
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2018 October - December

Publication Date: March 8, 2019



36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report

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Table of Contents

The Role and Objectives of the OUR.....	4
The Consumer and Public Affairs Department	4
The Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU)	4
The Intent and Purpose of the Quarterly Performance Report.....	5
Methods of Calculation.....	5
Executive Summary	7
Chapter 1: Utilities’ Responsiveness	10
(i) Acknowledgements.....	10
(ii) Response to Case Letters	10
Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns.....	12
(i) Billing	12
(ii) Interruption of Service	13
(iii) Disconnection	13
(iv) Service Connection	13
(v) Poor Service Quality	13
(vi) Equipment Damage.....	14
Chapter 3: Guaranteed Standards Performance	15
(i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?	15
(ii) How are customers compensated?	15
(iii) Quarterly report of breaches	15
.....	16
(iv) Utilities’ performance on Guaranteed Standards	16
Chapter 4: Customer Contact Centre/Call Centre Performance Reports	19
Chapter 5: Notification of Planned Outages Report	21
Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution.....	23
Chapter 6: Appeals Performance	25
(i) Closure of Appeals	25
(ii) Outstanding Appeals.....	25
Appeals Process Resolution Rate	25
Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights	26
(i) Credits/Compensation.....	26

(ii) JPS’ Application of Monthly Charges to Pay-As-You-Go Customers	26
List of Tables 2018 July - September	27
Table 6: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities).....	27
Table 7: Distribution of Contacts by Categories.....	27
Table 8: Annual Distribution of Contacts by Categories	28
Table 9: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities.....	29
Table 10: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding).....	29
Table 11: CAU’s Performance on Service Standards (Appeals)	30
List of Figures	30
Appendices.....	31
Appendix I: Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts	31
Appendix 2: Statement on Confidentiality of Telecommunications Service Provider Information ...	32
Appendix 3: Appeals Process	33
Appendix 4: CAU Internal Performance Standards.....	33
Appendix 5: Process Timelines for NWC Appeals.....	34
Appendix 6: List of Acronyms.....	36

The Role and Objectives of the OUR

The Office of Utilities Regulation Act of 1995 established the Office of Utilities Regulation (**OUR**) as a body corporate. Under the Act, the OUR is charged with the responsibility of regulating the provision of utility services in the electricity, telecommunications and water and sewerage sectors. The objectives are to:

- Ensure that consumers of utility services enjoy an acceptable quality of service at a reasonable cost;
- Establish and maintain transparent, consistent and objective rules for the regulation of utility service providers;
- Promote the long-term efficient provision of utility services for national development consistent with Government policy;
- Provide an avenue of appeal for consumers who have grievances with the utility service providers;
- Work with other related agencies in the promotion of a sustainable environment; and, act independently and impartially.

The Consumer and Public Affairs Department

Through the Consumer and Public Affairs (CPA) Department, the OUR discharges its mandate to protect utility consumers. The Consumer Affairs Unit, the Public Affairs Unit (PAU) and the OUR Information Centre (OURIC) all comprise the CPA Department. This Department is the section of the OUR that directly interfaces with utility consumers and one of its main responsibilities is to investigate appeals of decisions made by utility service providers brought by aggrieved consumers.

The Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU)

Among other things, the CAU receives, records and processes consumer complaints and appeals, monitors trends in consumer complaints and provides the Office with advice on measures to be taken to improve consumers' welfare.

The CAU uses as a primary input to its policy development and advice to the Office, the results of analyses of the complaints received from customers about the services provided by the companies. Feedback from consumers at town meetings, public fora and the media are also key sources for opinions and activities of utility services.

A consumer survey which seeks consumer feedback on a range of consumer issues is conducted every 18 - 24 months. Additionally, a public education programme is pursued which includes organizing consultations with stakeholders on pertinent regulatory matters.

The PAU manages the public education programme, media relations and the website while the Information Centre (OURIC), inter alia, provides information in keeping with the requirements of the Access to Information Act. The OUR through the CPA department also funds the activities of the Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities (CACU) which was established to operate as an independent advocacy group providing critical feedback and support for consumer issues.

The Intent and Purpose of the Quarterly Performance Report

The Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) is prepared by the Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) and provides the public with information and analysis about the contacts received from utility providers. The information includes: the number of customer contacts received over the review period; JPS and NWC's performance against the Guaranteed Standards; utilities' responsiveness to our appeals process; and the performance of the Unit against the appeals process timelines.

The QPR is intended to be a fair, reasonable and transparent report of the above-mentioned activities. The statistics for each reporting period is gathered from our Customer Information Database and is reflective of the contacts received from utility consumers island-wide. These contacts are received via various channels, namely: letters, telephone, walk-in, e-mails, fax and social media.

Methods of Calculation

The methods of calculation used include: summation, quarterly and year-on-year comparisons. The resort latterly to normalize the numbers of contacts by expressing this as per the customer base reflects our allowance for fair comparisons. Consequently, the report cites the number of contacts per 100,000 of the service provider's customer base. Even so, it is recognized that the telecommunications sector with its heterogeneous customer bases presents a peculiarity for comparison with the water and electricity utilities that have more homogenous customer bases. The information should be interpreted as a sample, or statistical representation of the intake to the Unit.

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Executive Summary

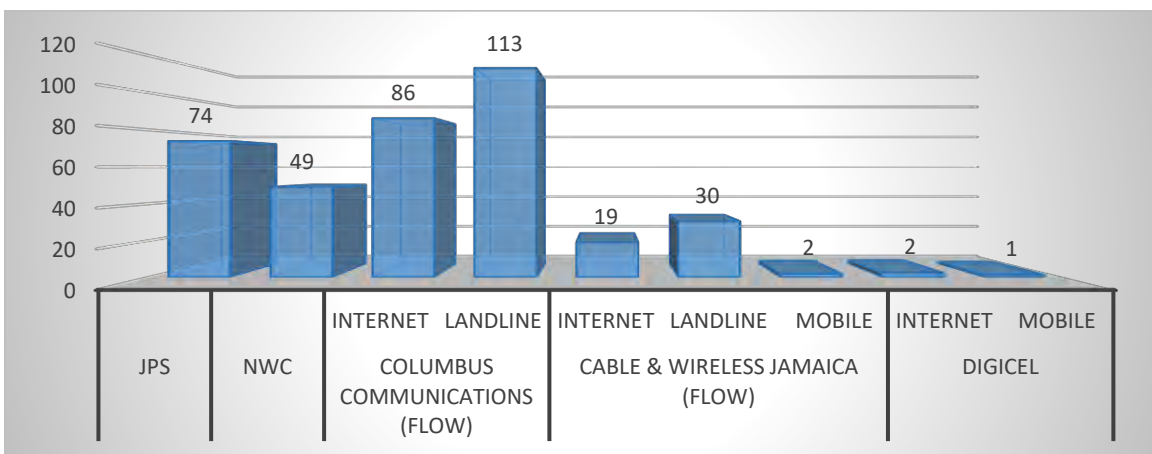
The 2018 October to December period saw the CAU receiving 991 contacts, which represents a 7% increase over the preceding period, and was the second highest number of contacts received per quarter during the year. Contacts relating to Disconnection (52%), alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches (30%) and Irregular Supply (20%, specifically related to the NWC), accounted for the most significant increases over the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service providers¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 467 (47%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 235 (24%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 101 (10%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 96 (10%)
- Digicel – 56 (6%)
- Private water and/or sewerage providers CanCara Development Ltd. and Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML); small telecommunications providers, Dekal Wireless, and Xtrinet; and, Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 36 (3%).

While JPS at 467, accounted for the most contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number of contacts – at 113 per 100,000 – in proportion to its landline customer base.

Figure 1: Distribution of OUR contacts per 100,000 of customer base



¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 6 on page 26

A total of 3,653 contacts were received in 2018, which represents a 2% decrease over the prior year. As is seen in Table 1, JPS and NWC - at 1,462 (40%) and 907 (25%) respectively - accounted for the highest number of total contacts received for the year.

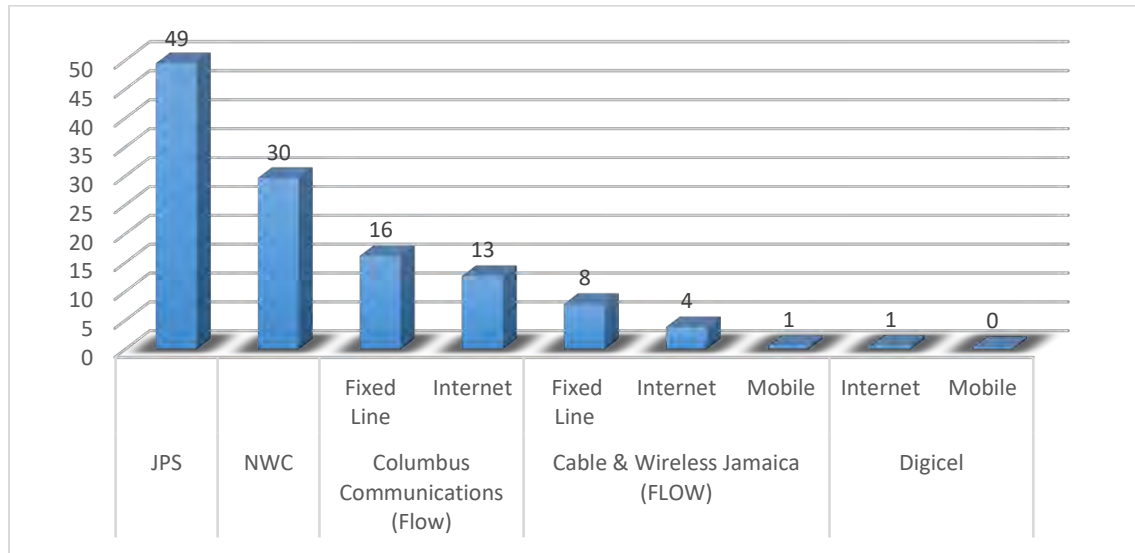
Table 1: Service Provider Contact Summary (January – December 2018)

Service Providers	Review Periods				Total
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	
JPS	346	242	407	467	1462
NWC	250	199	223	235	907
C&WJ (FLOW)	142	78	105	101	426
Columbus Communications (Flow)	142	105	99	96	442
Digicel	97	58	56	56	267
Small Telecommunications Providers	19	13	7	10	49
Private Water Providers	10	3	15	15	43
Other/ Not Utility Provider Related	12	16	18	11	57
Total	1018	714	930	991	3653

Matters related to billing continued to be the main reason for utility consumers contacting the CAU and increased by 10% over the preceding period. As a percentage of total contacts, JPS and NWC with 306 (31%) and 141 (14%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing related matters. For 2018, billing matters accounted for 50% of total contacts. For details on contact categories for the year see Table 8.

As is shown in Figure 2, JPS, at 49, also accounted for the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base. NWC and Columbus Communication's fixed line service followed with 30 and 16 contacts respectively, per 100,000 of their customer base.

Figure 2: Distribution of OUR billing contacts per 100,000 of customer base



In keeping with the usual trend, service interruption issues, at 16% of total contacts, remained the second highest reason for customer contact to the CAU. These also accounted for 17% of total contacts throughout 2018.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Over the review period, fifteen (15) new appeals were accepted for investigation with CanCara, JPS and NWC accounting for one (1), ten (10) and four (4) respectively. Requests for information, in the form of case letters, were sent for all new appeals accepted.

Both JPS and NWC agreed to acknowledge our case letters within five (5) business days. As is shown in Table 2, similar to the two preceding quarters, JPS attained a compliance rating of 50%, as acknowledgements were only received for five of the ten case letters sent. The NWC's performance on acknowledging our case letters showed marked improvement over the preceding quarters, attaining a 100% compliance rating.

Table 2: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2018)</i>	DEML	CanCara	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	100%	N/A	83%	63%
<i>April - March</i>	N/A	N/A	50%	83%
<i>July - September</i>	N/A	N/A	50%	43%
<i>October - December</i>	N/A	N/A	50%	100%

Throughout 2018, JPS and NWC attained average compliance ratings for acknowledgements of 58% and 72% respectively; this despite the NWC achieving a perfect score in the review period. These average percentages continue to indicate that both service providers need to improve on their performance in this area.

(ii) Response to Case Letters

All service providers are required to provide responses to our case letters within 30 business days. CanCara was compliant in that it provided the response to the case letter sent within the agreed timeline. Of the ten case letters sent to JPS, seven responses were received within the agreed timeline, resulting in a 70% compliance rate as is seen in Table 3. For the NWC, three of four responses were received within the agreed timeline; thereby resulting in a 75% compliance rating.

Table 3: Responses within standard (30 business days)

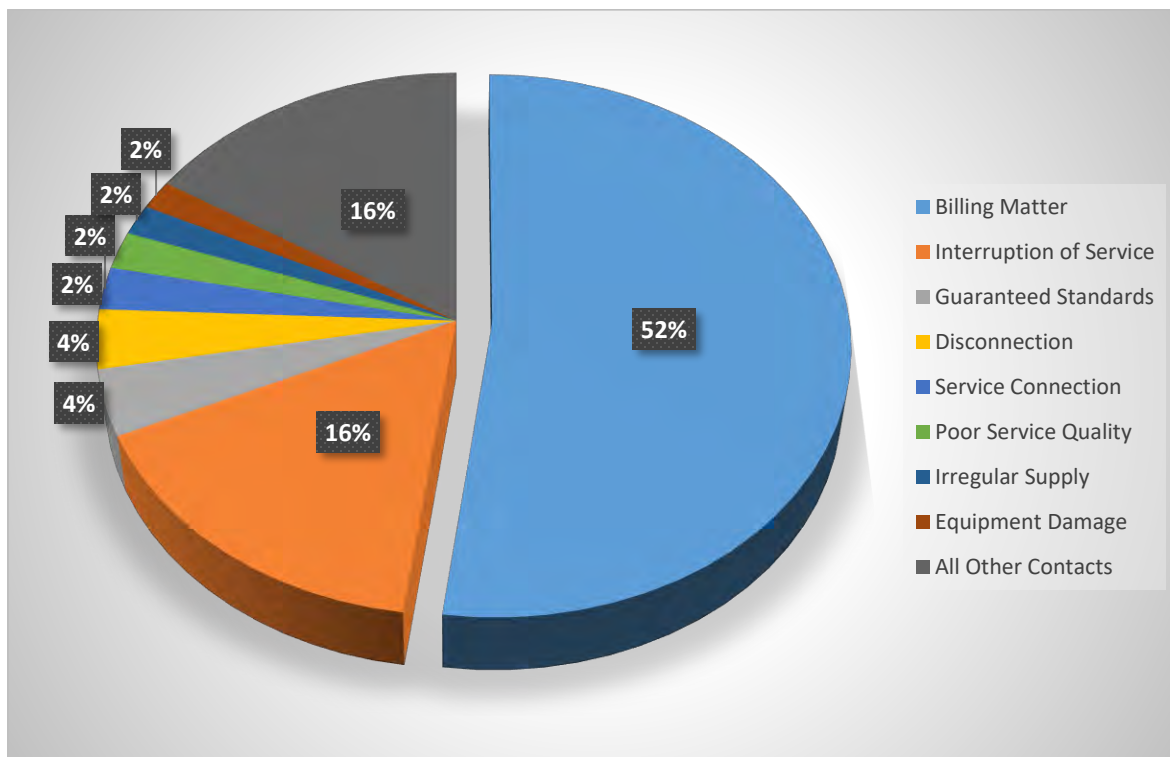
<i>Quarters (2018)</i>	DEML	CanCara	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	100%	N/A	40%	100%
<i>April – June</i>	N/A	N/A	75%	40%
<i>July - September</i>	N/A	N/A	100%	80%
<i>October - December</i>	N/A	100%	70%	75%

During 2018, both JPS's and NWC's performance rating in relation to providing responses within the agreed timeline fluctuated from one period to the next. With an average performance rating of 71% (JPS) and 74% (NWC), both service providers need to ensure that the necessary measures are put in place to achieve a sustained improved compliance rating.

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

The main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to: billing, interruption of service, Guaranteed Standards, disconnection, service connection, poor service quality, irregular supply and equipment damage (see Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category is provided in Table 7.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

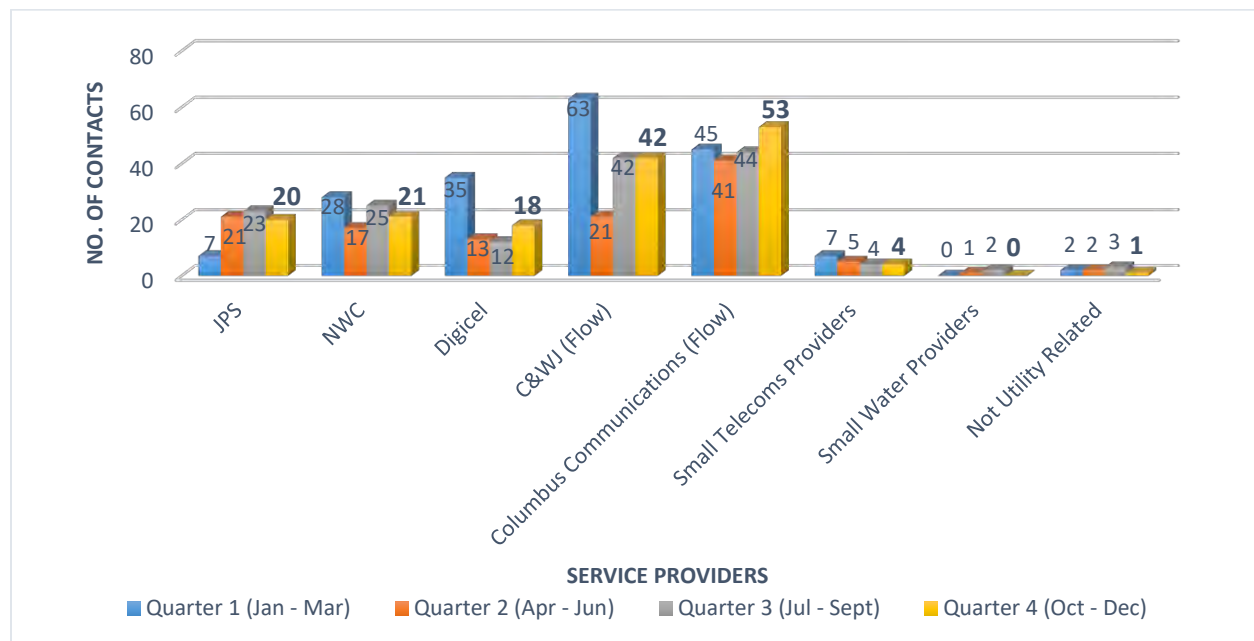
Matters relating to billing continued to be the main reason for customer contact during the 2018 October – December quarter and represented 52% of total contacts received. These matters included adjustments to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

JPS and NWC continued to account for the most number of billing contacts with 306 (31%) and 141 (14%) respectively. C&WJ (Flow) accounted for 26 (3%) while all other service providers accounted for the remaining 4%, with each having a share of 1% or less.

(ii) Interruption of Service

Contacts relating to service interruption were at 16% which is a one percentage point decrease over the preceding quarter. Columbus Communications (Flow) with 53 (5%) and C&WJ (Flow) with 42 (4%) continued to account for highest number of related contacts (see Figure 4). NWC, JPS and Digicel followed with 21, 20 and 18 (approximately 2% each) respectively, while Small Telecommunications Providers and Other/Not Utility Related shared the remaining 1%.

Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts



(iii) Disconnection

Contacts pertaining to disconnection, at 4%, increased by two percentage points when compared with the preceding quarter. JPS accounted for 2% while NWC, and Columbus Communications (Flow), equally shared the remaining 2%.

(iv) Service Connection

Similar to the preceding period, service connection matters remained at 2% of total contacts, which were received from JPS customers.

(v) Poor Service Quality

Poor service quality contacts declined by 2 percentage points – to 2% - when compared with the preceding period. JPS and C&WJ (Flow) accounted for an equal share of these contacts.

(vi) Equipment Damage

Equipment damage issues accounted for 2% of total contacts which is a one percentage point decrease over the preceding quarter. These issues also accounted for 4% of contacts relating to JPS.

Chapter 3: Guaranteed Standards Performance

(i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?

The Guaranteed Standards are performance measures that guide the provision of utility services delivered by the National Water Commission (NWC), small water providers and the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. If the companies fail to honour the agreement, the affected customer is entitled to compensation which is applied as a credit to their account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract compensation of up to six (6) periods of non-compliance.

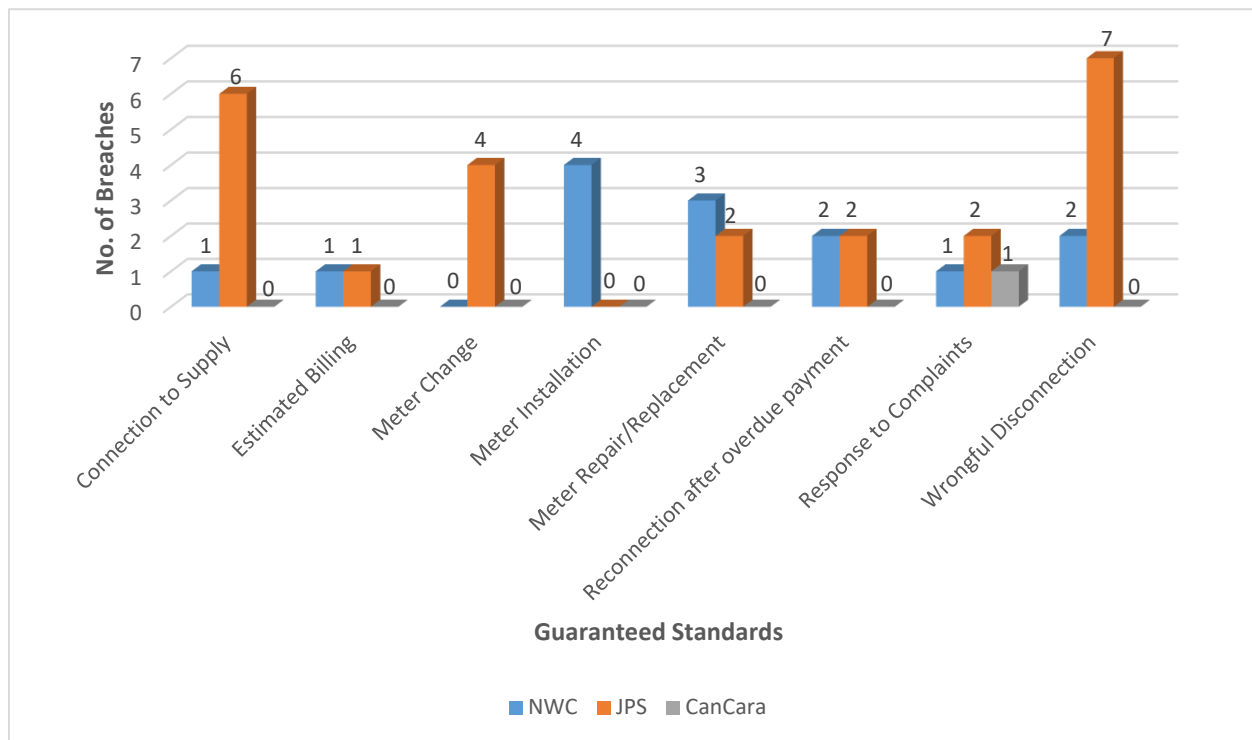
JPS: Residential customers: equivalent to the reconnection fee; Commercial customers: four (4) times the customer charge. Breaches of individual standards will attract compensation of up to eight (8) periods of non-compliance.

(iii) Quarterly report of breaches

Thirty-nine (39) contacts were received by the OUR in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards from customers of the JPS, NWC and CanCara Development Ltd. (CanCara). This represented four percent (4%) of total contacts received during the review period. The number of alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches per service providers were: JPS – 24, NWC – 14 and CanCara – 1.

As is seen in Figure 5, *Wrongful Disconnection* and *Connection to Supply* accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards for JPS. For the NWC, *Meter Installation* and *Repair/Replacement of Faulty Meter* accounted for the highest incidents in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards. The sole contact in relation to a breach of the Guaranteed Standards for CanCara related to responding to complaints within the specified timeline.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts



Additionally, the Guaranteed Standards reports submitted by the JPS and NWC did not reflect the alleged incidents of breaches reported to the OUR. Accordingly, no compensatory payments were made by JPS and NWC in relation to the contacts received by the OUR regarding Guaranteed Standards breaches.

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

JPS' compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards' performance indicated that 17,240 breaches were committed; which represents a 1% decline in the number of breaches compared to the preceding quarter. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of \$37.26 million, all of which was made by way of automatic compensation.

Estimated Bills (which restricts JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates without a penalty) and Connection to Supply (which prescribes the time within which JPS is to make a simple connection) accounted for the highest incidents of breaches. Both standards account for approximately 86% and 7% of breaches and 81% and 9% of compensatory payments, respectively.

During 2018, JPS committed a total of 72,046 breaches, which represents a 5% reduction in the number of breaches committed over 2017. Potential compensation for the 72,046 breaches was approximately \$148 million, all of which was paid out through automatic compensation.

NWC

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report indicates a total of 603 breaches being committed during the review period, which represents a 10% increase when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$2 million while actual payments amounted to \$1.2 million (representing 62% of total potential payments) which were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 38% of potential payments not made, represented those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

Similar to the preceding period, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: WGS 8 – Meter Repair/Replacement (which requires that needed meter repairs or replacements must be completed within 20 working days); and WGS 1 - Access (which requires that new service connections are made within 10 working days). These standards represented 42% and 31% of total breaches and potential payments respectively.

During 2018, the NWC committed a total of 2,146 breaches which attracted potential compensation of approximately \$7 million. Actual payments amounted to

approximately \$3.8 million, representing 54% of total potential amounts with the remaining 53% not being paid as the required claim forms were not submitted.

Chapter 4: Customer Contact Centre/Call Centre Performance Reports

In recognition of the important role of Customer Contact Centres (Call Centres) in customer service delivery, the OUR has deemed it necessary to include a report on the performance of the JPS and NWC Call Centres. Here focus will be placed on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that indicate general customer satisfaction levels for NWC and JPS.

NWC:

The NWC's Call Centre Report for the review period indicates an improvement in three of the four selected areas examined. As is seen in Table 4, improved performance was seen in the *Percentage Service Level*, *Average Length of Calls* and *Percentage of Abandon Calls* when compared with the preceding period. However, the thirty-one minutes and fifty-two seconds (0:31:52) that a caller waited in queue, represented the longest time for the *Maximum Delay* KPI throughout 2018.

Table 4: NWC's Call Centre Performance

<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Performance (2018)			
		Oct. - Dec	Jul - Sept	Apr - Jun	Jan - Mar
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds ²	58%	28%	55%	55%
<i>Maximum Delay</i>	Maximum time that caller waited in queue	0:31:52	0:19:20	0:18:30	0:14:10
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of calls	0:04:05	0:04:10	0:03:52	0:03:52
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	17%	30%	23%	31%

JPS:

² This represents the measure used by the NWC

As is shown in Table 5, JPS continued to maintained a credible Call Centre performance throughout 2018, as the KPIs reported were within set targets. Despite the reduction in the percentage of calls that are answered within 20 seconds, the JPS report indicates that the 91% attained for the reporting period has exceeded the international standard of 80%. Additionally, performance on the *Average Length of Calls* and *Percentage of Abandoned Calls* were within the targets set by the company during the review and preceding periods.

Table 5: JPS Call Centre Performance

		Performance (2018)			
<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Oct - Dec	Jul - Sept	Apr - Jun	Jan - Mar
<i>Service Level Answer</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds ³	91%	92%	94%	98%
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of calls ⁴	0:4:48	0:4:42	0:4:31	0:4:52
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced ⁵	8%	7%	6%	2%

³ This represents the measure used by the JPS

⁴ Goal of no more than 5 minutes set by JPS

⁵ Less than or equal to 8%

Chapter 5: Notification of Planned Outages Report

As part of their agreed Quality of Service Standards, the JPS and NWC are required to submit reports on their performance. One such report relates to their performance in notifying customers within a specified timeline about planned outages. This standard is a part of the Overall Standards for JPS (EOS 1) and the performance targets for the NWC.

JPS:

Under EOS 1, JPS is required to notify customers of planned outages, allowing at least 48 hours (2 days) advance notice. For the review period, JPS reported a 53.7% compliance rating in meeting this standard; which represents a 6 percentage point increase over the preceding period. The company has advised that it recognises the need for improvement in this area and will be taking the necessary corrective actions which will result in better performance in the short to medium timeframe.

During the review period, the OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report indicated that service interruption advisories relating to JPS were carried by main stream media. Specifically, the advisories provided information about scheduled interruptions in St. Ann and Hagley Park Road, St. Andrew. It also highlighted the complaint, made by residents of Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth, of frequent power outages.

NWC:

The NWC Performance Targets provides for a 98% attainment rate for 12 hours' advance notification of planned service interruptions of a duration of no more than 4 hours. However, where a planned interruption is expected to be for more than four hours, the NWC is required to give an advanced notice of at least 24 hours, at a 90% attainment rate.

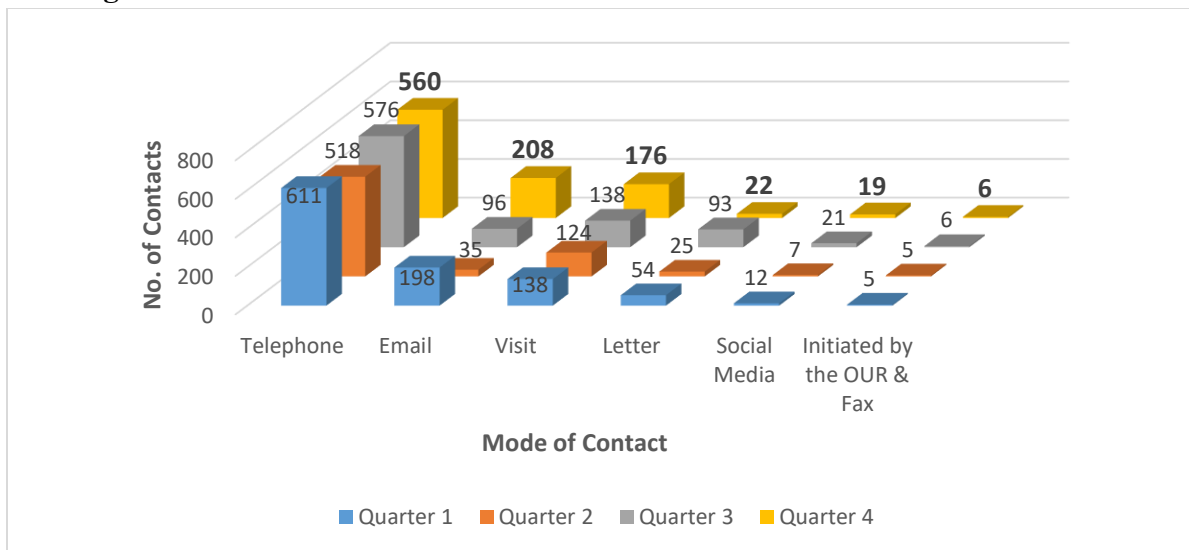
Based on the information reviewed, the NWC's compliance rating to provide at least 24 hours' advance notice prior to disruptions of a duration greater than 4 hours declined to 68% - from the 81% achieved in the preceding reporting period. Of the 31 related notifications received, 21 were in compliance with the stated target.

Similar to the preceding period, the OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report indicated that a number of advisories were issued relating to the NWC's Corporate area non-revenue water reduction programme, which resulted in service interruptions, as well as island-wide water restrictions. Specifically, the disruption which affected the Corporate Area in December due to the breakage of the Ferry water supply pipeline was highlighted.

Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

At 57% of total contacts, the telephone continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contacting the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit. Emails and visits followed with 21% and 18% respectively. Letters, social media, fax and contacts initiated by the OUR accounted for the remaining 4% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

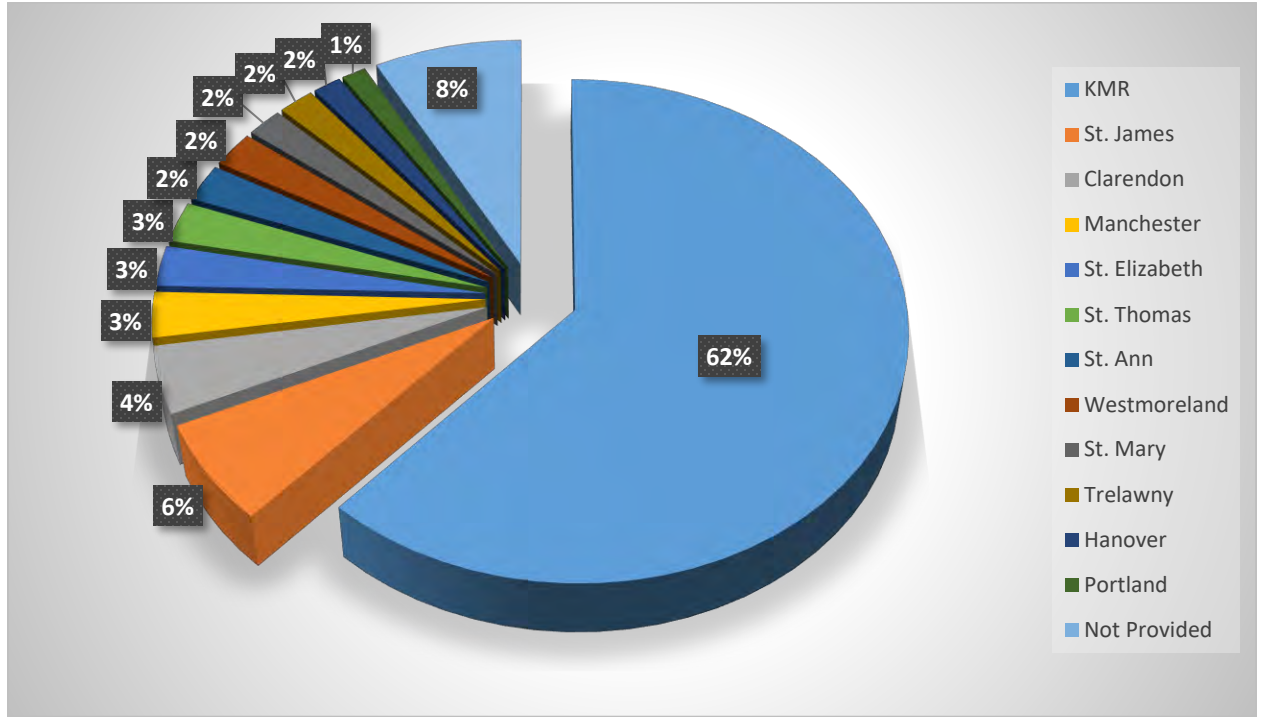
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR), at 62%, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. James and Clarendon followed with 8% and 4% respectively. Manchester, St. Elizabeth and St. Thomas each had a share of 3% while the remaining parishes each had a share of 2% or less. Eight percent (8%) of the contacts received provided no information on their location/parish or the information was not recorded. Details are provided in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Geographic Distribution of Contacts



Chapter 6: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals⁶

Fifteen (15) appeals were closed during the review period of which 12 (or 80%) were resolved in favour of the service provider with the remaining 3 (20%) being resolved by way of a compromise.

Of the closed appeals, 27% were resolved within the OUR's-established standard of sixty (65) working days while the remaining 73% exceeded the timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals⁷

At the end of the review period, eight (8) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, three (3) are awaiting responses from the service provider while the remaining five (5) are awaiting action to be taken by the OUR. For one of those awaiting OUR's actions, a final letter has been prepared for approval to dispatch.

Of the eight outstanding appeals, JPS accounted for three (3) equipment damage, two (2) property damage and one (1) billing related matter. The NWC accounted for the two remaining outstanding appeal which are billing related.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Fifteen new appeals were accepted for investigation during the review period for which all relevant information was available for twelve (12). Nine (9) of the 12 new appeals were resolved within the 65 working days' timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 75%, which is a fifteen percentage point increase over the preceding period. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity are provided in Table 11.

⁶ Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 9

⁷ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 10

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

An amount of \$200,813.53 was secured for utility customers through the intervention of the CAU. Of this amount, NWC, C&WJ, Columbus Communications (Flow) and JPS accounted for 40%, 33%, 15% and 12% respectively.

The total amounts secured for utility consumers, through our intervention, for 2018 was \$1,483,125.14. JPS, NWC and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 72%, 14% and 9% of total credits respectively with the remaining 5% being secured from C&WJ (FLOW).

(ii) JPS' Application of Monthly Charges to Pay-As-You-Go Customers

Close to the end of the preceding quarter, the OUR was made aware that JPS had, since 2016, required customers on its Pay-As-You-Go/ Prepaid Service to pay a monthly customer charge. Given that no monthly *Customer Charge* was approved by the OUR for this service, an investigation was launched.

JPS provided the information requested as part of our investigations, during the review period. Based on a review of the information, the OUR is satisfied that JPS has:

1. Taken the measures necessary to cease the application of the *Customer Charge* to Pay-As-You-Go Customers; and
2. Applied refunds to the affected customers' accounts, which amounted to approximately \$1.16 million.

The OUR will therefore take no further action regarding this matter at this time.

List of Tables 2018 July - September

Table 6: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel		Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Internet	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter													
(i)	New Appeals	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	15	
(ii)	New Complaints	134	50	6	22	11	30	14	11	9	3	2	293	
(iii)	New Enquires	67	32	0	3	3	4	3	1	9	2	2	129	
(iv)	New Opinions	8	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	18	
(v)	New Referrals	248	143	9	45	2	34	9	13	12	5	9	536	
	Total Contacts	467	235	15	70	16	68	28	25	31	10	15	991	
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:													
(i)	Mutually Resolved	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	
	Total Closures	7	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:													
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR													
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
	Total Outstanding Appeals	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	

Table 7: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small Telecoms Providers (Dekal Wireless, XtriNet)	Small Water/Sewerage Providers (CanCara, DEML)	OUR/Other (not utility related)		
Billing Matters	306	141	14	26	14	2	13	1	517	
Broken Main	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Customer Service	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	5	
Defective Street Lights	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Disconnection	20	8	1	0	5	0	1	0	35	
Equipment Damage	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	
Guaranteed Standards	24	14	0	0	0	0	1	0	39	
Guaranteed Standards Query	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Health & Safety	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Illegal Connections	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	
Interruption of Service	20	21	18	42	53	4	0	1	159	
Irregular Supply	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	
Leak at Meter	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Metering	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Number Portability	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	
Other	11	15	13	14	10	0	0	9	72	
Payment Arrangement	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Phone Cards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Poor Service Quality	9	1	4	6	1	1	0	0	22	
Property Damage	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Reconnection	7	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	11	
Redress not Received	2	0	1	6	5	2	0	0	16	
Service Connection	15	4	0	1	4	1	0	0	25	
Unable to get through to Provider	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	
Total	467	235	56	101	96	10	15	11	991	

Table 8: Annual Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Review Periods (2018)				
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Curent Quarter (Oct. - Dec.)	Total (Jan - Dec 2018)
Billing Matters	498	345	472	517	1832
Broken Main	6	3	5	4	18
Customer Service	22	6	7	5	40
Defective Street Lights	10	8	6	7	31
Disconnection	32	23	23	35	113
Equipment Damage	16	15	26	17	74
Guaranteed Standards	20	16	29	39	104
Guaranteed Standards Query	6	3	3	4	16
Health & Safety	16	5	13	4	38
Illegal Connections	3	4	9	10	26
Interruption of Service	187	121	155	159	622
Irregular Supply	13	8	15	18	54
Leak at Meter	7	4	4	5	20
Metering	9	8	7	2	26
Number Portability	6	4	3	3	16
Other	59	50	65	72	246
Payment Arrangement	2	3	5	4	14
Phone Cards	0	2	2	0	4
Poor Service Quality	33	27	34	22	116
Property Damage	5	2	5	2	14
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	2	1	2	1	6
Reconnection	6	7	8	11	32
Redress not Received	13	18	9	16	56
Security Deposit	2	0	0	0	2
Service Connection	28	17	21	25	91
Unable to get through to Service Provider	0	8	2	5	15
Unavailability of Service	17	6	0	4	27
Total	1018	714	930	991	3653

Table 9: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	4	8	12
Equipment Matters	2	0	2
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	7	8	15

Table 10: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	2	3
Equipment Damage	3	0	3
Property Damage	2	0	3
Total	6	2	9

Table 11: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (Appeals)

Activity	Service Standards	% Compliance	Comment
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within 2 business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	80%	Twelve (12) of the 15 new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	60%	Nine (9) of the 15 Case Letters were dispatched within the stipulated 5 business days.
Correspondence Copied to Customer	Customer is to be copied on all correspondence submitted to the utilities pertaining to their complaint	100%	
Final Response	Within the established timeline of receipt of all necessary information from relevant parties	67%	Eight (8) of twelve (12) final responses were dispatched within the established timeline.

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Distribution of Contacts per 100,000 of Customer Base
- Figure 2: Distribution of Billing Contacts per 100,000 of Customer Base
- Figure 3: Main Customer Concerns
- Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts
- Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts
- Figure 6: Methods of Contact
- Figure 7: Geographic Distribution of Contacts

Appendices

Appendix I: Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts

- Appeal:** Any contact in which the utility company has completed an investigation into a customer's complaint, the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome and writes to the OUR asking for an independent investigation of the matter.
- Complaint:** Any contact expressing dissatisfaction with the handling of a complaint by the utility company and to which the OUR takes steps to resolve without conducting a formal investigation.
- Customer Contact:** Any contact made to the OUR to register an appeal, inquiry, opinion, etc. Contact can be made through the telephone, post, electronic channels (emails, website, and Facebook page) and visits.
- Enquiry:** Any contact requiring verification/confirmation of information relating to the OUR, a utility service, policy and/or practice, etc.
- Opinion:** Any contact expressing a view about the actions, practice or terms of service, etc. of a utility company or the OUR.
- Referral:** Any contact advised by the OUR to consult the relevant utility company because the complainant had not initially utilized or exhausted the complaint procedure within the relevant utility company.

Appendix 2: Statement on Confidentiality of Telecommunications Service Provider Information

Information on the customer base of the telecommunication companies was used in some of the calculations contained in the QPR, pursuant to Section 7A of the Telecommunication Act – Amended. The referenced section states, in part:

“...the following information is not required to be regarded and dealt with as secret and confidential namely -

- (a) information that will facilitate customers in their choice of facilities or specified services and the development of the telecommunications industry; and
- (b) information relating to the –
 - (i) quality of service measurements;
 - (ii) prices charged to customers or to other licensees;
 - (iii) network coverage of licensees;
 - (iv) market share of licensees;
 - (v) volume of services of licensees however measured
 - (vi) subscriber base of licensees; and
 - (vii) capacity and usage of international submarine cables

Appendix 3: Appeals Process

The activities of utility companies are guided by “terms and conditions” within their license and/or Act. There are occasions, however, when consumers feel that particular action(s) of a utility company might have been in breach of the utility’s “terms and conditions” or might have been unfair to them. In such circumstances, the OUR is an avenue for recourse in having any such wrong investigated and addressed through our appeals process.

Prior to submitting an appeal to the OUR, consumers are expected and encouraged to first take the complaint, or issues giving rise to the complaint, up to the level of a senior officer at the respective utility company. The hearing of grievances is a consumer’s right and utilities are obliged to review such matters with the aim of having the issue addressed or clarified.

Appendix 4: CAU Internal Performance Standards

Process Timeline for Equipment Damage Appeals

<u>Description</u>	<u>Timelines</u>
Acknowledging correspondence & Assigning Appeal	2 (Two) working days
Case Letter Preparation	5 (Five) working days
Receive JPS’ Response/Update	15 – 25 working days
Review of Provider Response & prepare Follow-Up (F/U) Case letter or issue Directive (where necessary)	15 working days
Receive response to F/U Case Letter	5 (Five) working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 (Five) working days ⁸
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 (Five) working days
Supervisor’s Review of Final Letter	2 (Two) working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
Total	65 working days (using maximum response time of 25 working days)

Except for the thirty (30) working day response timeline for equipment damage appeals, all other timelines remain the same. As such, the complete process timeline for equipment damage appeals is sixty-five (65) working days.

⁸ Subsequent to the review of the providers’ response to OUR’s Case Letter, Follow-up Case Letter or Directive issued, the appeal may be escalated to the Supervisor, Manager or Director and would then be treated as a Special Appeal.

Recommended Service Levels

1. JPS is expected to respond or provide an update to **OUR's Case Letters** regarding customer's appeals (not related to equipment damage) within **FIFTEEN (15) working days** of receipt. The company is also expected to acknowledge receipt of our Case Letters within five (5) working days of receipt.
2. Where only an update is provided within fifteen (15) working days, the complete response is expected to be submitted to the OUR within ten (10) working days of receipt of the update.
3. JPS is expected to provide all information requested regarding equipment damage appeals within thirty (30) working days of receipt of our Case Letter.
4. JPS is expected to respond to the **OUR's follow-up case letter** within **FIVE (5) working days of receipt**.
5. The OUR's Final Letter to the customer is to be dispatched within **TWENTY-THREE (23) working days** of receipt of utilities' response (where no Follow-up Case Letter was sent). JPS will be provided with a copy of the Final Letter.
6. The OUR is expected to complete investigations of JPS appeals within the following timelines:
 - **Sixty-five (65) working days** for GENERAL APPEALS (which do not require external consultation)
 - **Seventy-Five (70) working days** for Equipment Damage Appeals (which do not require external consultation)
 - **Eighty-five (85) working days** for SPECIAL APPEALS (Appeals which require external consultation)
7. The Utility company is to extend the hold on the customer's account for **THIRTY (30) days** subsequent to receiving OUR's final response to allow the customer to make arrangements for the balances that are outstanding and/or give the customer time to appeal to the Director – Consumer & Public Affairs.

Appendix 5: Process Timelines for NWC Appeals

<u>Description</u>	<u>Timelines</u>
Acknowledging correspondence & Assigning Appeal	2 working days
Case Letter Preparation	5 working days
Receive NWC's Response/Update	30 working days
Review of Provider Response & prepare Follow-Up (F/U) Case letter or issue Directive (where necessary)	10 working days
Receive response to F/U Case Letter	

	5 working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 working days ⁹
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 working days
Supervisor's Review of Final Letter	2 working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
Total	65 working days

Other Appeals Activities:

- On **day ten (10)** after dispatch of the case letter, the Consumer Affairs Officer (CAO) will remind the service provider of its obligation to send a response within 20 days of receipt of the case letter.
- If the utilities' responses raise further questions or do not adequately address the queries posed by OUR, a *follow-up case letter* is sent to the utilities by OUR within **TEN (10) working days** of receipt of the utility's response.
- Beginning January 2014, monthly reports detailing the appeals for which the responses are outstanding will be generated and sent the NWC. Where the responses/updates are not received within fifteen working days (15) of submission of the report, the matter will be escalated to the Vice-President for Customer Services, NWC, for action.

Similarly, the CAU will provide NWC with a monthly update on appeals for which our responses are outstanding.

As a consequence, the following are the proposed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to which the utility companies will be accountable. It is being recommended that the following be agreed upon by all parties and published:

Recommended Service Levels

NWC is expected to respond to **OUR's Case Letters** regarding customer's appeals within **thirty (30) working days** of receipt. The Commission is also expected to acknowledge receipt of our Case Letters within five (5) working days.

⁹ Subsequent to the review of the providers' response to OUR's Case Letter, Follow-up Case Letter or Directive issued, the appeal may be escalated to the Supervisor, Manager or Director and would then be treated as a Special Appeal.

NWC is expected to respond to the **OUR's follow-up case letter** within **FIVE (5) working days of receipt**.

The OUR's Final Letter to the customer is to be dispatched within **EIGHTEEN (18) working days** of receipt of the NWC's response (where no Follow-up Case Letter was sent). The NWC will be provided with a copy of the Final Letter.

The OUR is expected to complete investigations of NWC appeals within the following timelines:

- **SIXTY-FIVE (65) working days** for GENERAL APPEALS (which do not require external consultation)
- **EIGHTY-FIVE (85) working days** for SPECIAL APPEALS (Appeals which require external consultation)

The Utility company is to extend the hold on the customer's account for FIFTEEN **(15) working days** subsequent to receiving OUR's final response to allow the customer to make arrangements for the balances that are outstanding and/or give the customer time to appeal to the Director – Consumer & Public Affairs.

Appendix 6: List of Acronyms

Can Cara	-	Can Cara Development Limited (Water & Sewerage Provider)
CPA	-	Consumer and Public Affairs Department (OUR)
CAU	-	Consumer Affairs Unit (OUR)
DEML	-	Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (Water and Sewerage Provider)
Dekal	-	Dekal Wireless Ltd. (Telecommunications Provider)
Flow Service	-	Columbus Communications Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) - Telecommunication Provider
FLOW	-	Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (C&WJ) Flow
JPS	-	Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (Electricity Provider)
KMR	-	Kingston Metropolitan Region (Kingston, St. Andrew & St. Catherine)
NWC	-	National Water Commission (Water & Sewerage Provider)

- OUR - Office of Utilities Regulation
- OURIC - Office of Utilities Regulation Information Centre
- The Office - Comprised of 6 members and is headed by a Chairman with the Director General serving as an Ex officio member