
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2017 April - June

Publication Date: September 14, 2017



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

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	9
(i) Acknowledgements.....	9
(ii) Response to Case Letters	9
Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns.....	10
(i) Billing	10
(ii) Interruption of Service	11
(iii) Disconnection	11
(v) Equipment damage.....	11
(vi) Poor Service Quality	11
(vii) Unavailability of Service	12
Chapter 3: Guaranteed Standards Performance	13
(i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?	13
(ii) How are customers compensated?	13
(iii) Quarterly report of breaches	13
(iv) Utilities’ performance on Guaranteed Standards	14
Chapter 4: Customer Contact Centre/Call Centre Performance Reports	16
Chapter 5: Customer Contact Distribution.....	17
Chapter 6: Appeals Performance	19
(i) Closure of Appeals	19
(ii) Outstanding Appeals.....	19
Appeals Process Resolution Rate.....	19
Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights	20
(i) Credits/Compensation.....	20
(ii) Directive issued to the NWC	20
(iii) Digicel’s Decision to Implement a Prepaid Maintenance Fee	20

List of Tables	21
Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities) 2017 January – March	21
Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories.....	21
Table 6: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities.....	22
Table 7: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding).....	22
Table 8: CAU’s Performance on Service Standards (Appeals)	23
List of Figures	23
Appendices.....	24
Appendix I: Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts	24
Appendix 2: Statement on Confidentiality of Telecommunications Service Provider Information ...	25
Appendix 3: Appeals Process	26
Appendix 4: CAU Internal Performance Standards.....	26
Appendix 5: Process Timelines for NWC Appeals.....	27
Appendix 6: List of Acronyms.....	29

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, to act independently and impartially.

The Consumer and Public Affairs Department

Through the Consumer and Public Affairs Department (CPA), 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. 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 to it 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 is conducted every 18 - 24 months which seeks consumer feedback on a range of consumer issues. Additionally, an aggressive 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 CPA 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.

Requests for additional details or any comments regarding this document should be directed to:

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Executive Summary

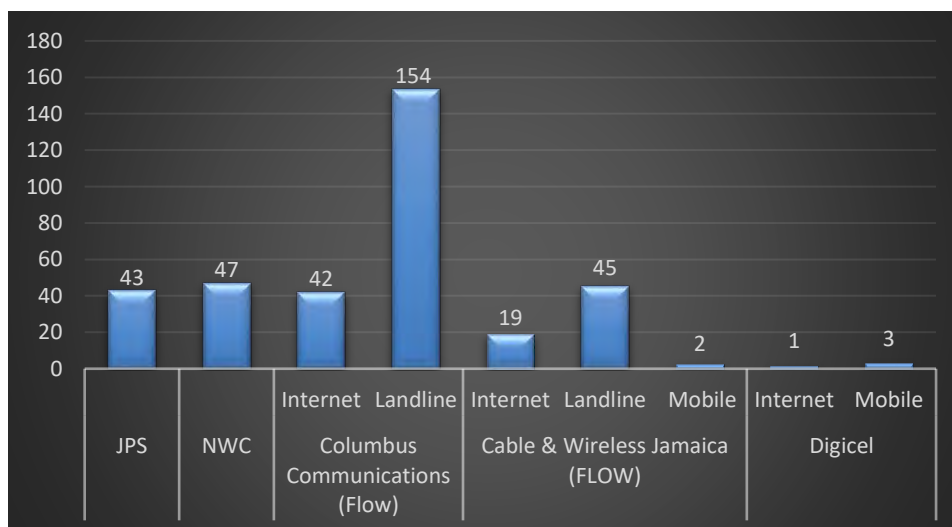
Over the period 2017 April – June, the CAU received 838 new contacts, which was a 3% reduction in the number of contacts received, over the preceding quarter.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 270 (32%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 224 (27%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (FLOW) – 137 (16%)
- Columbus Communications (FLOW) – 71 (8%)
- Digicel – 94 (12%)
- Small water providers CanCara Development Ltd., Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML) and the National Irrigation Commission; small telecommunications providers Caricel and Dekal Wireless; and, OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 42 (5%).

JPS (with 270 contacts) realized the highest number for total contacts, however Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for the highest number of contacts - at 154 per 100,000 - in proportion to its landline customer base.

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

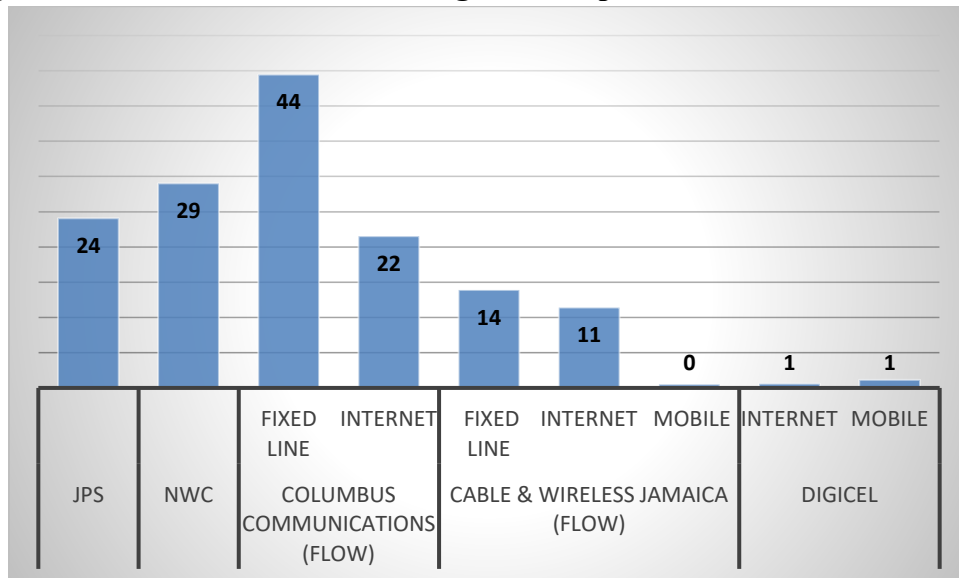


¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 4 on page 21

Billing matters, which realized a one percentage point increase over the preceding quarter to 49%, continued to be the main reason for utility consumers contacting the CAU. As a percentage of total contacts, JPS (at 18%) accounted for the highest number of billing related matters with the NWC following with 16%.

As shown in Figure 2, Columbus Communications (Flow) with 44 for its fixed line service, NWC with 29 and JPS with 24 were the service providers with the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of their customer base.

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



At 15% of total contacts, service interruption issues remained the second highest reason for customer contacts. When compared to the preceding period, these issues saw a two (2) percentage point increase.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

During the reporting period, seven (7) new appeals were accepted for investigation of which JPS and NWC accounted for two (2) and five (5) respectively. Requests for information, in the form of case letters, were sent to the respective service providers for all new appeals accepted.

As is shown in Table 1, no (0%) acknowledgements was received from JPS for the two case letters sent. Of the five case letters sent to the NWC, three (60%) acknowledgements were received and were within the established timeline.

Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2017)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	38%	55%
<i>April - June</i>	0%	60%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Both JPS and NWC attained a 100% rating for providing the requested information relating to appeals within the established 30 working days timeline (Table 2). JPS provided responses to the two case letters sent while, of the five case letters sent to the NWC, only three responses were due and were received.

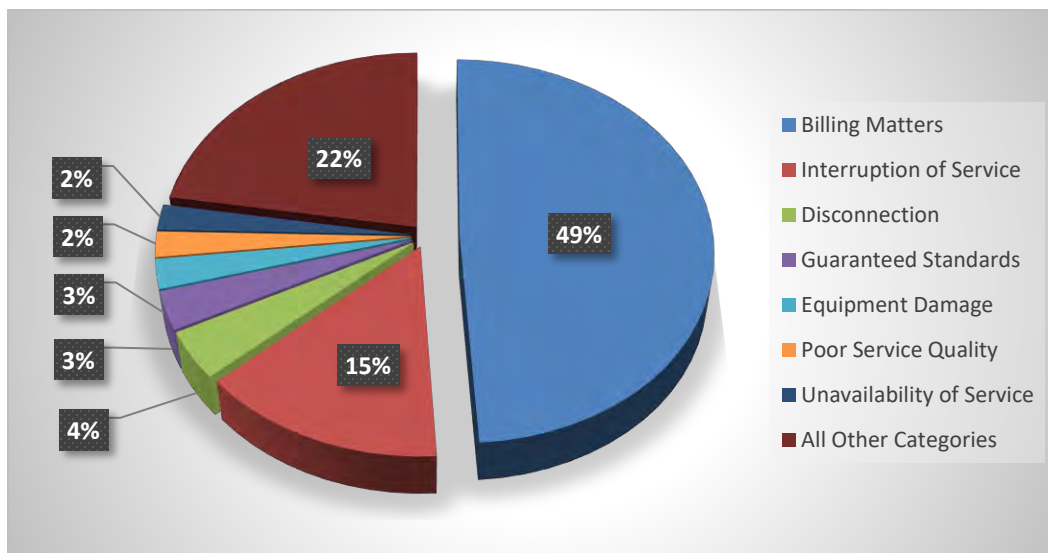
Table 2: Responses within standard (30 business days)

<i>Quarters (2017)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	86%	90%
<i>April – June</i>	100%	100%

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

As is shown in Figure 3, the main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to matters of: billing, interruption of service, disconnection, Guaranteed Standards, equipment damage and unavailability of service. Details on all contacts distributed per category is shown in Table 5.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

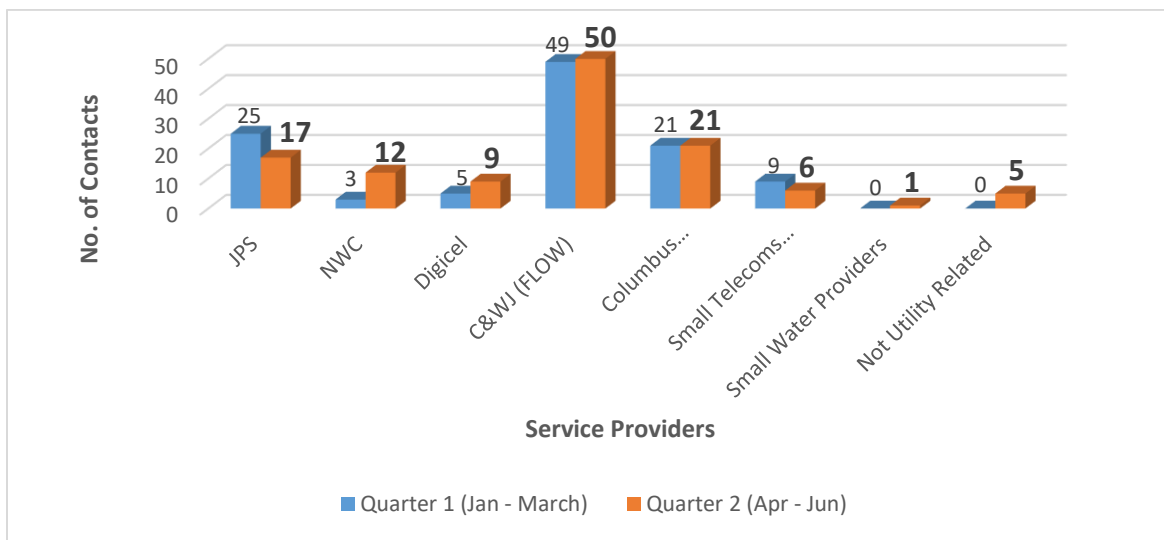
Billing matters, representing 49% of total contacts, continued to be the predominant reason for customer contact during the 2017 April - June quarter. The billing issues complained about included adjustments applied to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

A total of 411 billing related contacts were received of which JPS and NWC accounted for 149 (18%) and 138 (16%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 42 (5%) while C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 45 (5%) and 28 (3%) respectively. The remaining 2% of billing contacts were not utility related matters.

(ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruptions represented 15% of total contacts, which is two percentage point more than the previous quarter. As is seen in Figure 4, C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (FLOW) with 50 (6%) and 21 (3%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of total contacts in relation to service interruption issues. JPS and NWC accounted for 2% and 1% respectively while Digicel, and small telecommunications providers and matters not utility related each had a share of 1%.

Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts



(iii) Disconnection

Similar to the previous reporting period, disconnections represented 4% of contacts. JPS, NWC and C&WJ (Flow) each accounted for 1% while the remaining 1% was shared among Digicel, Columbus Communications and DEML.

(v) Equipment damage

Equipment damage issues remained at 3% of total contacts when compared with the previous quarter. Of the 21 related contacts received, JPS accounted 20 while one was attributed to C&WJ.

(vi) Poor Service Quality

JPS and C&WJ (FLOW) each had a 1% share of total contacts relating to poor service quality; thereby accounting for the 2% of total contacts.

(vii) Unavailability of Service

C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (FLOW) equally shared the 2% of contacts related to unavailability of service. The service providers indicated that they had no available facility with which to provide the requested service in the areas from which the contacts were received.

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 the account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

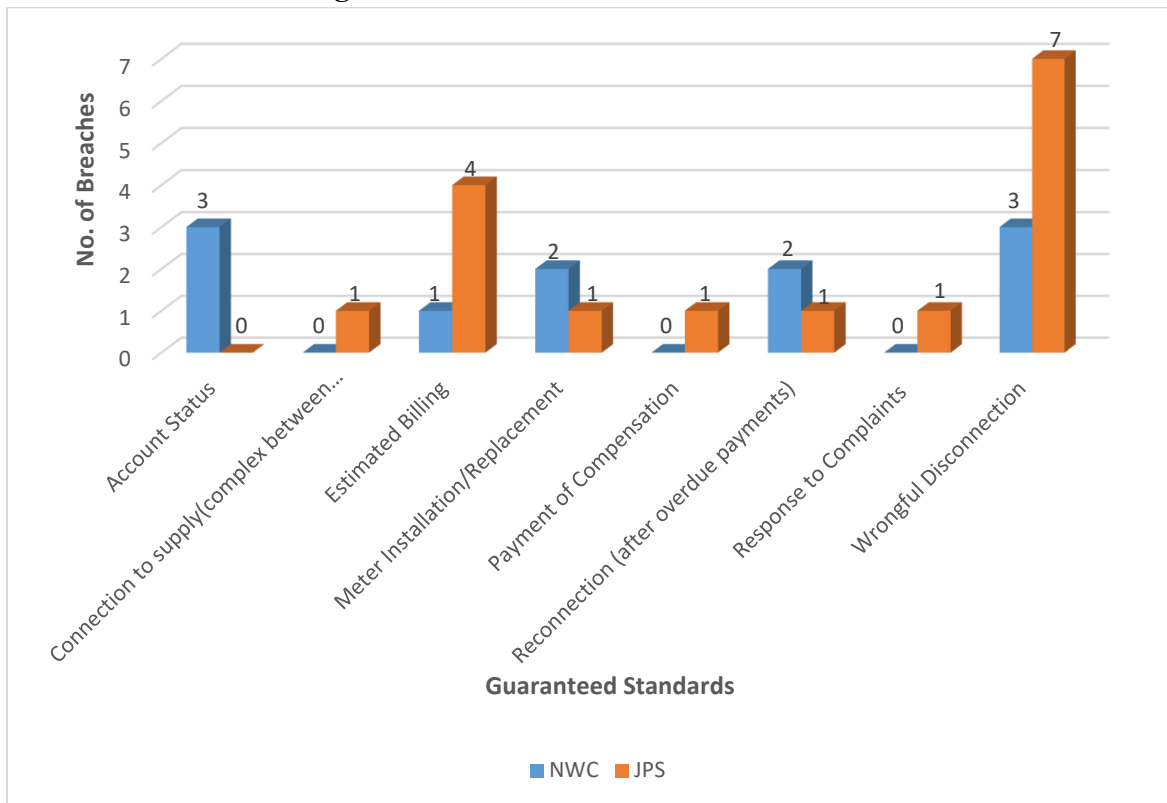
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract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

Twenty-seven (27) contacts were received in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards from customers of the JPS and the NWC. This represented three percent (3%) of total contacts received during the review period which is similar to the preceding quarter. JPS and NWC accounted for 16 and 11 contacts respectively, relating to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards.

Figure 5 indicates that the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches for JPS related to *Wrongful Disconnection and Estimated Billing*. In the case of the NWC, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches related to *Account Status and Wrongful Disconnection*.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

The JPS compliance report on its performance on the Guaranteed Standards indicated that a total of 15,999 breaches were committed during the review period; which represents a 40% decline in the number of breaches compared to the preceding quarter. These breaches also attracted compensatory payments of \$32,564,549 million, all of which was made out by way of automatic compensation.

Similar to the preceding quarter, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches related to Estimated Bills (which restricts JPS to sending more than two consecutive estimates without a penalty) and Estimation of Consumption (which prescribes the methodology to be used by JPS when computing estimated consumption). Both standards account for approximately 96% of breaches and compensatory payments.

NWC

For the review period, the NWC's compliance report on the Guaranteed Standards scheme indicated that there were 825 breaches, representing a 42% increase in the number of breaches over the preceding period. These 825 breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$2.6 million while actual payments amounted to \$1,026,568.20, representing 39% of total potential payments and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts.

The standards with the highest incidents of breaches were WGS 10(b) – Exceptional Meter Reading, WGS 10(a) – Meter Reading and WGS 1 – Access. These standards represented 31% and 27% and 13% of total breaches respectively.

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 report on the performance of the JPS and NWC Call Centres on a quarterly basis. In reporting on this, focus will be placed on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that indicate general customer satisfaction levels (as is shown in Table 3).

It is also important to note that for April - June, the reporting will only represent the NWC's performance as the JPS has requested and was granted additional time to submit the required information. Further, any similar reporting on the performance of the service providers in the telecommunications industry is awaiting the promulgation of the Quality of Service Standards for that sector.

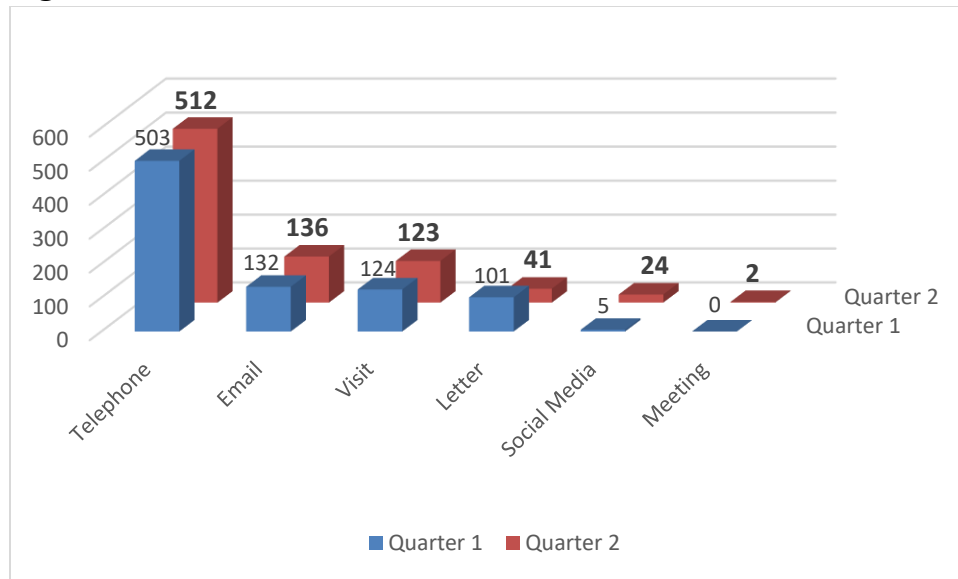
Table 3: NWC's Call Centre Performance

<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Performance
<i>Average Answer Speed</i>	Average speed of answering calls	1 minute and 20 seconds (1:20)
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds	52%
<i>Maximum Delay</i>	Maximum time that a caller waited in queue	23 minutes and 45 seconds (23:45)
<i>Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of Calls	Three minutes and twenty-eight seconds (3:28)
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	20%

Chapter 5: Customer Contact Distribution

The telephone, at 61% of the total contacts, continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU. Emails, visits and letters followed at sixteen percent (16%), fifteen percent (15%) and five percent (5%) respectively. Social media and outreach meeting accounted for the remaining 3% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

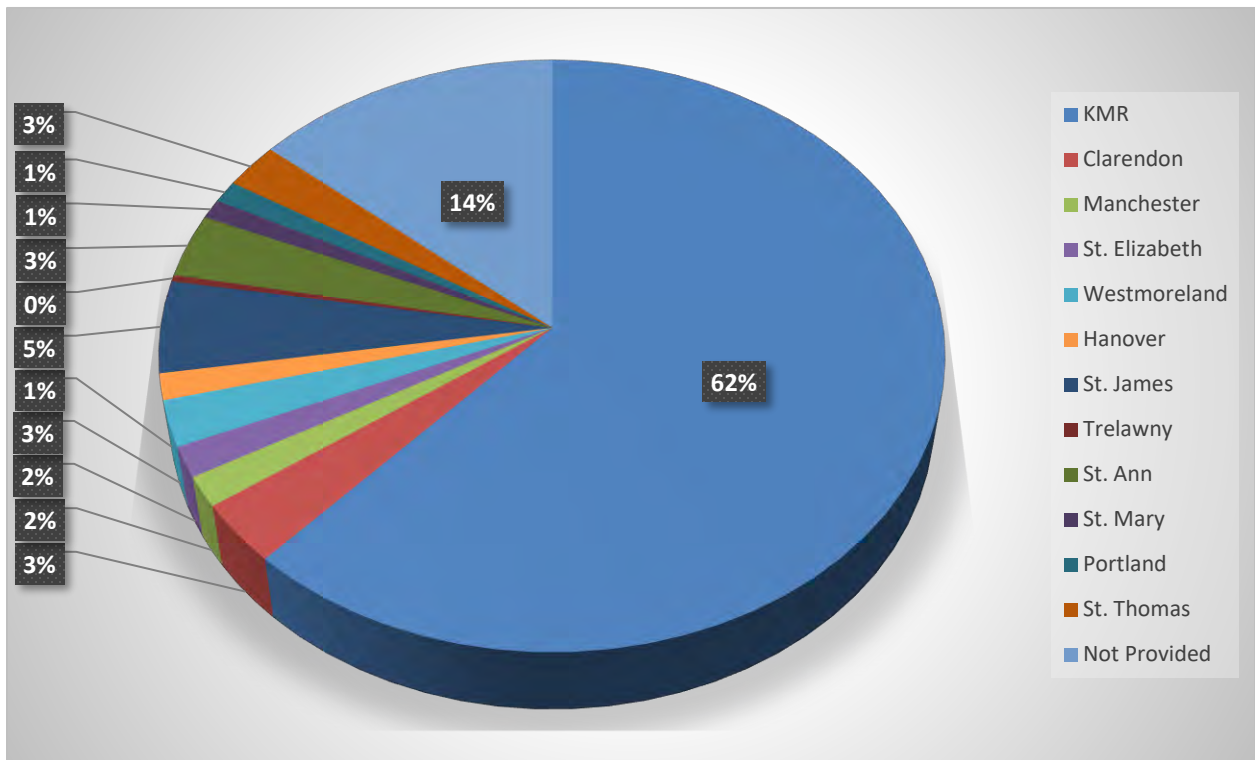
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR) continued to account for the highest number of total contacts at 62%. This represents a one percentage point decrease in contacts, for the KMR, when compared to the preceding quarter. At 5%, St. James accounted for the second highest number of total contacts for the period. Clarendon, Westmoreland, St. Ann and St. Thomas followed with 3% each while the remaining parishes each had a share of 2% or less. Fourteen percent (14%) 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 Appeals ²

Twenty-four (24) appeals were closed during the reporting period. Of those closed, sixty-seven percent (67%) were in favour of the service providers, compromise was reached for seventeen percent (17%), thirteen percent (13%) were resolved in the customer's favour while the remaining three percent (3%) represented those appeals that were withdrawn.

Fourteen (14), or 58%, of the closed appeals were resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days while the remaining 10 (42%) exceeded the established closure timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals³

At the end of the review period, seven (7) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, 3 are awaiting responses from the service providers while the remaining 4 are for action to be taken by the CAU/OUR.

Of the seven outstanding appeals, JPS accounted for four equipment damage and one property damage matters. JPS and NWC shared the remaining two outstanding appeals which are billing related.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Seven (7) new appeals were accepted for investigation, however only five provider responses were due by the end of the review period. All responses due were received within the established timeline. No requests for additional information was made.

Four of the five appeals for which all relevant information was received were resolved within the 65 working days' timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 80%. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity are provided in Table 8.

² Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 6

³ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 7

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

Resulting from our investigations, \$661,528.67 was secured for utility customers during the review period. NWC, at 87%, accounted for the greatest share of the credits secured with JPS and Digicel accounting for the remaining 12% and 1% respectively.

(ii) Directive issued to the NWC

In response to the Directive to cease the application of the Late Payment Fee (LPF), the NWC submitted the requested information which facilitated our review to confirm that the issue/s which caused the erroneous application of the fee was resolved. The review was completed and permission was granted to the NWC to resume the application of the LPF, with an effective date of 2017 July 1.

(iii) Digicel's Decision to Implement a Prepaid Maintenance Fee

Towards the end of the review period, Digicel advised of its decision to implement a Prepaid Maintenance Fee (PMF) to its customers whose monthly spend is under J\$50. Digicel further advised that the decision was taken to ensure that all customers adequately contribute to the cost of operating and maintaining their accounts on the company's system/network.

The OUR immediately intervened into this matter, since in its view, Digicel did not provide adequate notification to its customers prior to the implementation of the PMF. Additionally, the correspondence from Digicel did not advise of the exact amount of the PMF.

Consequent on our intervention, Digicel has since advised that it will not proceed with the implementation of the PMF at this time. Digicel also gave the assurance that rebates were applied to all customer's accounts to which the PMF was applied in June.

Given, the foregoing, the OUR has, for now, suspended any further action regarding this matter.

List of Tables

Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities) 2017 January – March

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Provider	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Digiplay	Internet	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(ii)	New Complaints	13	8	1	9	1	0	1	2	2	6	0	0	2	45
(iii)	New Enquires	9	10	0	3	1	1	4	0	0	4	0	1	3	36
(iv)	New Opinions	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
(v)	New Referrals	244	201	14	91	16	32	33	20	12	46	12	8	16	745
	Total Contacts	270	224	15	104	18	33	38	22	14	58	12	9	21	838
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	5	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	16
(iv)	Withdrawn	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total Closures	7	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	24
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Total Outstanding Appeals	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7

Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (Flow)	C&WJ (FLOW)	Small Telecoms Providers (Dekal Wireless)	Small Water Providers (CanCara, DEML, NIC & RBWC)	OUR/Other (not utility related)		
Billing Matters	149	138	42	28	45	2	5	2	411	
Broken Main	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Defective Street Lights	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Disconnection	8	8	4	3	8	0	3	0	34	
DigiPlay	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	4	14	
Equipment Damage	20	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	21	
Guaranteed Standards	16	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	
Guaranteed Standards Query	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Health & Safety	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Illegal Connections	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Interruption of Service	17	12	9	21	50	6	1	5	121	
Irregular Supply	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
Leak at Meter	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Metering	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Number Portability	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	
Other	22	14	19	5	15	0	0	10	85	
Phone Cards	0	0	1	2	4	0	0	0	7	
Poor Service Quality	7	0	4	1	5	1	0	0	18	
Property Damage	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Reconnection	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Redress not Received	0	3	4	3	0	3	0	0	13	
Security Deposit	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Service Connection	8	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	14	
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	2	4	1	5	6	0	0	0	18	
Total	270	224	94	71	137	12	9	21	838	

Table 6: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	DEML	
Billing Matter	3	15	1	19
Equipment Damage	4	0	0	4
Leak at Meter	0	1	0	1
Total	7	16	1	24

Table 7: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	1	2
Equipment Damage	4	0	4
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	6	1	7

Table 8: 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	100%	All 7 new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	100%	All 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	80%	Five (5) provider responses were received for which four (4) final responses were prepared and 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 ⁴
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.

⁴ 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 ⁵
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.

⁵ 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

CanCara	-	CanCara 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 - The Director General and both Deputy Directors General