
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2017 January - March

Publication Date: June 5, 2017



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report

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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 (CAU), 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 analysis 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, a public education programme is pursued which includes 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

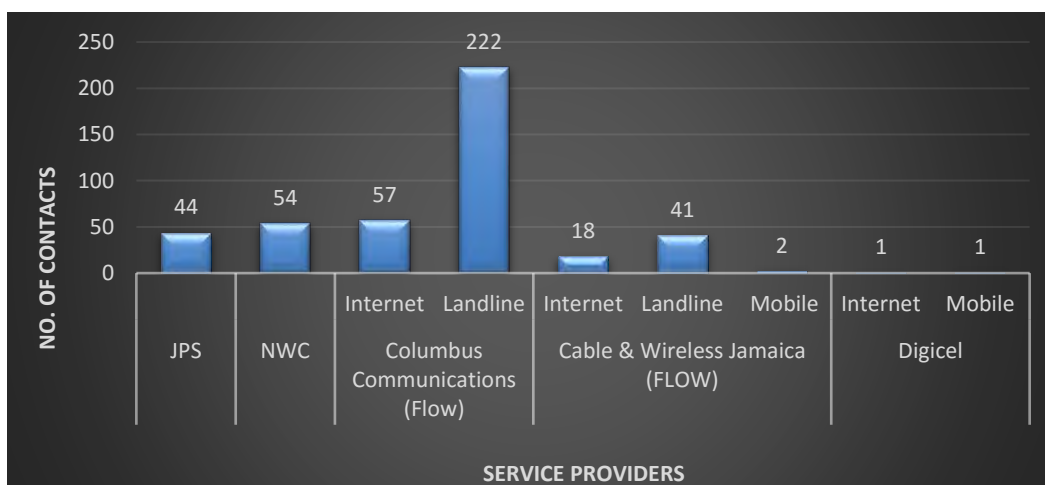
The first quarter of 2017 saw the CAU receiving 865 new contacts. This represents a 15% reduction in the number received and a general decline in contacts for most complaint categories, when compared with the preceding quarter.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 276 (32%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 258 (30%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (FLOW) – 128 (15%)
- Columbus Communications (FLOW) – 100 (12%)
- Digicel – 57 (7%)
- 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) – 46 (4%).

Despite JPS (at 276) realizing the highest number to total contacts for the review period, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for the highest number of contacts – at 222 per 100,000 – in proportion to its landline customer base.

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



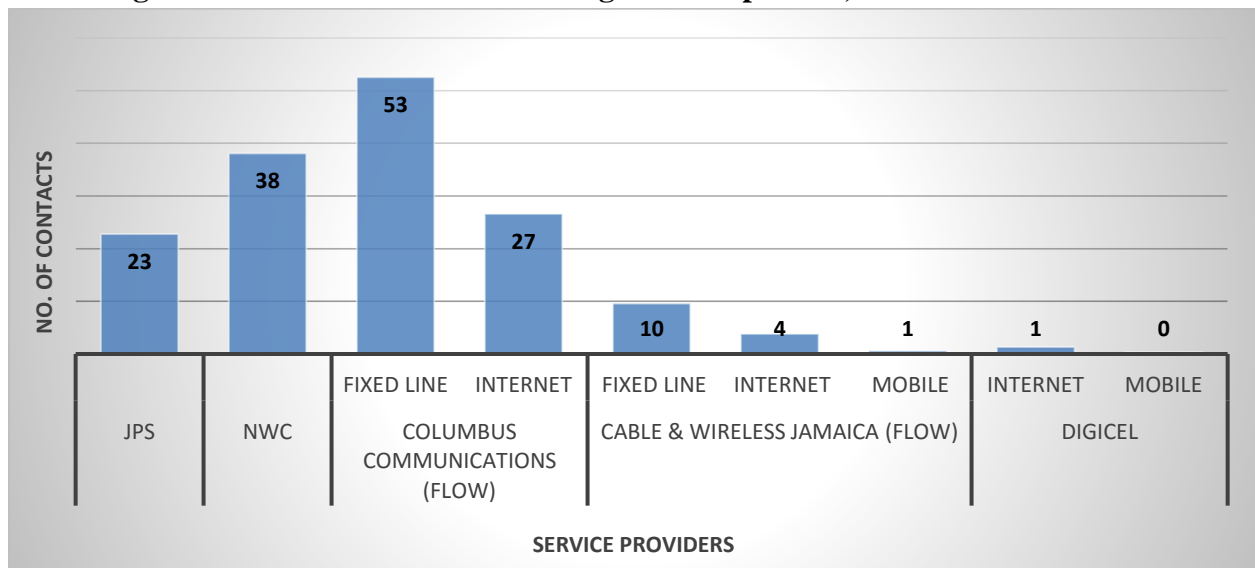
¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 1 on Page 20

Billing matters at 48%, which is a 17% decline over the preceding period, remained the main reason for persons contacting the CAU. As a percentage of total contacts, the NWC (at 21%) accounted for the highest number of billing related matters with the JPS following at 16%.

Service interruption issues, at 13%, continued to account for the second highest reason for customer contacts. When compared to the preceding period, these issues represent a 31% decrease.

As shown in Figure 2, Columbus Communications (Flow) with 53 and 27 contacts for its fixed line and internet services respectively, and NWC with 38, 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



Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Twenty-five (25) new appeals were accepted for investigation of which JPS and NWC accounted for ten (10) and fourteen (14) respectively, while one new appeal was accepted for DEML. Requests for information, in the form of case letters, were sent to the respective service providers for all new appeals accepted.

For the ten (10) case letters which were sent to JPS, eight acknowledgments were due within the reporting period of which three (3), or 38%, were received. The three acknowledgements were received within the established timeline.

Eleven acknowledgements were due from the NWC within the reporting period. Of the number of acknowledgements due, ten (10) were received with 6, or 55%, being received within the established timeline.

No acknowledgement was received from DEML for the one case letter sent.

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Of the 10 case letters sent to JPS, responses were due for seven within the review period. All seven responses were received however, only six, or 86%, were received within the established timeline.

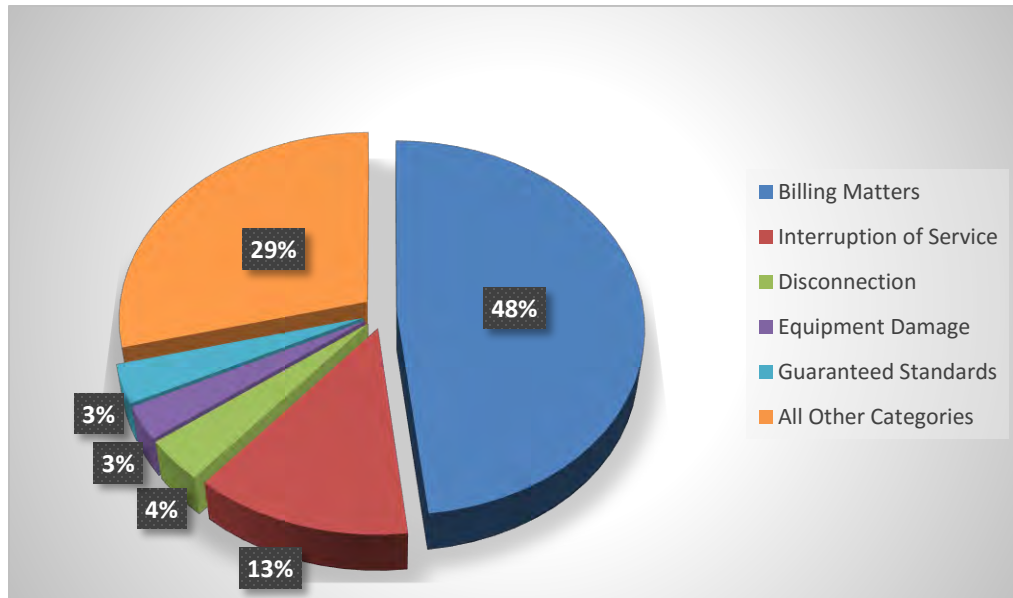
For the NWC, all ten responses that were due during the review period were received. However, only 9 (90%) were received within the established timeline.

While DEML submitted the response to our Case Letter, same was not received within the stipulated timeline.

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, equipment damage and the Guaranteed Standards. Details on all contacts distributed per category is shown in Table 5.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

At 48% of total contacts, billing related matters continued to be the predominant reason for customer contact during the 2017 January – March quarter. The billing issues complained about included adjustments that were applied to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

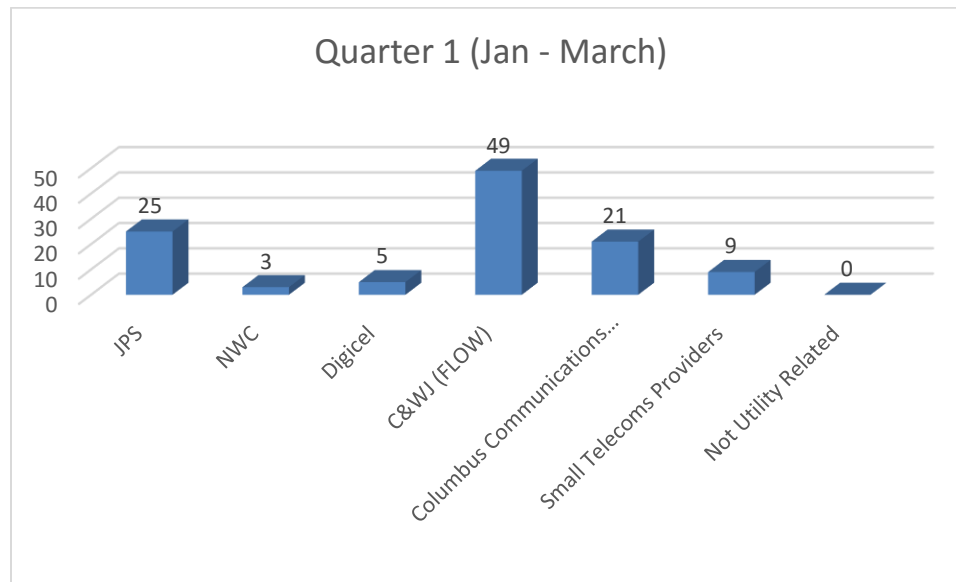
There were 417 billing related contacts of which JPS and NWC accounted for 141 (34%) and 181 (44%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 22 (5%) while C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 30 (7%) and 34 (8%) respectively. The remaining (9) 2% of billing contacts were not utility related matters.

(ii) Interruption of Service

At 13% of total contacts, service interruption issues declined by three percentage points compared with the previous quarter. As is seen in Figure 4, C&WJ (FLOW) with 49, or 6%, and JPS with 25

(3%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of total contacts in relation to service interruption issues. Columbus Communications accounted for 2% while Digicel, and small telecommunications providers each had a share of 1%.

Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts



(iii) Disconnection

Contacts relating to disconnections saw a one percentage point increase to 4% during the reporting period when compared to the previous period. JPS and C&WJ (Flow) each accounted for 1% while all other service providers shared the remaining 2% of disconnection related issues.

(v) Equipment damage

Equipment damage issues declined by one percentage point to 3% of total contacts when compared with the previous quarter. These contacts also represented nine percent (9%) of contacts specific to the services provided by 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 the account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

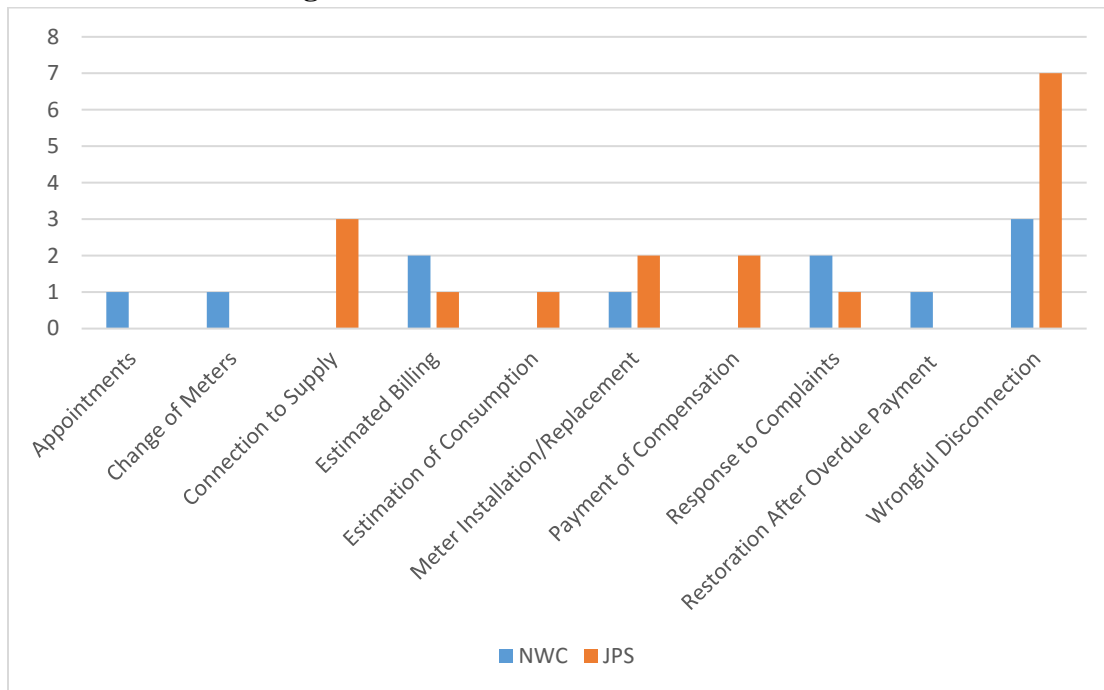
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract 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-eight (28) 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 17 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 Connection to Supply*. In the case of the NWC, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches related to *Wrongful Disconnection, Estimated Billing and Response to Complaints*.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

During the review period, the JPS compliance report on its performance on the Guaranteed Standards indicated that a total of 26,762 breaches were committed. This represents a 29% decline in the number of breaches when compared to the October – December 2016 quarter. These breaches also attracted a payout of approximately \$52.5 million, all of which was paid out by way of automatic compensation.

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 98% of breaches and compensatory payments.

NWC

The NWC's compliance report on the Guaranteed Standards scheme for the review period indicated that 581 breaches were committed; which is a 49% decline in the number of breaches over the preceding period. These 581 breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$1.85 million while actual payments amounted to \$763,839.04, representing 41% of total potential payments. The payments were by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts.

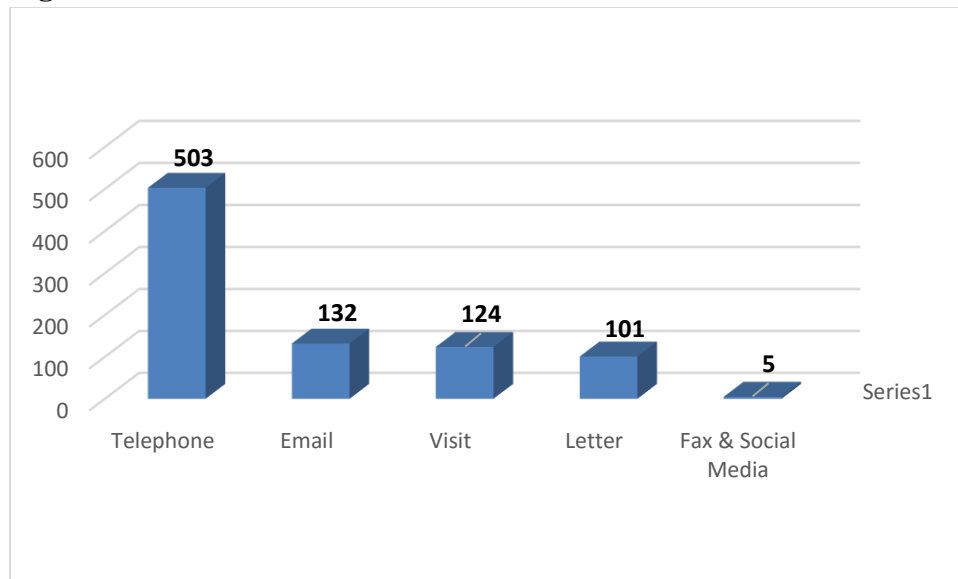
The standards with the highest incidents of breaches were WGS 10(a) – Meter Reading and WGS 8 – Meter Repair/Replacement. Both standards represented 26% and 25% of total breaches respectively; with Meter Reading accounting for 66% of actual compensatory payments made.

The JPS Guaranteed Standards compliance report was not received at the time of publication of this report.

Chapter 4: Customer Contact Distribution

As is shown in Figure 6, the telephone, at 58%, of the total contacts continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU. Emails, visits and letters followed at fifteen percent (15%), fourteen percent (14%) and twelve percent (12%) respectively. Fax and social media accounted for the remaining 1% of contacts.

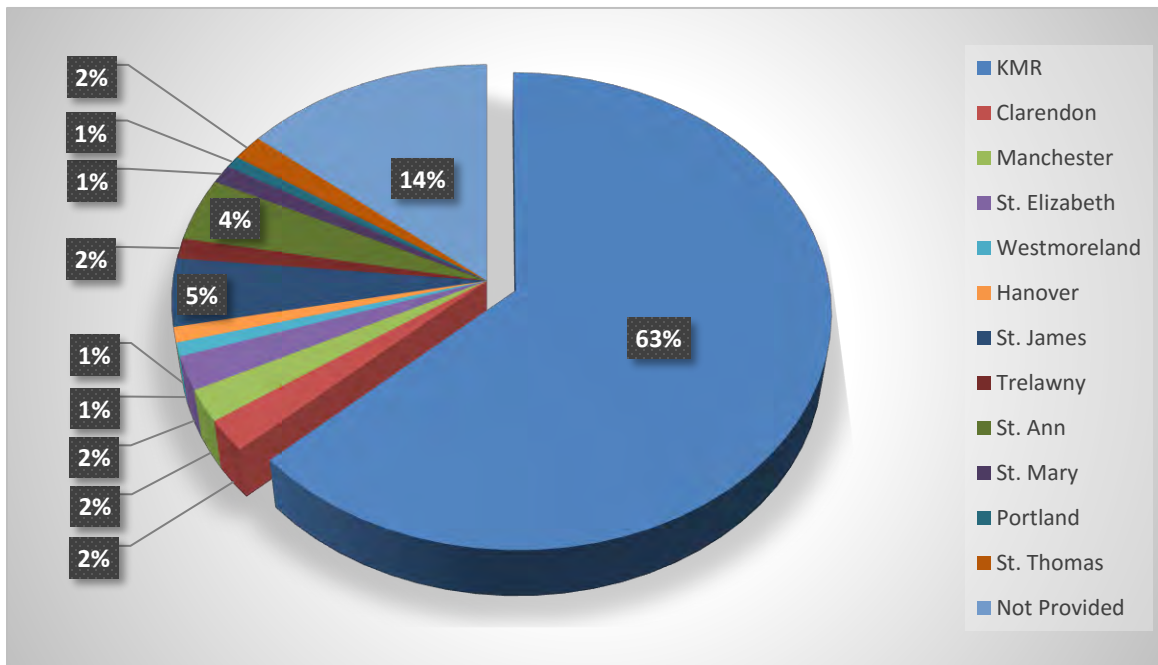
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

At 63%, the Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR) continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. This represents a six percentage point increase in contacts, for the KMR, when compared to the preceding October - December quarter. The parishes of St. James and St. Ann had a share of 5% and 4% respectively. Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, Trelawny and St. Thomas followed with 2% each while the remaining parishes each had a share of 1%. Fourteen (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 5: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals ²

The CAU closed thirty (30) appeals during the reporting period. Of those closed, seventy-three percent (73%) were in favour of the service providers, compromise was reached for seventeen percent (17%) while the remaining ten percent (10%) were resolved in favour of the customer.

One half of the closed appeals were carried forward from previous periods while the remaining half were resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals³

At the end of the review period, ten (10) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, 4 (or 40%) are awaiting responses from the service providers while the remaining 6 (or 60%) are for action to be taken by the CAU.

Matters relating to billing represent 60% of total outstanding appeals of which JPS and NWC accounts for 10% and 50% respectively. Equipment and Property Damage appeals, which relates specifically to JPS, account for 30% of outstanding matters while Leak at Meter account for the remaining 10%.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Twenty-five (25) new appeals were accepted for investigation, however only 18 provider responses were due by the end of the review period. All 18 responses due were received with only 15 (83%) being within the established timeline. No requests for additional information was made.

Seventeen (17) of the 18 appeals for which all relevant information was received were resolved within the 65 working days' timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 94%. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity is provided in Table 5.

² Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 3

³ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 4

Chapter 5: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

An amount of \$652,478.87 was secured for utility customers as a result of our investigation into their appeals. NWC, at 88%, account for the greatest share of the credits secured with JPS and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounting for 10% and 2% of the remaining credits, respectively.

(ii) Quarterly Meetings with Main Telecommunications Providers

The CAU hosted quarterly meetings with the two main providers of telecommunications services, namely Digicel and C&WJ (Flow). These meetings are intended to discuss any significant consumer related issue that has arisen as well as to explore possible solutions to having the issues resolved.

At the meeting with Digicel held on 2017 January 30, the issues with its DigiPlay services were discussed. One of the main issues raised with the DigiPlay service related to the lengthy installation timeline after payment was made, as well as the prolonged delay in refunding customers where a request was made. The company's representatives confirmed that they were experiencing challenges with this service which they were working assiduously to address.

The meeting with C&WJ (Flow) was held on 2017 March 14. Issues discussed included: Call Centre operations, continued service interruption and actions being taken to reduce same, migration of customers from the formerly LIME platform to that of Columbus Communications (Flow).

(iii) Directive issued to the NWC

The OUR issued a Directive to the NWC on 2017 March 31 instructing the service provider to stop charging their customers the Late Payment Fee (LPF) until further notice, as it was being applied erroneously. The NWC was also directed to desist from the practice of sending more than one bill per billing period. The Directive was issued to allow the OUR time to receive and review information confirming that the issues which resulted in the erroneous application of the LPF were resolved.

The NWC has indicated that it will comply with the Directive and has since submitted the requested information relating to the cause for the erroneous application of the LPF and the steps taken to resolve same. The matter remains under review.

A	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				
Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	10	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	25
(ii)	New Complaints	23	11	1	13	1	4	2	5	1	3	1	0	65
(iii)	New Enquires	13	10	1	2	1	0	3	1	1	1	0	1	39
(iv)	New Opinions	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(v)	New Referrals	228	223	12	79	18	41	50	21	7	17	10	6	734
Total Contacts		276	258	14	94	20	45	55	27	9	21	11	8	865
B Closure/Resolution of Appeals														
(i)	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	7	14	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	22
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	11	18	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	30
Total Closures		11	18	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	30
C Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total Outstanding Appeals		4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10

Complaint Category	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (Flow)	C&WJ (FLOW)	Providers (Dekal Wireless, Caricel)	Small Water Providers (CanCara, DEML & NIC)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	Total
Broken Main	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Customer Service	1	0	7	3	6	0	0	1	18
Defective Street Lights	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Disconnection	11	4	4	3	7	0	2	1	32
Equipment Damage	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25
Guaranteed Standards	17	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
Guaranteed Standards Query	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Health & Safety	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Illegal Connections	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Interruption of Service	25	3	5	21	49	9	0	0	112
Irregular Supply	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Leak at Meter	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Metering	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Number Portability	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	7
Other	18	21	13	18	16	0	0	18	104
Payment Arrangement	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Phone Cards	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Poor Service Quality	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	5
Property Damage	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Reconnection	4	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	10
Redress not Received	3	1	0	3	4	1	0	0	12
Security Deposit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Connection	3	2	0	6	2	1	0	0	14
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	3	3	0	7	3	0	2	0	18
Unable to get through to provider	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	4
Total	276	258	57	100	128	11	8	27	865

Table 3: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	Columbus Communication (Flow)	
Billing Matter	3	18	0	21
Disconnection	0	0	1	1
Equipment/Property Damage	8	0	0	8
Total	11	18	1	30

Table 4: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	5	6
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
Leak at Meter	0	1	1
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	4	6	10

Table 5: 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	92%	Of the 25 appeals received, 23 were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	60%	Of the 25 Case Letters sent, 15 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	83%	Eighteen (18) provider responses were received for which fifteen (15) final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline.

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- 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

<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)

Process Timeline for Equipment Damage Appeals

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.

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**.

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.

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

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.

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.

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