



A Special Annual Report on the Rural Circuit Courts
2019

JANUARY TO DECEMBER

Case Clearance Rate	92.81%
Case Disposal Rate	33.95%
Trial Date Certainty Rate	58.19%

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Executive Summary

This is the first comprehensive report of its kind on case activity in the Rural Circuit Courts across the island. It represents another important addition to the current fleet of reporting on the productivity of the Jamaican court system and in being able to effectively quantify the various facets of the caseload. The ability to quantify and measure court activity in this way strengthens the ability of the judicial system to objectively monitor and evaluate the court performance and to inform the interventions necessary to strengthen the capacity of the courts to deliver a high standard of justice in a timely and consistent manner. Such advances will aid greatly in furtherance of the strategic goals set out by the judiciary as part of the Chief Justice's vision of becoming the best court system in the Caribbean in three years and among the bests in the world in five years.

The report highlights some insightful statistics on the Rural Circuit Courts using a range of important court metrics. The estimated weighted average case clearance rates across the Rural Circuit Courts in 2019 was 92.81%, which is roughly 15 percentage points higher than that of the Home Circuit Court and not far behind the general performance of the criminal division of the parish courts. This result suggests that for every 100 new cases entering the Rural Circuit Courts in 2019, roughly 93 cases were disposed a result that satisfies the lower end of the international standards. The Hanover and Trelawny Circuit Courts with clearance rates of 168.63% and 154.29% respectively were the top performers on this metric while the St. Catherine Circuit Court 129.70% ranks next. The results were however not as impressive for the closely related measurement of the case disposal rate. The weighted average case disposal rate for the Rural Circuit Courts in 2019 was 33.95%, an indication that roughly 34 of every 100 new

cases entered into Circuit in 2019 were disposed in said year. This is substantially lower than that of the average court-wide rate; but is interesting approximately 17 percentage points higher than that of the Home Circuit Court. As with the case clearance rate, the Hanover Circuit Court (64.71%) and the Trelawny Circuit Court (62.86%) topped the case disposal rates. Another essential measurement which is crucial to monitoring and evaluating court performance is the trial date certainty rate which provides an indication of the extent to which trial dates set are complied with. The estimated average trial date certainty rate across the Rural Circuit Courts included in this report in 2019 was 58.19%. The circuit courts in Trelawny, St. James and St. Elizabeth are estimated to have had the highest trial date certainty rates for the year. The overall average trial date certainty rate for the Rural Circuit Courts was roughly 30 percentage points higher than that of the Home Circuit Court. Over 1000 disposed cases were sampled across the Rural Circuit Courts in this report, revealing that the average time taken to dispose of these cases was roughly 6 months, though there is a wide range in the times from as few as days to as many as several years.

The general results on several key metrics does indeed suggest that the Rural Circuit Courts may be performing better than previously thought, although there is still significant room for improvement as the court system mobilizes towards the aggressive target of becoming the best in the Caribbean Region within the next few years and among the best in the world in the coming 5 -6 years. The delay factors which threaten the attainment of timely delivery of justice in the Rural Circuit Courts are similar to those of the Home Circuit Court as matters are most commonly adjourned across these courts for reasons such as for files to be completed, due to unavailable medical reports and other scientific documents, for subpoenas to be issued and for

warrants to be issued. The dominant charges heard across the Rural Circuit Courts during the year include murder, sexual intercourse with a person under 16 years old, possession of identity information, rape and gun related charges. Among the most common methods of disposition were matters discharged/dismitted and guilty outcomes (inclusive of pleas and verdicts).

See the below summary of key performance metrics for 2019:

Parish Court	Case disposal rates (%)	Case clearance rates (%)	Trial certainty rates (%)	Average time taken to dispose of cases (days)
St. James Circuit	42.11%	114.04%	77.17%	359
Western Regional Gun Court	23.81%	41.80%	68.57%	73
Hanover Circuit	64.71%	168.63%	62.50%	452
Manchester Circuit	5.77%	45.19%	59.26%	16
Portland Circuit Court	41.79%	86.57%	24.16%	23
St. Ann Circuit Court	39.72%	102.24%	44.97%	94
St. Catherine Circuit Court	24.85%	129.70%	32.92%	133
St. Elizabeth Circuit Court	28.74%	71.26%	71.43%	261
St. Mary Circuit Court	45.56%	128.89%	55.71%	312
Trelawny Circuit Court	62.86%	154.29%	95.83%	111
Westmoreland Circuit Court	39.87%	77.78%	47.58%	251
Total/Average	34.23%	92.81%	58.19%	189.55

NB: The Clarendon and St. Thomas Circuit Courts were not included in this series due to logistical matters but will be included in all future reports.

Methodology – Generating Court Statistics in Jamaica

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 4 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 (soon to be called Statistical Officers) in each court. These 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 Statistical Unit of the Supreme Court. A robust data validation mechanism is in place to periodically sample case files in all parish courts and the Divisions of the Supreme Court 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.

The Court Statistics Unit at the Supreme Court produces various Quarterly and Annual 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.

This report breaks provides a court by court performance and case activity summary for 2019.

The Western Regional Gun Court and 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 hear 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 and Western Regional Gun Courts in the parish of St. James for the 2019 calendar. 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.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James as well as the Western Regional Gun Court over the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 courts over the year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. James Circuit Court and Western Regional Gun Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard- Circuit	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive - Circuit	Case Disposal Rate- Circuit (%)	Number of new cases heard- Gun Court	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Case Disposal Rate- Gun Court (%)
114	48	42.11%	189	45	23.81%

It is seen in the above table that 114 new cases were committed to the Circuit Court in the 2019 calendar year, of which 48 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 42.11%, suggesting that 4 in every 10 new cases heard, were disposed in the year. For the Western Regional Gun Court, 189 new cases were heard over the year, of which 45 cases were disposed or became inactive, producing a case disposal rate of 23.81%. This suggests that roughly 2 in every 10 cases filed were disposed over the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2019

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Electing Judge / Jury	39	51.3
Judge Alone	36	47.4
Jury Trial	1	1.3
Total	76	100.0

A sample of 76 new matters heard in 2019 in the Circuit Court in St. James over the year, revealed that 39 or 51.3% were electing judge or jury, while Judge alone heard 36 or 47.4% of the matters. Jury trial accounted for the remaining 1.3%. A Judge, without a jury, hears all Gun Court matters.

Table 3.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence-Circuit	Frequency-Circuit	Percentage-Circuit (%)	Offence-Gun Court	Frequency-Gun Court	Percentage-Gun Court (%)
Possession of identity information	52	21.8	Illegal possession of firearm	280	43.7
Murder	29	12.2	Illegal possession of ammunition	118	18.4
Rape	28	11.8	Assault at common law	64	10.0
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	25	10.5	Shooting with Intent	49	7.6
Wounding with Intent	21	8.8	Wounding with intent	46	7.2
Total	155	65.1	Total	557	86.9

NB: Sample size (n)= 238 (Circuit Court)

NB: Sample size (n)= 641 (Gun Court)

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. James and the Western Regional Gun Court in the 2019 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 55 or 21.8%, murder with 29 or 12.2% and rape with 28 or 11.8% account for the three leading offences heard in the year in the Circuit Court. Illegal possession of firearm with 280 or 43.7%, illegal possession of ammunition with 118 or 18.8% and assault at common law with 64 or 10% round off the leading three offense heard in the Western Regional Gun Court over the year.

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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender of offenders-Circuit	Frequency-Circuit	Percentage-Circuit (%)	Gender of offenders-Gun Court	Frequency-Gun Court	Percentage-Gun Court (%)
Male	225	91.5	Male	593	92.2
Female	21	8.5	Female	50	7.8
Total	246	100	Total	643	100

A sample of 246 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James over the year, revealed that 91.5% of these matters involved male offenders. In the Western Regional Gun Court, an estimated 7.8% of the matters had female offenders, while 92.2% had male offenders. Taken together, 92.01% of the matters involved male offenders.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	219
Mean	28.2420
Std. Error of Mean	.66901
Median	27.0000
Mode	21.00
Std. Deviation	9.90046
Skewness	1.364
Std. Error of Skewness	.164
Range	49.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	64.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 219 cases heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. James over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 28 years, while the median age was 27 years and the most frequently occurring age was 21 years. The standard deviation of 10 years is an indication that there is some variation in the age distribution. The high 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 15 years.

Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Western Regional Gun Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	56
Mean	33.1964
Std. Error of Mean	1.50398
Median	30.0000
Mode	27.00
Std. Deviation	11.25477
Skewness	1.237
Std. Error of Skewness	.319
Range	50.00
Minimum	19.00
Maximum	69.00

The above sample of 56 matters heard in the Gun Court during the 2019 calendar year shows that the average age of accused persons brought to court over the period was 33 years, while the median age is 30 years and the mode is 27 years. The standard deviation is moderate, suggesting a moderate dispersion of the scores around the overall average. The high positive skewness of the age distribution is an indication that a large proportion of the scores were

below the overall average. The maximum age in the data set is 69 years, while the minimum age is 19 years.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status-Circuit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	425	84.2
Remanded into Custody	77	15.2
Warrant Issued but Stayed	3	0.6
Total	505	100.0

Using a sample of 505 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James during the 2019 calendar year, it is seen in 425 or 84.2% of the matters, bail was extended, while the accused was remanded into custody in 77 or 15.2% of the matters. Warrants were issued but stayed accounted for the remaining 0.6% of the matters.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit 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 7.1: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Plea and Case Management Hearing	20	32.8
Warrant to issue	9	14.8
For Disclosure	8	13.1
For sentencing	6	9.8

Legal representative to be settled	5	8.2
Subpoena crown witness	5	8.2
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) sample requested	3	4.9
File to be completed	2	3.3
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	2	3.3
Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

A sample of 61 adjournments during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James revealed that 20 or 32.8% of the matters were adjourned for continuance by way of plea and case management hearings. Adjournments for warrants to issue with 9 or 14.8% of the reasons and adjournments for disclosure with 8 or 13.1% rounds off the top three reasons for adjournment.

Table 7.2: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Western Regional Gun Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To complete file	88	26.19
Medical report unavailable	31	9.23
Legal representative to be settled	16	4.76
Investigating officer unavailable	15	4.46
Complainant absent	12	3.57
Legal aid assignment	12	3.57
Not before court	9	2.69
File cannot be located	6	1.79
Disclosure	5	1.49
Plea and Case Management Hearing	3	0.89
Attorney absent	3	0.89
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	2	0.60
Crown witness unavailable	2	0.60
Subpoena	2	0.60
Total	206	61.31

Sample size = 336

A sample of 336 adjournments and continuances during the 2019 calendar year in the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James revealed that 88 or 26.19% of the matters were adjourned to

complete files. 31 or 19.23% and 16 or 4.76% of the sample of adjournments were due to the unavailability of medical reports and to settle legal representation respectively, rounding off the top three reasons for adjournment in this court in 2019.

Table 8.1: Sampling Distribution of the Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the St. James Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered - Discharged	106	51.0
Guilty Plea	57	27.4
Guilty	18	8.7
Not Guilty - Discharged	17	8.2
Nolle Prosequere	4	1.9
Transferred	4	1.9
No Case to Answer – Discharged	2	1.0
Total	208	100

A sample of 208 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to no evidence offered accounted for the largest share with 106 or 51%, while guilty pleas with 57 or 27.4% was next. Guilty verdicts with 18 or 8.7% of the sample rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 36.1%.

Table 8.1: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	98	41.4
Guilty Verdict	49	20.7
No Further Evidence Offered – Discharged	37	15.6
Guilty Plea	30	12.6
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	23	9.7
Total	237	100.0

A sample of 237 matters disposed in the Western Regional Gun Court in St. James in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to formal verdicts of not-guilty accounted for the largest share with 98 or 41.4%, while being found guilty with 49 or 20.7% was next. Matters discharged

due to no further evidence being offered with 37 or 15.6% round off the top three. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 33.3%.

Table 9.1: Time to disposition for matters Completed in the St. James Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	176
Mean	359.0057
Std. Error of Mean	25.28329
Median	304.5000
Mode	38.00
Std. Deviation	335.42080
Skewness	.680
Std. Error of Skewness	.183
Range	1166.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	1167.00

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 359 days or roughly a year. The median time is 305 days or approximately 10 months, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 38 days. The standard deviation of 335 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The moderate skewness of 0.680 suggests that slightly more scores in the data set fell below the average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1167 days or 3.2 years, while the minimum time taken was a day. These estimations suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal although the greater proportion appears to take under 2 years to be disposed. A sample size of 176 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.2: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Western Regional Gun Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	206
Mean	73.0777
Std. Error of Mean	4.82682
Median	50.0000
Mode	80.00
Std. Deviation	69.27790
Skewness	1.984
Std. Error of Skewness	.169
Range	348.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	350.00

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 73 days or 2.4 months. The median time is 50 days and the mode is 80 days. The standard deviation of 69 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set while the skewness of 1.98 suggests that proportionately more of the scores fall below the average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 350 days or roughly a year, while the minimum time is 2 days. As with the Western Regional Gun Court, these estimations suggest that a number of cases are being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification however several are still reaching a backlog classification prior to disposal. A sample size of 206 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed- St. James Circuit Court	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases-Circuit Court	Clearance rate- Circuit Court (%)	Number of new cases filed-Gun Court	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases- Gun Court	Clearance rate- Gun Court (%)
114	130	114.04%	189	79	41.80%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James as well as the Western Regional Gun Court for the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 114 new cases were heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James over the year, while a total of 130 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 114.04%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the period, roughly eleven cases were disposed.

In the Western Regional Gun Court, 189 new cases were filed, while 79 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, leading to a case clearance rate of 41.80%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed during the period, roughly 4 cases were disposed. Taken together, the results suggest that the Rural Circuit Court cleared seven more cases for every ten new cases heard than the Gun Court in 2019.

Table 11.1: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the St. James Circuit Court for the year ended December 21, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
92	21	77.17%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 92 trial dates set in the year, of which 21 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of 77.17% for the year. This

result means that for every ten trial dates set in the period, roughly 8 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.2: Sampling distribution of trial date certainty rates for the Western Regional Gun Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
35	11	68.57%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 35 trial dates set on the year, 11 of which were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of 68.57% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the period, all 10 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.1: Sampling distribution of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the St. James Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	348
Mean	422.9511
Std. Error of Mean	17.66830
Median	348.0000
Mode	99.00
Std. Deviation	329.59793
Skewness	1.050
Std. Error of Skewness	.131
Range	1418.00
Minimum	36.00
Maximum	1454.00

The above descriptive statistics provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. James over the year. A sample of 348 active matters at the end of 2019 reveal that the average age of active cases before the court is 422 days or roughly 1.2 years. The most

frequently occurring age of active case is 99 days or 3.3 months. The large standard deviation is an indication of a wide dispersion of the scores around the mean while the high positive skewness is an indication that most 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 period is 1454 days or just over 4 years, while the minimum is 36 days.

Table 12.2: Sampling distribution of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Western Regional Gun Court

Descriptive Statistics (days)

Number of observations	628
Mean	187.7357
Std. Error of Mean	4.97867
Median	174.0000
Mode	53.00
Std. Deviation	124.76518
Skewness	.490
Std. Error of Skewness	.098
Range	723.00
Minimum	4.00
Maximum	727.00

A sample of 628 active cases at the end of the 2019 calendar year in the Western Regional Gun Court revealed an average age of 188 days or 6.3 months, while the most frequently occurring age was 53 days or 1.8 days. The standard deviation observed is fairly high, indicative of a wide dispersion of the individual case ages around the mean. The moderate positive skewness further indicates that there are slightly more scores falling below the overall mean. The maximum observed age of active cases is 727 days or roughly 2 years, while minimum observed age of active cases heard in the period is 4 days.

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 hear 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 section is focused on case activity in the Rural Circuit Court in the parish of Hanover for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 information.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Hanover Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
51	33	64.71%

It is seen in the above table that 51 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over the 2019 calendar year. Of these, 33 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 64.71%, suggesting that between 6 and 7 of every 10 new cases heard, were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2019

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Judge only	47	100
Total	47	100

A sample of 47 new matters heard in 2019 in the Circuit Court in Hanover over the year, revealed that all were judge only hearings.

Table 3.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possession of identity information	23	30.6
Murder	11	14.7
Rape	9	12.0
Conspiracy to obtain property by false pretence	8	10.7
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	8	10.7
Total	59	78.7

NB: Sample size (n) = 75

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in Hanover in the 2019 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 23 or 30.6%, murder with 11 or 14.7% and rape with 9 or 12% account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the Circuit Court. Conspiracy to obtain property by false pretence and sexual intercourse with a person under 16 each with 8 or 10.7% rounds off the top charges for the year. The top 5 charges listed above account for 78.7% of the total sample of 75 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	68	90.7
Female	7	9.3
Total	75	100

A sample of 75 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover over the year, revealed that 90.7% of these matters involved male offenders, while 9.3% were female.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	58
Mean	29.7931
Std. Error of Mean	1.53931
Median	26.0000
Mode	24.00
Std. Deviation	11.72306
Skewness	1.347
Std. Error of Skewness	.314
Range	46.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	61.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 58 new matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was roughly 30 years, while the median age was 26 years and the most frequently occurring age was 24 years. The moderately large standard deviation of 12 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 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

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: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sentencing	16	34.0
Social enquiry report requested	6	12.8
Continuance (General Procedural)	5	10.6
Plea and Case Management Hearing	4	8.5
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	3	6.4
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) sample requested	3	6.4
Warrant to issue	2	4.3
Forensic report unavailable	2	4.3
Crown witness unavailable	2	4.3
Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding	2	4.3
Legal aid assignment	1	2.1
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	1	2.1
Total	47	100

A sample of 47 adjournments and continuance during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover revealed that 16 or 34.0% of the matters were adjourned for a sentencing hearing. Adjournments for social enquiry reports with 6 or 12.80% of the reasons and adjournments/continuance ranks next. Among the other featured reasons for adjournment in the list are adjournments for psychiatric evaluation to be done and for DNA samples to be furnished.

Table 8.0: Sampling Distribution of the Methods of Disposition for matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guilty Plea	33	27.7
Not Guilty Verdict	20	16.8
Not Guilty – Discharged	17	14.3
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	12	10.1
Nolle Prosequere	10	8.4
Remitted to Parish Court	10	8.4
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	8	6.7

No Further Evidence Offered – Discharged	4	3.4
Plead Guilty to A Lesser Charge	2	1.7
Dismissed	2	1.7
Found Guilty	1	.8
Total	119	100.0

A sample of 46 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover in 2019 revealed that guilty pleas accounted for the largest share with 33 or 27.7%, while not guilty verdicts with 20 or 16.8% was next. Matters discharged with not guilty outcomes with 17 or 14.3% of the sample rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 28.50%.

Table 9.0: Sampling distribution of the time to disposition for matters completed in the Hanover Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Observations	115
Mean	451.7043
Std. Error of Mean	47.32438
Median	316.0000
Mode	17.00
Std. Deviation	507.49742
Skewness	2.269
Std. Error of Skewness	.226
Range	2597.00
Minimum	10.00
Maximum	2607.00

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 452 days or roughly 1.2 years. The median time is 316 days or approximately 10.5 months, while the most frequently occurring time is 17 days. The standard deviation of 507 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The relatively 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 2607 days or 7.1 years, while the minimum time taken was 10 days. These estimations 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 115 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
51	86	168.63%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover for the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 51 new cases were entered over the year, while a total of 86 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing an impressive case clearance rate of 168.63%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, about 17 cases were disposed.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
48	18	62.50%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 48 trial dates set in 2019, 18 were adjourned. This reveals an estimated trial date certainty rate of roughly 62.50% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, approximately 6 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Sampling distribution of the age of active cases in the Hanover Circuit Court as at December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	72
Mean	379.3750
Std. Error of Mean	39.95441
Median	279.5000
Mode	278.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	339.02438
Skewness	1.656
Std. Error of Skewness	.283
Range	1487.00
Minimum	32.00
Maximum	1519.00

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover for the 2019 calendar year. A sample of 72 active matters at the end of the year revealed that the estimated average age of active cases before this court is 379 days or roughly 1.04 years. The most frequently occurring age of active cases is 278 days or just over 9.3 months. Additionally, the large standard deviation observed is an indication of a wide dispersion of the individual scores around the mean and the relatively high 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 1519 days or 4.2 years, while the minimum is 32 days.

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 hear 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 year ended December 31, 2019. 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 data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Manchester Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new which were disposed or became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
104	6	5.77%

It is seen in the above table that 104 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over the 2019 calendar year. Of these, 6 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a very low case disposal rate of 5.77%, suggesting that about 1 in every 10 new cases heard, was disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illegal Possession of firearm	54	18.3
Robbery with aggravation	35	11.9
Illegal possession of ammunition	20	6.8
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	19	6.4
Assault at common law	18	6.1
Total	146	49.5

NB: Sample size (n) = 295

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in Manchester for the 2019 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 54 or 18.3%, robbery with aggravation with 35 or 11.9% and illegal possession of ammunition with 20 or 6.8% account for the three leading offences heard in the year in the Manchester Circuit Court in 2019. The list is rounded off by sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 19 or 6.4% and assault at common law with 18 or 6.1%. The top charges listed above account for 49.5% of the total sample of 295 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Sampling distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	285	95.3
Female	14	4.7
Total	299	100

A sample of 299 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over 2019, revealed that 95.3% of these matters involved male offenders, while 4.7% were female.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age distribution of accused persons brought before the Manchester Circuit Court during the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	289
Mean	29.9308
Std. Error of Mean	.57840
Median	28.0000
Mode	22.00

Std. Deviation	9.83274
Skewness	1.362
Std. Error of Skewness	.143
Range	50.00
Minimum	16.00
Maximum	66.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 289 new matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 30 years, while the median age was 28 years and the most frequently occurring age was 22 years. The standard deviation of 10 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the age distribution of accused persons brought before the Manchester Circuit Court in 2019. The positive large 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 16 years.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Warrant Issued	14	37.8
Bail Extended	12	32.4
Not Before the Court	7	18.9
Remanded into Custody	3	8.1
Warrant Issued but Stayed	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

Using a sample of 37 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester during the 2019 calendar year, warrants issued with 14 or 37.8% and bail extended with 12 or 32.4% of the

matters account for the largest proportion of the ‘warrant statuses’. The list is rounded off by warrants not before court with 7 or 18.9%, remanded in custody with 3 or 8.1% and warrant issued but stayed with 1 or 2.7%.

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

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 7.0: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
File to be completed	50	27.3
Legal representative to be settled	32	17.5
Continuance	29	15.8
Plea and Case Management Hearing	20	10.9
Sentencing	10	5.5
Legal aid assignment	8	4.4
Adjournment request – defense	6	3.3
Statement outstanding	5	2.7
Disclosure	5	2.7
Accused not brought	3	1.6
Attorney absent	3	1.6
Subpoena complainant	2	1.1
Bail application	2	1.1
Complainant absent	2	1.1
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	2	1.1
Warrant to issue	1	.5
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) result outstanding	1	.5
For antecedents	1	.5
Medical report unavailable	1	.5
Total	183	100.0

A sample of 183 adjournments and continuances during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester revealed that 50 or 27.3% of the matters were adjourned for files to be completed. Adjournments for legal representations to be settled with 32 or 17.5% of the reasons and adjournments for continuance with 29 or 15.8% rank next. Adjournments for plea and case management hearing with 20 or 10.9% and for sentencing with 10 or 5.5% complete the top 5 reasons for adjournments for 2019 based on the sample.

Table 8.0: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	27	37.0
Guilty Plea	12	16.4
Not Guilty – Discharged	11	15.1
Transferred	9	12.3
Plea Bargain	4	5.5
Remitted to Parish Court	2	2.7
Dismissed	2	2.7
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	2	2.7
Nolle Prosequere	2	2.7
Found Guilty	2	2.7
Total	73	100

A sample of 73 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to no evidence being offered accounted for the largest proportion with 27 or 37% of the sample, while guilty pleas with 12 or 16.4% was next. Matters discharged due to not guilty outcomes - discharged with 11 or 15.1%, matters transferred with 9 or 12.3% and plea bargains with 4 or 5.5% complete the top 5 methods of disposition. The estimated conviction rate from this sample is 19.10%

Table 9.1: Sampling distribution of the times to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	12
Mean	15.7500
Std. Error of Mean	.69767
Median	16.0000
Mode	16.00
Std. Deviation	2.41680
Skewness	1.417
Std. Error of Skewness	.637
Range	9.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	22.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over 2019 is 15.75 days. The median time and the most frequently occurring time are both 16 days. The relatively small standard deviation indicates a small variation of scores in the data set with the bulk of the scores clustering around the mean. The cluster of the scores in the data set around the overall means is affirmed by the closeness of the three measures of central tendency (i.e. the mean, mode and median). The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 22 days and the minimum time taken is 13 days.

Table 9.2: Breakdown of disposition of cases by year for cases disposed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Year of Origin	Number of Cases Disposed	Percentage Disposed (%)
2016	6	12.8
2017	11	23.4
2018	19	40.4
2019	11	23.4
Total	47	100

The table above provides a breakdown of the 47 cases disposed in the 2019 calendar year at the Circuit Court in Manchester. Cases that originated in 2018 accounted for the highest proportion of disposals with 40.4%. Cases that originated in 2017 and 2019 rank next with 23.4% each while cases that originated in 2016 accounted for the lowest proportion with 12.8% of the disposals in 2019. These estimations suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; a significant proportion is being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 47 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
104	47	45.19%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester in 2019. It is shown that 104 new cases were heard over the year, while a total of 47 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 45.19%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, between 4 and 5 cases were disposed.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
27	11	59.26%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 27 trial dates set in the year, 11 were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of 59.26% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 6 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Manchester Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	184
Mean	158.8152
Std. Error of Mean	5.34678
Median	92.0000
Mode	92.00
Std. Deviation	72.52720
Skewness	.151
Std. Error of Skewness	.179
Range	162.00
Minimum	77.00
Maximum	239.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over the year. A sample of 184 active matters at the end of 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 159 days or roughly 5.3 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 92 days or 3.1 months. The moderate standard deviation is an indication of some variation in the individual scores around the mean. The small positive skewness is an indication that slightly 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 239 days or roughly 8 months, while the minimum is 77 days or 2.6 months.

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 hear 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 Portland for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 Portland Circuit Court during year.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Portland Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed and which became inactive cases	Case disposal rate (%)
67	28	41.79%

It is seen in the above table that 67 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over 2019 calendar year. Of these, 28 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 41.79%, suggesting that 4 in every 10 new cases heard were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2019

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Jury trial	84	100
Total	84	100

A sample of 84 new cases heard in 2019 in the Circuit Court in Manchester, revealed that all were jury trial.

Table 3.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	33	31.7
Rape	20	19.2
Murder	9	8.7
Wounding with intent	6	5.8
Grievous sexual assault	4	3.8
Possession of identity information	4	3.8
Total	76	73.1

NB: Sample size (n) = 104

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester in 2019. 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 33 or 31.7%, rape with 20 or 19.2% and murder with 9 or 8.7% account for the largest proportion. Wounding with intent with 6 or 5.8%, grievous sexual assault and possession of identity information with 4 or 3.8% each rounds off the list. The offences listed above account for 73.1% 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	105	100
Total	105	100

A sample of 105 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over the year, revealed that all these matters involved male offenders.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	66
Mean	34.3788
Std. Error of Mean	1.66042
Median	32.5000
Mode	19.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	13.48933
Skewness	.513
Std. Error of Skewness	.295
Range	53.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	68.00

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The output above reveals that from a sample of 66 new matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Hanover over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 34 years, while the median age was 33 years and the most frequently occurring age was 19 years. The standard deviation of 13 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the individual age distribution. The slight 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 15 years.

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

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 in the Rural Circuit Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No evidence offered	11	64.71
Sentencing	5	29.41
Not guilty – discharged	1	5.88
Total	17	100.0

A sample of 18 adjournments during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester revealed that 11 or 64.71% of the matters were adjourned due to no evidence being offered. Adjournments for sentencing with 5 or 29.41% of the reasons and matters discharged with a not guilty outcome with 1 or 5.88% rounds off the sample.

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, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Guilty Verdict	22	21.4
Not Guilty – Discharged	21	20.4
Guilty Plea	17	16.5
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	13	12.6
Guilty Verdict	12	11.7
No Further Evidence Offered – Discharged	11	10.7
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	3	2.9
No Case to Answer - Discharged	2	1.9
No Case Submission Upheld	1	1.0
Transferred	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

A sample of 103 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in 2019 revealed that matters not guilty with 22 or 21.4% and matters discharged due to not guilty outcomes with 21 or 20.4% accounted for the or largest proportion. Guilty pleas with 16.5% and matters discharged due to no evidence being offered with 13 or 12.6% ranks next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 28.2%.

Table 8.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	20
Mean	22.5000
Std. Error of Mean	7.68611
Median	18.0000
Mode	7.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	34.37334
Skewness	4.115
Std. Error of Skewness	.512
Range	164.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	165.00

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Portland over the year is 23 days. The median time is 18 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 7 days. The standard deviation of 34 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The acutely high positive skewness suggests that a significant proportion of the scores in the data set fall below the average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 165 days, while the minimum is 1 day.

Table 8.2: Breakdown of disposition of cases by year for matters disposed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Year Disposed	Number of Cases Disposed	Percentage Disposed (%)
2016	6	10.7
2017	12	21.4
2018	11	19.6
2019	27	48.2
Total	56	100

The table above provides a breakdown of the 56 cases disposed in the 2019 calendar year at the Circuit Court in Portland. Cases that originated in 2019 accounted for the highest proportion of cases disposed with 48.2%. Cases that originated in 2017 with 21.4% of the total and in 2018 with 19.6% rank next. Cases that originated in 2016 accounted for the lowest proportion with 10.7% of the cases disposed in 2019. These estimations suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; the larger proportion is being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 56 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
67	58	86.57%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in Portland for the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 67 new cases were heard, while 58 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 86.57%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, about 9 cases were disposed.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
149	113	24.16%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 149 trial dates set, of which 113 were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of 24.16% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, only 2 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	50
Mean	223.4600
Std. Error of Mean	59.79184
Median	64.0000
Mode	64.00
Std. Deviation	422.79214
Skewness	3.058
Std. Error of Skewness	.337
Range	1561.00
Minimum	64.00
Maximum	1625.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Manchester over the year. A sample of 50 active matters at the end of 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 223 days or roughly 7 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 64 days or just over 2 months. The large standard deviation is an indication of a wide dispersion in the individual scores around the mean. The large positive skewness is an indication 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 1625 days or just over 4.5 years, while the minimum is 64 days.

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 hear 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. Ann for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Ann Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
141	56	39.72%

It is seen in the above table that 141 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over the 2019 calendar year. Of these cases, 56 were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 39.72%, suggesting that about 4 in every 10 new cases heard were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2019

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Electing Judge / Jury	446	100
Total	446	100

A sample of 446 new matters heard in 2019 in the Circuit Court in St. Ann over the year, revealed that all were electing judge or jury.

Table 3.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illegal possession of firearm	69	15.7
Illegal possession of ammunition	40	9.1
Murder	38	8.6
Possession of identity information	31	7.0
Robbery with aggravation	30	6.8
Total	208	47.3

NB: Sample size (n) = 440

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Ann in 2019. 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 69 or 15.7%, illegal possession of ammunition with 40 or 9.1% and murder with 38 or 8.6% account for the highest proportion of charges heard in the year in the Portland Circuit Court. Possession of identity information with 31 or 7% and robbery with aggravation with 30 or 6.8% rank next. The charges listed account for 47.3% 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	405	90.8
Female	41	9.2
Total	446	100

A sample of 446 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann over the year, revealed that 90.8% of these matters involved male offenders with 9.2% being female.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of the age of offenders in the Portland Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	10
Mean	35.7000
Std. Error of Mean	3.60571
Median	41.0000
Mode	41.00
Std. Deviation	11.40224
Skewness	.319
Std. Error of Skewness	.687
Range	35.00
Minimum	22.00
Maximum	57.00

The output above reveals that from a small sample of 10 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 36 years, while the median age and the most frequently occurring age were both 41 years. The standard deviation is an indication that there is a small variation in the age distribution. 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 57 years and the lowest is 22 years.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in Portland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail extended	354	53.3
Remanded into custody	278	41.9
Warrant issued	27	4.1

Warrant issued but stayed	5	.8
Total	664	100.0

Using a sample of 664 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann during the 2019 calendar year, it is seen in 354 or 53.3% of the matters, that bail was extended, while being remanded into custody with 278 or 41.9% of the matters. Warrants issued with 27 or 4.1% and warrant issued but stayed with 5 or 0.8% round off the list.

4. Delay factors, methods of disposition and case age estimates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann in the year ended December 31, 2019

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 7.0: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continuance (Procedural Events)	126	35.6
Subpoena investigating officer	101	28.5
Subpoena	16	4.5
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	9	2.5
Subpoena complainant	9	2.5
Total	261	79.82

Sample size = 327

A sample of 327 adjournments during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann revealed that 126 or 35.6% of the matters were adjourned for continuance (procedural events). This was followed by adjournments for subpoena of the investigating officer with 101

or 28.5% of the reasons while adjournments due to other subpoenas issued with 66 or 18.6% round off the top three reasons for adjournment in 2019.

Table 8.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for all matters completed in the Portland Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Guilty	23	25.6
Transferred	18	20.0
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	14	15.6
Not Guilty - Discharged	14	15.6
Dismissed	8	8.9
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	6	6.7
Guilty Plea	4	4.4
Found Guilty	2	2.2
No Case to Answer – Discharged	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0

A sample of 90 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann in 2019 revealed that matters with a not guilty outcome accounted for the largest share with 23 or 25.6%, while matters transferred with 18 or 20% rank next. Matters discharged due to no evidence offered and those discharged not guilty each with 15.6% of the sample rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 6.6%.

Table 9.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	114
Mean	94.1579
Std. Error of Mean	10.63549
Median	35.5000
Mode	179.00
Std. Deviation	113.55600
Skewness	1.864

Std. Error of Skewness	.226
Range	560.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	561.00

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 94 days or roughly 3 months. The median time is 35.5 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 179 days or about 6 months. The standard deviation of 114 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The skewness of 1.864 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 561 days or 1.6 years, while the minimum was 1 day. These estimations suggest that all the cases are being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 114 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
141	145	102.24%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann for the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 141 new cases were heard over the year, while a total of 145 were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 102.24%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year a similar number of cases were disposed, a result which satisfies the international standard.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
189	104	44.97%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 189 trial dates set during the year, 104 were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of 44.97% for the year, a result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, only 4 preceded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Circuit Court

Number of observations	320
Mean	137.4281
Std. Error of Mean	6.82573
Median	89.0000
Mode	89.00
Std. Deviation	122.10236
Skewness	2.560
Std. Error of Skewness	.136
Range	579.00
Minimum	31.00
Maximum	610.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Ann over the year. A sample of 376 active matters at the end of 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 137 days or roughly 5 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 89 days or roughly 3 months. The large standard deviation observed is an indication of a wide dispersion in the individual ages around the mean while the relatively high positive skewness is an indication that proportionately 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 610 days or 1.7 years, while the minimum is 31 days.

The St. Catherine Rural 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 hear 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 year ended December 31, 2019. 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 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
165	41	24.85%

It is seen in the above table that of the 165 new cases which were heard, 41 were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 24.85%, suggesting that 2 out of every 10 new cases heard, were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2019

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Judge Alone	96	99.0
Jury Trial	1	1.0
Total	97	100.0

A sample of 97 new cases heard in 2019 in the Circuit Court in St. Catherine, revealed that 99% were judge alone, while jury trial accounted for the remaining 1%.

Table 3.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	112	26.2
Rape	55	12.9
Grievous sexual assault	35	8.2
Murder	30	7.0
Possession of identity information	25	5.9
Total	257	60.2

NB: Sample size (n) = 427

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Catherine in 2019. 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 112 or 26.2%, rape with 55 or 12.9% and grievous sexual assault with 35 or 8.2% account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the St. Catherine Circuit Court. Murder with 30 or 7% and possession of identity information with 25 or 5.9% rounds completes the list. The leading charges listed above account for 60.2% of the total sample of 427 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	420	94.6
Female	24	5.4
Total	444	100

A sample of 444 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine over the year, revealed that 94.6% of these matters involved male offenders, with females accounting for the remaining 5.4%.

Table 5.0: sampling distribution on age distribution of offenders in the St. Catherine Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	423
Mean	27.4823
Std. Error of Mean	.58236
Median	23.0000
Mode	18.00
Std. Deviation	11.97743
Skewness	1.268
Std. Error of Skewness	.119
Range	54.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	67.00

The output above revealed that from a sample of 423 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 27 years while the median age was 23 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 67 years and the lowest is 13 years.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail extended	476	68.8
Remanded into custody	182	26.3
Warrant issued	19	2.8
Not before the court	8	1.2
Warrant issued but stayed	6	0.9
Total	691	100

Using a sample of 691 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine during the 2019 calendar year, it is seen in 476 or 68.8% of the matters that bail was extended, while in 182 or 26.3% of the matters, the accused was remanded into custody. Warrants were issued in 19 or 2.8% of the matters, while matters not before court with 1.2% and warrants issued but stayed with 0.9% rank next.

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 7.0: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the St. Catherine Rural Circuit Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
File to be completed	140	48.9
Plea and Case Management Hearing	60	21.0
Subpoena crown witness	34	11.9
Sentencing	10	3.5
Adjournment request - Crown	8	2.8
Bail application	6	2.1

Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	4	1.4
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) sample requested	7	2.4
File not in court	4	1.4
Legal representative to be settled	1	.3
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	5	1.7
Social enquiry report requested	1	.3
Subpoena complainant	6	2.1
Total	286	100

A sample of 286 adjournments during the 2019 calendar in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine revealed that 140 or 48.9% of the matters were adjourned for files to be completed. Adjournments for plea and case management hearings with 60 or 21% of the reasons and adjournments to subpoena crown witness with 11.9% round off the top three. Adjournments for sentencing with 10 or 3.5% and adjournment/continuance and adjournments at request by the Crown with 2.8% rank next.

Table 8.0: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered - Discharged	136	33.2
Guilty Plea	119	29.0
Transferred	53	12.9
Nolle Prosequere	26	6.3
Not Guilty – Discharged	23	5.6
Not Guilty Verdict	22	5.4
Dismissed	11	2.7
Guilty Verdict	10	2.4
Remitted to Parish Court	9	2.2
No Case Submission Upheld	1	.2
Total	410	100.0

A sample of 410 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to no evidence offered accounted for the largest share with 136 or

33.2% of the sample, while guilty pleas with 119 or 29% was next. Matters transferred with 53 or 12.9% and Nolle Prosequere with 26 or 6.3% of the sample rounds off the top four. The estimated conviction rate from this sample data is 31.4%.

Table 9.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	177
Mean	133.2316
Std. Error of Mean	10.86719
Median	80.0000
Mode	1.00
Std. Deviation	144.57857
Skewness	1.617
Std. Error of Skewness	.183
Range	624.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	625.00

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 133 days or roughly 4.4 months. The median time is 80 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands impressively at 1 day. The standard deviation of 145 days indicates a wide variation of the individual times to disposition in the data set while the skewness of 1.6 suggests that a large proportion of scores fell below the overall average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 625 days or 1.7 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 177 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
165	214	129.70%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Catherine Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019. It is shown that 165 new cases were heard over the year, while a total of 214 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 129.70%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, 13 cases were disposed, a result that exceeds the international standard of 90% to 110% per annum.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
243	163	32.92%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 243 trial dates set in the year, 163 were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of roughly 33% for the year which means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, only 3 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	387
Mean	220.0775
Std. Error of Mean	8.99454
Median	195.0000
Mode	54.00
Std. Deviation	176.94339
Skewness	1.173

Std. Error of Skewness	.124
Range	928.00
Minimum	14.00
Maximum	942.00

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 387 active matters at the end of 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 220 days or 7.3 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 54 days or 1.8 months. The large standard deviation is an indication of a wide variation in the individual scores while the positive skewness is an indication that there were proportionately 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 942 days or 2.6 years, while the minimum is 14 days.

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 hear 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. Elizabeth for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 essential data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 this court.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
87	25	28.74%

It is seen in the above table that 87 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard in 2019. Of these, 25 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produced a case disposal rate of 28.74%, suggesting that 3 in every 10 new cases heard, was disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illegal possession of firearm	46	25.1
Illegal possession of ammunition	20	10.9
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	17	9.3
Rape	16	8.7
Possession of identity information	12	6.6
Total	111	60.7

NB: Sample size (n) = 183

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Elizabeth in 2019. 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 46 or 25.1%, illegal possession of ammunition with 20 or 10.9% and sexual intercourse with a person with 17 or 9.3% account for the three leading offences heard in the year in the Circuit Court. Rape with 16 or 8.7% and

possession of identity information with 12 or 6.6% rank next. The offences listed above account for 60.7% of the total sample of 183 offences.

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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	181	98.9
Female	2	1.1
Total	183	100

A sample of 183 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth over the year, revealed that 98.9% of these matters involved male offenders, with the remaining 1.1% being females.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	33
Mean	27.3939
Std. Error of Mean	1.74888
Median	25.0000
Mode	22.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	10.04658
Skewness	1.696
Std. Error of Skewness	.409
Range	39.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	54.00

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The output above reveals that from a sample of 33 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth in the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 27 years, while the median age was 25 years and the most frequently occurring age was 22 years. The moderate standard deviation of 10 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 54 years and the lowest is 15 years.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	84	98.8
Warrant Issued	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

Using a sample of 85 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth during the 2019 calendar year, it is seen in 84 or 98.8% of these matters, bail was extended, while warrant was issued with the remaining 1.2%.

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

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 7.0: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Legal representative to be settled	21	23.6
Legal aid assignment	21	23.6
Sentencing	17	19.1
File to be completed	14	15.7
Investigating officer unavailable	7	7.9
Bail application	2	2.2
Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding	2	2.2
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	2	2.2
Subpoena crown witness	1	1.1
Crown not ready	1	1.1
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) result outstanding	1	1.1
Total	89	100.0

A sample of 89 adjournments during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth revealed that legal representative to be settled and legal aid assignment with 21 or 23.6% each accounted for the largest shares while sentencing with 17 or 19.1%, files to be completed with 14 or 15.7% or investigating officer unavailable with 7 or 7.9% ranks next. The reasons for adjournment above account for 89.9% of the total sample.

Table 8.0: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Guilty - Discharged	45	38.8
Guilty Plea	41	35.3
Not Guilty	12	10.3
Found Guilty	10	8.6
Dismissed	5	4.3
No Further Evidence Offered - Discharged	2	1.7
Mediated Settlement	1	0.9
Total	116	100

A sample of 116 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to not guilty outcomes with 45 or 38.8% accounted for the largest share, while guilty pleas with 41 or 35.3% was next. Not guilty matters with 12 or 10.3% rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 43.9%.

Table 9.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	84
Mean	261.4167
Std. Error of Mean	22.54951
Median	245.0000
Mode	258.00
Std. Deviation	206.66970
Skewness	.537
Std. Error of Skewness	.263
Range	630.00
Minimum	11.00
Maximum	641.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth over the year is 261 days or 8.7 months while the median time is 245 days or 8.2 months and the most frequently occurring time 258 days or 8.6 months. The standard deviation of 207 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The moderate skewness of 0.537 suggests that a significant proportion of scores are clustered around the average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 641 days or 1.8 years, while 11 days was the minimum. These estimations suggest that a notable number of the cases disposed are being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 84 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 10.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
87	62	71.26%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Elizabeth the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 87 new cases were heard during the year, while a total of 62 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 71.26%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, seven cases were disposed.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
49	14	71.43%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 49 trial dates set during the year, 14 were adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of roughly 71.43% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, 7 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Sampling distribution of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the St. Elizabeth Circuit Court

Descriptive (in days)

Number of observations	211
Mean	268.7583
Std. Error of Mean	12.52169
Median	284.0000
Mode	183.00
Std. Deviation	181.88810

Skewness	.403
Std. Error of Skewness	.167
Range	658.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	673.00

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 211 active matters at the end of 2019 reveals that the average age of active cases before the court is 269 days or roughly 9 months. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 183 days or 6.1 months. 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 that 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 673 days or 1.9 years, while the minimum is 15 days.

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 hear 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 year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 this court.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the St. Mary Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
90	41	45.56%

It is seen in the above table that 90 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over the 2019 calendar year. Of these, 41 were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 45.56%, suggesting that between 4 and 5 in every 10 new cases heard, were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the types of hearings in the year ended December 31, 2019

Case Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Judge Alone	207	100
Total	207	100

A sample of 207 new matters heard in 2019 in the Circuit Court in St. Mary over the year, revealed that all were judge only trials.

Table 3.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	45	22.1
Rape	23	11.3
Illegal possession of firearm	21	10.3
Murder	13	6.4
Robbery with aggravation	13	6.4
Total	115	56.4

NB: Sample size (n)= 204

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in St. Mary in 2019. 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 45 or 22.1%, rape with 23 or 11.3% and illegal possession of firearm with 21 or 10.3% account for the three leading charges heard in the year in the St. Mary Circuit Court in 2019. Murder and robbery with aggravations with 13 or 6.4% each rank next. The charges listed above account for 56.4% of the total sample of the 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 4.0: Table 4.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	612	98.1
Female	12	1.9
Total	624	100

A sample of 624 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the year, revealed that 98.1% of these matters involved male offenders, with females accounting for the remaining 1.9%.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in years)

Number of observations	361
Mean	27.7839
Std. Error of Mean	.59291
Median	25.0000
Mode	17.00
Std. Deviation	11.26538
Skewness	.981
Std. Error of Skewness	.128
Range	50.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	63.00

The output above reveals that from a sample of 361 new matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the 2019 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 moderate skewness shown is an indication that slightly more of the scores fell below the overall mean. The maximum age in the sample set is 63 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

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: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Plea and Case Management Hearing	36	34.3
Legal representative to be settled	25	23.8
Subpoena crown witness	25	23.8
Subpoena to complainant	7	6.7
Subpoena investigating officer	6	5.7
Defendant Not Appearing (DNA) warrant issued	5	4.8
Attorney absent	1	1.0
Total	105	100.0

A sample of 105 adjournments during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary revealed that 36 or 34.3% of the matters were adjourned for continuance by way of plea and case management hearings. Adjournments for legal representations to be settled and adjournments to subpoena crown witness with 25 or 23.8% each round off the top three reasons.

Table 7.0: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered - Discharged	68	31.5
Guilty Plea	65	30.1
Transferred	46	21.3
Guilty Verdict	11	5.1
Not Guilty - Discharged	11	5.1
Dismissed	7	3.2
No Case to Answer – Discharged	3	1.4
Nolle Prosequere	3	1.4
Not Guilty	1	.5
Remitted to Parish Court	1	.5
Total	216	100.0

A sample of 216 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary between in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to no evidence being offered accounted for the largest share with 68 or 31.5%, while guilty pleas with 65 or 30.1% followed this. Matters transferred with 46 or 21.3% and guilty verdicts and discharged not guilty with 5.1% each of the sample rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 35.2%.

Table 8.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the St. Mary Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	211
Mean	311.5972
Std. Error of Mean	26.23611
Median	134.0000
Mode	22.00
Std. Deviation	381.10153
Skewness	1.738
Std. Error of Skewness	.167
Range	1750.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	1752.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose of 211 matters before the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the year is 312 days or roughly 9 months. The median time is 134 days or approximately 4.5 months, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 22 days. The standard deviation of 381 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The high positive skewness suggests that a large proportion of scores fall below the overall mean. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1752 days or 4.9 years, while the minimum time is 2 days. These estimations suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; the larger proportion is being disposed in under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 211 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
90	116	128.89

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary for the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 90 new cases were heard, while a total of 116 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 128.89%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, about 13 cases were disposed.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 21, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
70	31	55.71%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 70 trial dates set in 2019, 31 were adjourned. This produces an estimated trial date certainty rate of 55.71% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 6 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 12.0: Descriptive summary of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the St. Mary Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	282
Mean	415.4043
Std. Error of Mean	23.73747
Median	288.0000
Mode	36.00
Std. Deviation	398.61998
Skewness	.804
Std. Error of Skewness	.145
Range	1614.00
Minimum	25.00
Maximum	1639.00

The above descriptive statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in St. Mary over the 2019 calendar year. A sample of 282 active matters at the end 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 415 days or roughly 1.2 years. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 36 days. The large standard deviation is an indication of a wide dispersion of the scores around the mean while the moderate positive skewness is an indication that slightly 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 1639 days or 4.6 years, while the minimum is 25 days.

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 hear 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 year ended December 31, 2019. 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 data.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 this court.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Trelawny Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed and which became inactive	Case disposal rate (%)
35	22	62.86

It is seen in the above table that 35 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over the 2019 calendar year, of which 22 were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 62.86%, suggesting that 6 in every 10 new cases heard, were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Most frequent offences filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possession of identity information	31	31.0
Rape	13	13.0
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	11	11.0
Murder	7	7.0
Causing Death by Dangerous Driving	5	5.0
Possession of access device	5	5.0
Total	72	72.0

NB: Sample size (n)= 100

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Rural Circuit in Trelawny in 2019. 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 31 or 31%, rape with 13 or 13% and sexual intercourse with a person under 16 with 11 or 11% account for the three leading offences heard in the year in the Circuit Court. Murder with 7% rank next, while causing death

by dangerous driving and possession of an access device with 5% each follow. The charges listed above account for 72% of the total sample of 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 2019 calendar year.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	96	91.4
Female	9	8.6
Total	105	100

A sample of 105 new matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny over the year, revealed that 91.4% of these matters involved male offenders, with the remaining 8.6% being female.

Table 4.0: Descriptive Statistics on age distribution of offenders in the Circuit Court over the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	14
Mean	33.7857
Std. Error of Mean	4.20776
Median	28.5000
Mode	22.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	15.74400
Skewness	1.728
Std. Error of Skewness	.597
Range	57.00
Minimum	19.00
Maximum	76.00

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The output above reveals that from a sample of 14 matters heard at the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny over the 2019 calendar year, the average age of accused persons was 34 years, while the median age was 29 years and the most frequently occurring age was 22 years. The standard deviation of 15 years is an indication that there is some amount of variation in the age distribution 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 76 years and the lowest is 19 years.

Table 5.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	57	76.0
Remanded into Custody	13	17.3
Warrant Issued	5	6.7
Total	75	100.0

Using a sample of 75 matters heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny during the 2019 calendar year, it is seen in 57 or 76% of the matters. The accused was remanded into custody in 13 or 17.3% of the matters and warrants issued in the remaining 6.7%.

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

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: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Evidence Offered – Discharged	27	31.8
Guilty Verdict	22	25.9
Formal Verdict of Not Guilty – Discharged	14	16.5
Guilty Plea	12	14.1
Nolle Prosequere	4	4.7
Transferred	3	3.5
Not Guilty – Discharged	2	2.4
Dismissed	1	1.2
Total	85	100

A sample of 85 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny in 2019 revealed that matters discharged due to no evidence offered accounted for the largest share with 27 or 31.8%, while guilty verdicts with 22 or 25.9% were next. Matters discharged due to not guilty outcomes with 14 or 16.5% of the sample rank next. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 40%.

Table 8.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	65
Mean	110.9692
Std. Error of Mean	23.11559
Median	25.0000
Mode	21.00
Std. Deviation	186.36380
Skewness	3.843
Std. Error of Skewness	.297
Range	1186.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	1187.00

The descriptive statistics shown above reveal that the estimated average time taken to dispose sample of 65 matters before the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny over the year is 111 days or 3.7 months. The median time is 25 days, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 21 days. The standard deviation of 186 days indicates a wide variation of scores in the data set. The high positive skewness of 3.84 suggests that a large proportion of scores fall below the series average. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 1187 days or 3.3 years, while the minimum time taken was a day. These estimations suggest that although a number of cases are falling into backlog prior to disposal; a significant proportion is being disposed under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification. A sample size of 65 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 9.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
35	54	154.29%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Rural Circuit Court in Trelawny for the 2019 calendar. It is shown that 35 new cases were heard in the Rural Circuit over the year, while a total of 54 cases were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 154.29%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, roughly 15 cases were disposed.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
24	1	95.83%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 24 trial dates set in the year, 1 was adjourned. This reveals a crudely estimated trial date certainty rate of roughly 95.83% for the year. The result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 10 also proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 11.0: Sampling distribution of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	125
Mean	366.1520
Std. Error of Mean	27.19752
Median	316.0000
Mode	316.00
Std. Deviation	304.07748
Skewness	1.586
Std. Error of Skewness	.217
Range	1477.00
Minimum	43.00
Maximum	1520.00

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 125 active matters at the end of 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 366 days or roughly a year. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 316 days or just over 10 months. The large standard deviation is an indication of a wide dispersion around the mean while the positive skewness is an indication 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 1520 days or 4.2 years, while the minimum is 43 days.

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 hear 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 year ended December 31, 2019. 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.

2. Case activity summary

The first section of this report provides a summary of court activity on new 2019 cases heard in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland for the year ended December 31, 2019. 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 this court.

Table 1.0: Case activity summary for the Westmoreland Circuit Court for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases heard	Number of new cases disposed or which became inactive cases	Case disposal rate (%)
153	61	39.87%

It is seen in the above table that 153 new cases, which were committed to the Circuit Court, were heard over the 2019 calendar year, of which 61 were disposed or became inactive during the year. This produces a case disposal rate of 39.87%, suggesting that about 4 in every 10 new cases heard, were disposed in the year.

Table 2.0: Most frequent charges filed in the year ended December 31, 2019

Offence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Possession of Identity information	73	19.1
Murder	65	17.0
Obtaining money by means of false pretenses	64	16.8
Sexual intercourse with a person under 16	23	6.0
Rape	22	5.8
Total	247	64.7

NB: Sample size (n)= 382

The above table provides a summary of the dominant charges entered in the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court in 2019. 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 73 or 19.1%, murder with 65 or 17% and obtaining money by means of false pretenses with 64 or 16.8% 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 and age distribution of offenders involved in matters heard over the 2019 calendar year.

Table 3.0: Gender distribution on matters heard over the year ended December 31, 2019

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	121	65.4
Female	64	34.6
Total	185	100

A sample of 185 new matters heard in the Westmoreland Circuit Court over the year, revealed that 65.4% of these matters involved male offenders, with the remaining 34.6 being female.

Table 4.0: Sampling distribution of warrant statuses for matters heard in the year ended December 31, 2019

Warrant status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bail Extended	199	71.8
Remanded into Custody	76	27.4
Not Before the Court	2	.7
Total	277	100.0

Using a sample of 277 matters heard in the Westmoreland Rural Circuit Court during the 2019 calendar year, it is seen in 199 or 71.8% of the matters, bail was extended and in 76 or 27.4% of the matters, the accused was remanded into custody. Matters not before the court accounted for the remaining 0.7% of the sample.

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

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: Distribution of common reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland in 2019

Reasons for Adjournment/Continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subpoena crown witness	9	28.1
Sentencing	6	18.8
Subpoena (other)	5	15.6
Transferred	4	12.5
Communication Forensic & Cybercrime Unit (CFCU) Report outstanding	3	9.4
Psychiatric evaluation to be done	3	9.4
File to be completed	1	3.1
Re-issue	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

A sample of 32 adjournments during the 2019 calendar year in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland revealed that 9 or 28.1% of the matters were adjourned to subpoena crown witnesses. Adjournments for sentencing with 18.8% and adjournments for the issuance of other subpoena with 15.60% rounds off the top three reasons.

Table 6.0: Methods of Disposition for all matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Dismissed	114	59.1
Not guilty verdicts	59	30.6
Guilty Plea	14	7.3
Transferred	6	3.1
Total	193	100.0

A sample of 193 matters disposed in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland in 2019 revealed that matters dismissed accounted for the largest share with 114 or 59.1%, while not guilty

verdicts with 59 or 30.6% was next. Guilty pleas with 14 or 7.3% and matters transferred with 6 or 3.1% round of the list. The estimated conviction rate from this sample set is 7.3%.

Table 7.0: Time to disposition for matters completed in the Circuit Court in the year ended December 31, 2019

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	182
Mean	250.6868
Std. Error of Mean	15.66148
Median	234.0000
Mode	18.00
Std. Deviation	211.28493
Skewness	.479
Std. Error of Skewness	.180
Range	652.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	654.00

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 251 days or roughly 8.4 months. The median time is 234 days or 7.8 months, while the most frequently occurring time stands at 18 days. The standard deviation of 211 days indicates some variation of scores in the data set while the skewness of 0.479 suggests that a moderate proportion of scores are below the overall average score. The maximum time taken to dispose of a case in the sample is 654 days or 1.8 years, while the minimum time taken was 2 days. These estimations suggest that a significant proportion of disposed cases are taking under the 2-year marker for case backlog classification to be completed. A sample size of 182 disposed matters was used to derive these estimates.

Table 8.0: Clearance rate summary for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of new cases filed	Gross number of disposed and inactive cases	Clearance rate (%)
153	119	77.78%

The table above provides a summary of the case clearance rates in the Westmoreland Circuit Court for the 2019 calendar year. It is shown that 153 new cases were heard in the over the year, of which a total of 119 were disposed or became inactive during the year, producing a case clearance rate of 77.78%. This result suggests that for every ten new cases filed in the year, about eight cases were disposed.

Table 9.0: Sampling distribution for trial date certainty rates for the year ended December 31, 2019

Number of trial dates set	Number of adjournments	Trial date certainty rate (%)
124	65	47.58%

The data shown above reveals that from a sample of 124 trial dates set in the year, of which 65 adjourned. This reveals a trial date certainty rate of roughly 47.58% for the year. This result means that for every ten trial dates set in the year, about 5 proceeded on schedule without adjournment.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution of the age of active cases as at December 31, 2019 in the Circuit Court

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	441
Mean	363.1179
Std. Error of Mean	10.65938
Median	312.0000
Mode	307.00
Std. Deviation	223.84708
Skewness	.347

Std. Error of Skewness	.116
Range	668.00
Minimum	33.00
Maximum	701.00

The statistics above provide a summary of the age of active cases in the Rural Circuit Court in Westmoreland over the year. A sample of 441 active matters at the end of 2019 revealed that the average age of active cases before the court is 363 days or roughly a year. The most frequently occurring age of active case is 307 days or just over 10 months. The relatively high standard deviation is an indication of some dispersion around the mean while the moderate positive skewness indicates that slightly 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 701 days or just 1.9 years, while the minimum is 33 days.

Concluding Note

This report represented the first comprehensive account on case activity in the Rural Circuit Courts across the island. Tracking case activity in this jurisdiction is an extremely important facet of the operations of the court system as this is where the most serious criminal cases are heard and decided. Two of the Rural Circuit Courts were not part of this report due to logistical issues which were recently resolved. Nevertheless the report is sufficiently penetrative and the sample size across all courts large enough to provide profound inferences. In highlighting four of the key performance measures deployed in this study it was shown that the estimated weighted average case disposal rate for the Rural Circuit Courts was approximately 34%, suggesting that 34 of every 100 new cases filed in during the year were disposed. This is substantially less than the output for criminal matters at the parish court level but this is not surprising as the more complex cases heard at the Circuit Court level will on average take longer. The result is however roughly 16 percentage points higher than that of the Home Circuit Court over the period. The overall weighted average case clearance rate for 2019 is significantly higher than the weighted average case disposal rate, netting out at 92.81%, suggesting that for every 100 new cases entered in the Rural Circuit Courts in 2019, 93 were disposed. This result is almost 15 percentage points higher than that of the Home Circuit Court over the same period and is comparable to the performance of the criminal division of the parish courts, representing a promising outcome which bodes well for the potential contribution of the Rural Circuit Courts to the fulfillment of the strategic vision set out by the Honourable Chief Justice. The Rural Circuit Courts did not fare as well on the measurement of trial date certainty with an overall figure of 58.19% registered for 2019. This result suggests that for every 100 trial dates set in

2019, only 59 proceeded on schedule without adjournment. This outcome is substantially less than that of the criminal division of the parish courts but roughly 30 percentage points higher than the Home Circuit Court. There is indeed significant room for improvement on this metric, right across courts and business lines. It is heavily impacted by many factors outside of the control of the courts however much more can be done to improve internal efficiencies and thus sustain the trial date certainty rate at a healthy level. The Rural Circuit Courts had an overall estimated average time to disposition of just over 6 months for the matters resolved in 2019. The fact that this was derived from a sample of over 1000 disposed cases augurs well for the potential productivity of the Rural Circuit Court.

A longer reporting time series is required to establish clear trends and patterns in the Rural Circuit Courts as a whole however the results gleaned from this report are insightful and has successfully highlighted areas of strengths and weaknesses across these vital courts. The results for 2019 generally show good promise.

Glossary of Terms

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

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

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system.ⁱ

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

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

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

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

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

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%

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

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

Skewness: This is 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.

Source:

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

ⁱ *Source:*

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

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.