large proportion of scores fell below the average time. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 905 days or 2.5 years, while the minimum was 6 days. These estimations suggest that all the cases are being

disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 146 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates. The average time taken to dispose of 80 Gun Court cases was 224 days or roughly 7.5 months.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard in the year (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases filed-Gun Court	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%) -gun court
39	102	261.54	264	21	48	228.57

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rate in the St. Ann Circuit Court as a whole and in the Gun Court in particular for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 39 new cases were filed, while 102 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 261.54%, an increase of 159.30 percentage points when compared to 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 26 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 264 cases overall were heard during the year at the St. Ann Circuit Court. It is further shown that as a subset of 21 new gun court cases were filed in the year, while 48 cases were disposed or became inactive, leading to an estimated clearance rate of 228.57% for gun court cases.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
220	81	63.18

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 220 trial dates set during the year, 81 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of 63.18% for the year, which is 18.21 percentage points above the recorded 2019 rate. This result also means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, only 6 preceded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the St. Ann Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	363
Mean	517.1901
Std. Error of Mean	7.16932
Median	542.0000
Mode	549.00
Std. Deviation	136.59392
Skewness	.103
Std. Error of Skewness	.128
Range	905.00
Minimum	165.00
Maximum	1070.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann during the year. A sample of 363 active matters at the end of the 2020 calendar year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 517 days. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 549 days or roughly 18.3 months. The moderate standard deviation observed is an indication of some dispersion in the individual ages around the mean, while the small positive skewness is an indication that most of the scores in the data set were clustered around the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1070 days or 3 years, while the minimum is 165 days.

Chapter 7.0: The St. Catherine Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious Gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of St. Catherine for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates as well as the trial date certainty rate among other useful data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard, the case disposal rate and the distribution of the types of charges brought before the court during the year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Catherine Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard	Approximate Number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Approximate Case disposal rate (%)	Number of traversed cases
113	26	23.01	87

It is seen in the above table that in the St. Catherine Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020, 113 new cases were heard during the year, of which 26 cases were disposed, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 23.01%. This rate suggests that roughly 2 in every 10 cases filed were disposed during the year. There were 87 active traversed cases.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2020

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Judge Alone	55	100.0
Total	55	100.0

A sample of 55 new cases heard in 2020 in the Circuit Court in St. Catherine, revealed that all were judge alone hearings.

Table 3.0: Sampling Distribution on the most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	62	26.05
Rape	49	20.59
Grievous sexual assault	18	7.56
Possession of identity information	16	6.72
Murder	12	5.04
Sub-total	157	65.97

NB: Sample size (n)= 238

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Catherine in 2020. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 62 or 26.05%, rape with 49 or 20.59% and grievous sexual assault 18 or 7.56% of the sample account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the St. Catherine Circuit Court. Possession of identity information with 16 or 6.72% and murder with 12 or 5.04% complete the list of the top 5 charges. The leading charges listed above account for 65.97% of the total sample of 238 charges.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of persons charged in relation to cases filed

Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	891	96.22
Female	35	3.78
Total	926	100.00

A sample of 926 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine during the year, revealed that 96.22% of these matters involved male males and 3.78% females.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age distribution of offenders for matters heard in the St. Catherine Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (Age in years)

Number of observations	622
Mean	29.4566
Std. Error of Mean	.47076
Median	26.0000
Mode	18.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	11.74064
Skewness	1.102
Std. Error of Skewness	.098
Range	56.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	69.00

^a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The output above revealed that from a sample of 622 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine over the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 29 years while the median age was 26 years and the most frequently occurring age was 18 years. The standard deviation of roughly 12 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the individual age distribution, while the positive skewness shown is an indication that a larger proportion of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 69 years and the lowest is 13 years.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	219	64.22
Remanded into Custody	101	29.62
Warrant Issued	13	3.81
Not Before The Court	7	2.05
Warrant Issued But Stayed	1	0.29
Total	341	100.00

Using a sample of 341 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine during the 2020 calendar year, it is seen in 219 or 64.22% of the matters that bail was extended, while in 101 or 29.62% of the matters, the accused was remanded into custody. Warrants were issued in 13 or 3.81% of the matters and matters not before court with 7 or 2.05% rank next. Warrant issued but stayed accounted for the remaining 0.29% of the sample.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 7.0a: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance for matters heard in the St. Catherine Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subpoena crown witness	251	40.29
file to be completed	169	27.13
Plea and Case Management Hearing (Continuance)	68	10.91
Subpoena investigating officer	24	3.85
File not in court	16	2.57
Sub-total	528	84.75

Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance =623

A sample of 623 adjournments heard during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine revealed that 251 or 40.29% of the matters were adjourned to subpoena crown witnesses. Adjournments for files to be completed with 169 or 27.13% and continuances (delays intrinsic to the progression of a case) for plea and case management hearings with 68 or 10.91% of the sample round off the top three reasons for adjournment. Adjournments to subpoena investigating officer with 24 or 3.85% and adjournments due to files not in court with 16 or 2.57% round off the top five reasons for adjournment for the year. The reasons for adjournments listed above accounted for 84.75% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 8.0: Sampling distribution on the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the St. Catherine Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	62	28.97
Transferred	62	28.97
Guilty Plea	50	23.36
No Further Evidence Offered - Discharged	11	5.14
Nolle Prosequere	11	5.14
Sub-total	196	91.59

Sample size= 214

A sample of 214 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine in the 2020 calendar year revealed that matters transferred to another court and matters discharge for no evidence being offered accounted for the largest share with 62 or 28.97% of the sample each, while guilty pleas with 50 or 23.36% ranks next. Matters discharged due to no further evidence offered and dispositions by Nolle Prosequere with 11 or 5.14% each of the sample rounds off the list. The estimated conviction rate from this sample data is 24.76%.

Table 9.0: Descriptive statistics on time to disposition for matters completed in the St. Catherine Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	164
Mean	307.5366
Std. Error of Mean	16.30543
Median	265.0000
Mode	401.00
Std. Deviation	208.81143
Skewness	.461
Std. Error of Skewness	.190
Range	912.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	913.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine over the year is 308 days or roughly 10.3 months. The median time is 265 days and the most frequently occurring time is 401 days. The standard deviation of 209 days indicates some variation of the individual times to disposition in the data set, while the positive skewness suggests that a slightly more of scores fell below the overall average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 913 days or 2.5 years, while the minimum time taken was 1 day. These estimations suggest that a significant number of the cases are being disposed in under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 164 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Clearance rate (%)	Number of cases heard
113	101	89.38	395

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the St. James Rural Circuit Court for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 113 new cases were filed, while 101 cases were either disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 89.38%, which is 40.32 percentage points below the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 9 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 395 cases overall were heard during the year at the St. James Rural Circuit Court.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of Adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
161	63	60.87

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 161 trial dates set in the year, 63 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of roughly 60.87% for the year, which is 27.95 percentage points above result for the 2019 calendar year. This result also means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, 6 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the St. Catherine Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	504
Mean	489.7619
Std. Error of Mean	12.62627
Median	514.0000
Mode	514.00
Std. Deviation	283.45901
Skewness	.306
Std. Error of Skewness	.109
Range	1358.00
Minimum	44.00
Maximum	1402.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine over the year. A sample of 504 active matters at the end of the 2020 calendar year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 490 days or 16.3 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case and the median age are both 514 days

or 17.1 months. The moderate standard deviation is an indication of some variation in the individual scores, while the small positive skewness is an indication that the ages were generally clustered around the overall mean age, though slightly more fell below it. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1402 days or 3.9 years, while the minimum is 44 days.

Chapter 8.0: The St. Elizabeth Parish Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious Gun related charges are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court, depending on the case dynamics. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of St. Elizabeth for the 2020 year ended December 31, 2020. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates among other essential data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)		Approximate number of new cases heard-Gun Court	Approximate number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%) - Gun court
57	21	36.84	36		28	13	46.43

It is seen in the above table that in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court as a whole for the year ended December 31, 2020, 57 new cases were heard over the year, of which 21 cases were disposed, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 36.84, an increase of 8.10 percentage points when compared to 2019. This rate suggests that about 4 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year. There were active cases 28 traversed cases. The table also shows a subset of 28 new Gun Court cases filed in the year, of which 13 were disposed. This led to a case disposal rate of 46.43% for the year for gun court cases.

Table 2.0: Sampling Distribution on the most frequent charges filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
illegal possession of firearm	41	25.00
Illegal possession of ammunition	22	13.41
Robbery with aggravation	15	9.15
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	14	8.54
Rape	10	6.10
Sub-total	102	62.20

NB: Sample size (n)= 164

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Elizabeth in the 2020 calendar year. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, illegal possession of firearm with 41 or 25%, illegal possession of ammunition with 22 or 13.41% and robbery with aggravation with 15 or 9.15% of the sample account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court. Sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 14 or 8.54% and rape with 10 or 6.10% complete the list of the top 5 charges. The leading charges listed above account for 62.20% of the total sample of 164 charges.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of persons charged in relation to matters heard in 2020 at the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	448	97.18
Female	13	2.82
Total	461	100.00

A sample of 461 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth over the year, revealed that 97.18% of these matters involved males while 2.82% involved females.

Table 4.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of offenders for matters heard in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	109
Mean	30.5596
Std. Error of Mean	1.05702
Median	28.0000
Mode	22.00
Std. Deviation	11.03566
Skewness	1.529
Std. Error of Skewness	.231
Range	48.00
Minimum	16.00
Maximum	64.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 109 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth in the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 31 years, while the median age was 28 years and the most frequently occurring age was 22 years. The moderate standard deviation of 11 years is an indication of some amount of variation of the scores around the mean, while the positive skewness shown is an indication that a larger proportion of the

scores in the data set fell below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 64 years and the lowest is 16 years.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in St. Ann Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	61	98.39
Warrant Issued	1	1.61
Total	62	100.00

Using a sample of 62 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth during the 2020 calendar year, it is seen in 61 or 98.39% of these matters, bail was extended, while warrant was issued in the remaining 1.61% of the sample.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 6.0a: Sampling Distribution of common reasons for adjournment for matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
File to be completed	31	9.97
Legal representative to be settled	22	7.07
Subpoena crown witness	13	4.18
Crown witness unavailable	11	3.54
Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding	10	3.22
Sub-total	87	27.97

Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance (n) =311

A sample of 311 adjournments heard during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth revealed that adjournments for files to be completed with 31 or 9.97% and for legal

representative to be settled with 22 or 7.07% accounted for the largest shares of the sample. Adjournments to subpoena crown witness with 13 or 4.18%, adjournments due to the unavailability of crown witnesses with 11 or 3.54% and Communication, Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding with 10 or 3.22% rank next. The reasons for adjournment listed above accounted for 27.97% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 6.0b: Distribution of common reasons for continuance for matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continuance (Procedural events)	99	31.83
Sentencing	34	10.93
Plea and Case Management Hearing	24	7.72
Bail application	12	3.86
Sub-total	169	54.34

Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance (n) =311

The analysis of adjournments makes a distinction between those incidences, which may be considered avoidable due to either internal or external factors, and those, which are intrinsic to the progression of a case. The above table highlights the primary reasons for adjournment gleaned from the sample, which may be considered as simply intrinsic to the progression of some cases. These reasons are classified as reasons for ‘continuance.’ As seen in the above table, adjournments for other procedural events, broadly termed as “continuance” with 99 or 31.83%, adjournments for sentencing with 34 or 10.93% and Plea and case management hearings with 24 or 7.72% of the sample featured among such reasons. Adjournments for bail applications accounted for 12 or 3.86% of the sample. The reasons for continuance listed above accounted for 54.34% of the total incidences of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Guilty	39	40.63
Guilty Plea	33	34.38
Not Guilty - Discharged	22	22.92
Found Guilty	2	2.08
Total	96	100.00

A sample of 96 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth in the 2020 calendar year revealed that matters discharged from not guilty verdicts accounted for the largest share with 39 or 40.63%, while guilty pleas with 33 or 34.38% was next. Matters discharged from not guilty verdicts with 22 or 22.92% and those found guilty with 2.08% round of the list. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 36.46%.

Table 8.0: Descriptive Statistics on time to disposition for matters completed in the St. Elizabeth Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	70
Mean	327.5143
Std. Error of Mean	37.36062
Median	300.5000
Mode	21.00
Std. Deviation	312.58134
Skewness	.442
Std. Error of Skewness	.287
Range	909.00
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	917.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth during the year is 328 days or roughly 10.9 months, while the median time is 300.5 days and the most frequently occurring time is 21

days. The standard deviation of 313 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The positive skewness suggests that slightly more of the scores are fell below the series average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 917 days or roughly 2.5 years, while 8 days was the minimum. These estimations suggest that a notable number of the cases resolved are being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 70 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates. From a sample of 52-gun court matters disposed, it is seen that the average time to disposition for the year was 329 days or roughly 11 months.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases filed-Gun Court	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%)
57	48	84.21	200	28	28	100

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rate in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court as a whole and Gun Court cases in particular for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 57 new cases were filed, while 48 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 84.21%, an increase of 44.68 percentage points when compared to 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 8 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 200 cases overall were heard during the year at the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court. It is further shown that as a subset of total Circuit Court activity, 28 new Gun Court cases were filed in the year, while an equivalent number were either disposed

or became inactive during the year, leading to an estimated case clearance rate of 100% for gun court cases.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
41	8	80.49

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 41 trial dates set in the year, of which 8 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of 80.49% for the year, which is 9.06 percentage points above the 2019 recorded rate. This result also means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 8 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	270
Mean	503.0111
Std. Error of Mean	17.66508
Median	535.0000
Mode	549.00
Std. Deviation	290.2668
	2
Skewness	.216
Std. Error of Skewness	.148
Range	1179.00
Minimum	28.00
Maximum	1207.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth over the year. A sample of 270 active matters at the end of the year reveals that the average age of active cases before the court is 503 days or roughly 16.8 months.

The most frequently occurring age of active cases is 549 days and the median age is 535 days. The moderate standard deviation is an indication of some dispersion in the individual scores around the mean, while the low positive skewness is an indication of some cluster of scores around the mean, though slightly more of the scores in the data set fell below the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1207 days or roughly 3.4 years, while the minimum is 28 days.

Chapter 9.0: The St. Mary Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges presides over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of St. Mary for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the Portland Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Mary Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate Overall Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)		Approximate number of new cases heard-Gun Court	Approximate number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%) -Gun Court
64	31	48.44	33		7	2	28.57

It is seen in the above table that in the St. Mary Circuit Court as a whole for the year ended December 31, 2020, 64 new cases were heard during the year, of which 31 were disposed or became inactive, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 48.44%, which is 2.88 percentage points above the case disposal rate recorded in 2019. This rate suggests that about 5 in every 10 cases filed were disposed during the year. There were 33 cases traversed as at the end of the year. As a subset of total Circuit Court activity, the table also shows that there were 7 new Gun Court cases filed in the year, of which 2 were disposed or became inactive. This led to a case disposal rate of 28.57% for the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	42	30.88
Rape	20	14.71
Illegal possession of firearm	11	8.09
Illegal possession of ammunition	10	7.35
Murder	7	5.15
Sub-total	90	66.18

NB: Sample size (n)= 136

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Mary in 2020. The charges listed for the St. Mary Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 42 or 30.88%, rape with 20 or 14.71% and illegal possession of firearm with 11 or 8.09% account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the St. Mary Circuit Court in 2020. Illegal possession of ammunition with 10 or 7.35% and murder with 5.15% rank next. The charges listed above account for 66.18% of the sample.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of persons charged in relation to cases entered before the St. Mary Circuit Court in 2020.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	453	98.48
Female	7	1.52
Total	460	100.00

A sample of 460 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the year, revealed that 98.41% of these matters were male and 1.52% were female.

Table 4.0: Descriptive Statistics of the age of persons charged for matters heard in the St. Mary Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (years)

Number of observations	332
Mean	27.5572
Std. Error of Mean	.60987
Median	25.0000
Mode	17.00
Std. Deviation	11.11243
Skewness	1.092
Std. Error of Skewness	.134
Range	55.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	68.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 332 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 28 years, while the median age was 25 years and the most frequently occurring age was 17 years. The standard deviation of 11 years is an indication that there is some variation in the individual age distribution. The positive skewness shown is an indication that more of the scores fell below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 68 years and the lowest is 13 years.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance for matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subpoena crown witness	64	27.00
Legal representative to be settled	22	9.28
Subpoena	21	8.86
File to be completed	15	6.33
Investigating officer unavailable	15	6.33
Sub-total	137	57.81

Sample size of reasons for adjournments/continuance = 237

A sample of 237 adjournments during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary revealed that 64 or 27% of the matters were adjourned to subpoena crown witness. Adjournments for legal representative to be settled with 22 or 9.28%, adjournments for other subpoenas with 21 or 8.86% rank next. Adjournments for files to be completed and adjournments due to the unavailability of investigating officer with 15 or 6.33% each round off the top reasons for adjournment for the year. The reasons for adjournments listed above accounted for 57.81% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the St. Mary Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guilty Plea	51	40.16
Guilty	23	18.11
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	21	16.54
Dismissed	16	12.60
No Case Submission Upheld	9	7.09
Sub-total	120	94.49

Sample size (n)= 127

A sample of 127 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary in the 2020 calendar year revealed that guilty pleas accounted for the largest share with 51 or 40.16% of the sample, while guilty verdicts 23 or 18.11% followed this. Matters discharged due to no evidence being offered

with 21 or 16.54%, matters dismissed with 16 or 12.60% and no case submission upheld matters with 7.09% round off the list. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 58.27%.

Table 8.0: Descriptive Statistics on time to disposition for matters completed in the St. Mary Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	127
Mean	379.4331
Std. Error of Mean	37.72687
Median	151.0000
Mode	1092.00
Std. Deviation	425.16028
Skewness	1.365
Std. Error of Skewness	.215
Range	1615.00
Minimum	4.00
Maximum	1619.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of 127 matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary during the year is 379 days or roughly 12.6 months. The median time is 151 days or approximately 5 months, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 1092 days or roughly 3 years. The high standard deviation indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set while the moderate positive skewness suggests that a proportionately more of scores fall below the overall mean. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1619 days or roughly 4.5 years, while the minimum time is 4 days. These estimations suggest that a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; with the larger proportion being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 127 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates. From a sample of 28

disposed gun court matters, it was also observed that the average time to disposition is 563 days or roughly 1.6 years.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate overall Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard (Circuit Court and Gun Court combined)	Approximate number of new cases filed-Gun Court	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%) - Gun Court
64	88	137.50	205	7	7	100

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rate for the St. Mary Circuit Court as a whole and the Gun Court in particular for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 64 new cases were filed, while 88 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 137.50%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 14 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 205 cases were heard during the year at the St. Mary Circuit Court. The data further suggests that 7 new gun court cases were filed in the year, while an equivalent number were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an estimated clearance rate of 100% for Gun Court cases.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
72	20	72.22

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 72 trial dates set in the year, 20 were adjourned. This reveals as estimated trial date certainty rate of 72.22% for the year, which is 16.51 percentage points above the 2019 rate. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 7 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the St. Mary Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	321
Mean	553.7196
Std. Error of Mean	21.99057
Median	402.0000
Mode	402.00
Std. Deviation	393.99350
Skewness	1.057
Std. Error of Skewness	.136
Range	1984.00
Minimum	21.00
Maximum	2005.00

The above descriptive statistics provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the 2020 calendar year. A sample of 321 active matters at the end of the year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 554 days or roughly 1.5 years. The most frequently occurring age and the median age are both 402 days. The relatively large standard deviation is an indication of some dispersion of the scores around the mean, while the positive skewness suggests that proportionately more of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 2005 days or 5.6 years, while the minimum is 21 days.

Chapter 10.0: The Trelawny Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of Trelawny for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries, common reasons for adjournment as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates among other data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the Portland Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Trelawny Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases
33	7	21.21	26

It is seen in the above table that in the Trelawny Rural Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020, 33 new cases were heard over the year, of which 7 cases were disposed, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 21.21%, which is 41.65 percentage points below the case disposal rate recorded in 2019. This rate suggests that between 2 and 3 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year. There were 26 traversed cases, which were all active at the end of the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possession of identity information	25	42.37%
Murder	9	15.25%
Rape	5	8.47%
Possession of access device	3	5.08%
Illegal possession of firearm	2	3.39%
Incest	2	3.39%
Wounding with intent	2	3.39%
Sub-total	48	81.36%

NB: Sample size (n)= 59

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in Trelawny in 2020. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, possession of identity information with 25 or 42.37%, murder with 9 or 15.25% and rape with 5 or 8.47% account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the Circuit Court.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender and age distribution of offenders involved in matters heard over the 2020 calendar year.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard during the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	185	91.58
Female	17	8.42
Total	202	100.00

A sample of 202 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny over the year, revealed that 91.58% of these matters involved males and 8.42% involved females.

Table 4.0: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of persons charged in relation to matters entered in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	25
Mean	29.1200
Std. Error of Mean	2.00027
Median	25.0000
Mode	22.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	10.00133
Skewness	1.884
Std. Error of Skewness	.464
Range	34.00
Minimum	21.00
Maximum	55.00

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown_a

The output above reveals that from a sample of 25 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny in the 2020 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 29 years, while the median age was 25 years and the most frequently occurring age was 22 years. The modest standard deviation of 10 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the age distribution, while the positive skewness shown suggests that a larger proportion of the scores in the data set fell below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 55 years and the lowest is 21 years.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance for matters heard in the Trelawny Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reason for adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Legal representative to be settled	15	23.44
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	9	14.06
File to be completed	8	12.50
Sentencing (Continuance)	6	9.38
Investigating officer unavailable	5	7.81
Plea and Case Management Hearing (Continuance)	5	7.81
Sub-total	48	75.00

Sample size= 64

A sample of 64 adjournments during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny revealed that 15 or 23.44% of the matters were adjourned for legal representative to be settled. Adjournments for defendants not appearing leading to warrants being issued with 9 or 14.06% and adjournments for files to be completed with 8 or 12.50% rank next. Continuances (delays intrinsic to the progression of a case) for sentencing with 6 or 9.38% and adjournments due to the unavailability of investigating officer and for plea and case management hearings with 5 or 7.81% each round off the top reasons for adjournments/continuances during the year. The reasons for adjournments listed above accounted for 75% of the total incidence of adjournments/continuance sampled.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guilty Verdict	22	30.99
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	17	23.94
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	7	9.86
Dismissed	6	8.45
Not Guilty – Discharged	5	7.04
Sub-total	57	80.28

Sample size (n)= 71

A sample of 71 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny in 2020 revealed that guilty verdicts accounted for the largest share with 22 or 30.99%, while cases discharged due to no evidence offered with 17 or 23.94% were next. Matters discharged due to formal not guilty verdicts with 7 or 9.86% of the sample, matters dismissed with 8.45% and matters discharged due to not guilty outcomes with 7.04% rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 30.99%.

Table 8.0: Descriptive statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed in the Trelawny Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	59
Mean	427.7119
Std. Error of Mean	35.54645
Median	396.0000
Mode	625.00
Std. Deviation	273.03745
Skewness	.788
Std. Error of Skewness	.311
Range	1489.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	1490.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose sample of 59 matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny over the year is 428 days or 1.2 years. The most frequently occurring time stand at 625 days. The moderately large standard deviation indicates some variation of scores in the data set while the positive skewness suggests that a greater proportion of scores are below the series average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1490 days or 4.1 years, while the minimum time taken was 1 day. These estimates suggest that a significant proportion of cases is being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 59 disposed matters were used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard
33	42	127.27	94

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Trelawny Rural Circuit Court for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 33 new cases were filed, while 42 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 127.27%, which is 27.02 percentage points below the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 13 cases were disposed. The table also shows that overall 94 cases were heard during the year at the Trelawny Rural Circuit Court.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
32	0	100

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 32 trial dates set in the year, none was adjourned. This reveals as estimated trial date certainty rate of 100% for the year, which is 4.17 percentage points above the 2019 rate. This result also means that for 100% of the trial dates set in the year proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Trelawny Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	118
Mean	482.5424
Std. Error of Mean	36.17051
Median	423.0000
Mode	66.00
Std. Deviation	392.91228
Skewness	.959
Std. Error of Skewness	.223
Range	1765.00
Minimum	43.00
Maximum	1808.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny over the year. A sample of 118 active matters at the end of the 2020 calendar year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 483 days or roughly 1.3 years. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 66 days. The moderate deviation is

an indication of some dispersion around the mean, while the positive skewness suggests that proportionately more of the scores in the data set fall below the overall mean age. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1808 days or 5 years, while the minimum is 43 days.

Chapter 11.0: The Westmoreland Circuit Court

1. Introduction

Circuit Court sittings operate in all parishes island-wide, catering to cases, which have been transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to the High Court jurisdiction. The Home Circuit Court is located at the Supreme Court in Kingston and primarily hears cases, which have been committed from the Corporate Area Court – Criminal Division. Supreme Court Judges preside over cases which are committed to Circuit Court in the respective parishes, in separate Terms throughout the year. Similarly, serious Gun related offences are transferred from the parish court jurisdiction to be heard in the Supreme Court jurisdiction either in the High Court Division of the Gun Court or the Circuit Court. The Judges of the Supreme Court hear all such cases, typically in the relevant parishes.

This report is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of Westmoreland for the 2020 calendar year. In particular, the report provides case count and case status summaries and methods of disposition as well as important productivity measures, namely the case clearance and case disposal rates as well as the trial date certainty rate.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland for the 2020 calendar year. Included in this section are the types and status of new cases heard and the case disposal rate of cases brought before the Portland Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Westmoreland Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases heard	Approximate number of new cases disposed, or which became inactive	Approximate Case Disposal Rate (%)	Number of traversed cases
81	44	54.32	37

It is seen in the above table that in the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2020, 81 new cases were heard during the year, of which 44 cases were disposed or became inactive, producing an approximate case disposal rate of 54.32%, which is 14.45 percentage points above the case disposal rate recorded in 2019. This rate suggests that between 5 and 6 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year. There were 37 active cases traversed at the end of the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the most frequent charges filed in the year ended December 31, 2020

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possession of Identity information	39	22.54
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	32	18.50
Rape	21	12.14
Conspiracy to obtain property by false pretense	18	10.40
Murder	16	9.25
Sub-total	126	72.83

NB: Sample size (n)= 173

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court in 2020. The charges listed for the Circuit Court are charges as committed from the parish court jurisdiction to the Supreme Court jurisdiction. These may change during the life of a case. As shown, possession of identity information with 39 or 22.54%, sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 32 or 18.50% and rape with 21 or 12.14% account for the three leading charges heard in the year at the Westmoreland Circuit Court.

3. Case demographics and warrant statuses

The ensuing tables provide a summary of the gender of persons charged in relation to cases entered in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland in 2020.

Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	623	89.51
Female	73	10.49
Total	696	100.00

A sample of 696 matters heard in the Westmoreland Circuit Court during the year, revealed that 89.51% of these matters involved males while 10.49% involved females.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in Westmoreland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	319	73.50
Remanded into Custody	103	23.73
Not Before The Court	10	2.30
Warrant Issued	1	0.23
Warrant Issued But Stayed	1	0.23
Total	434	100.00

Using a sample of 434 matters heard in the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court during the 2020 calendar year, it is seen in 319 or 73.50% of the matters that bail was extended and in 103 or 23.73% of the matters, the accused was remanded into custody. Matters not before the court accounted for 10 or 2.30% and warrant issued and warrant issued but stayed each accounted for 0.23% of the sample.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland in 2020

This subsection focuses on a descriptive analysis of the factors contributing to delays in case progression, the common methods of disposing cases as well as the estimated times to disposition and age of active cases.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance for matters heard in the Trelawny Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Reason for adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sentencing (continuance)	24	77.42
Subpoena crown witness	3	9.68
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	2	6.45
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) sample requested	2	6.45
Total	31	100.00

A sample of 31 adjournments during the 2020 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland revealed that 24 or 77.42% of the matters were adjourned for sentencing. Adjournments to subpoena crown witness with 9.68% and adjournments for defendants not appearing resulting in warrants being issued and adjournments for Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) sample being requested with 6.45% each rounds off the sample.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the Westmoreland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2020

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Dismissed	109	56.77
Not guilty	55	28.65
Guilty Plea	13	6.77
Guilty	5	2.60
Nolle Prosequere	5	2.60
Transferred	3	1.56
No Case Submission Upheld	1	0.52
Remitted to Parish Court	1	0.52
Total	192	100.00

Sample size of disposals (n)= 192

A sample of 192 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland in the 2020 calendar year revealed that matters dismissed accounted for the largest share with 109 or 56.77%, while not guilty verdicts with 55 or 28.65% of the sample was next. Guilty pleas accounted for 13 or 6.77%. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 9.37%.

Table 8.0: Descriptive Statistics on time to disposition for matters completed in the Westmoreland Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2020

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	192
Mean	391.0417
Std. Error of Mean	21.34585
Median	367.0000
Mode	280.00
Std. Deviation	295.77671
Skewness	.471
Std. Error of Skewness	.175
Range	1023.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	1025.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland over the year is 391 days or roughly 1.1 years. The median time is 367 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 280 days. The moderately large standard deviation indicates some variation of scores in the data set, while the positive skewness suggests that slightly more of scores are below the overall average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1025 days or 2.8 years, while the minimum time taken was 2 days.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2020

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Approximate Case Clearance Rate (%)	Number of cases heard
81	123	151.85	274

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court for the 2020 calendar year. It is shown that 81 new cases were filed, while 123 cases

were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to an approximate case clearance rate of 151.85%, which is 74.07 percentage points above the recorded rate for 2019. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the year, roughly 15 cases were disposed. The table also shows that 274 cases overall were heard during the year at the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 2020

Approximate number of trial dates set	Approximate number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
172	73	57.56

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 172 trial dates set in the year, of which 73 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of roughly 57.56% for the year, which is 9.98 percentage points above the 2019 recorded rate. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 6 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at the year ended December 31, 2020 in the Westmoreland Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	386
Mean	618.6632
Std. Error of Mean	14.81468
Median	574.0000
Mode	673.00
Std. Deviation	291.06236
Skewness	-.026
Std. Error of Skewness	.124
Range	1022.00
Minimum	45.00
Maximum	1067.00

The statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland in 2020. A sample of 386 active matters at the end of the 2020 calendar year revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 619 days or roughly 1.7 years. The most frequently occurring age of active case was 673 days or roughly 1.9 years. The moderate standard deviation is an indication of some dispersion around the mean, while the small negative skewness indicates that most of the scores in the data set were clustered around the mean. The maximum observed age of active cases at the end of the year is 1067 days or roughly 3 years, while the minimum is 45 days.

Conclusion

The Rural Circuit Courts demonstrated resilient performances in 2020, despite the adverse effects on the COVID-19 pandemic on general court operation. The overall case clearance rate for example, inclusive of Gun Court activity was 85.24%, which represents a fall of 7.57 percentage points when compared to 2019 but was nonetheless quite commendable. The equally important trial date certainty rate experienced an overall increase, netting out at 77.73%, which is an impressive 19.54 percentage points improvement when compared to 2019. It is important to note that in computing the 2020 trial date certainty rate, trials unavoidably rescheduled due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were isolated and did not therefore affect the measurement. The Rural Circuit Courts also recorded an average time to disposition of roughly 14 months and although this is weaker outcome than 2019 it is nonetheless encouraging, within the context that a criminal case is considered to be in a state of backlog if it is unresolved for over two years of filing. The average time to disposition for the Rural Circuit Courts as a whole in 2020 was also better than the Home Circuit Court by a factor of 0.5 (i.e. the overall average time to disposition in the Home Circuit Court for 2020 is twice that of the Rural Circuit Courts as a whole). Impressively, six of the Rural Circuit Courts featured in this report satisfied or exceeded the international standard of 90% - 110% for cases clearance rate. These were Hanover, Trelawny, Westmoreland, Portland, St. Ann and St. Mary. Despite the commendable performance, the Rural Circuit Courts continue to face challenges with avoidable adjournments for reasons such as absent investigating officers, incomplete file, CFCU report and DNA results outstanding and various subpoenas. The continuous strengthening of case management practices and improvements in cooperation from external stakeholders will go a far way in

improving general efficiency. As a whole the Rural Circuit Courts are poised to make a substantial contribution to the fulfillment of the key quantitative targets in the judiciary's strategic plan in 2021.

Glossary of Statistical Terms

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 casefile 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 either 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.

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 (both active and inactive cases).

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 35th 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.

Exponential Smoothing: Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older the 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 α — determine the weights for 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.

ⁱ Source:

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

ⁱⁱ Source:

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

