
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2017 July - September

Publication Date: December 22, 2017



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, 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, 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 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.

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

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Executive Summary

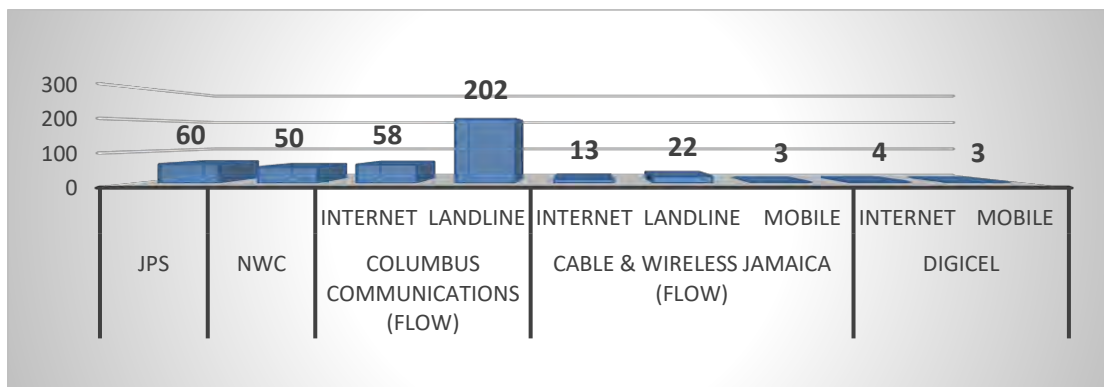
As is customary for the July – September period, the 973 contacts received by the CAU represent the highest number of contacts when compared to the preceding two quarters of 2017. With the exception of contacts relating to disconnection, there was a general increase in all other main reasons for contact. Equipment damage, service connection and unavailability of service showed the greatest increases over the preceding period at 67%, 29% and 22% respectively.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 379 (39%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 241 (25%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (FLOW) – 82 (8%)
- Columbus Communications (FLOW) – 124 (13%)
- Digicel – 112 (12%)
- Small water providers CanCara Development Ltd. and Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML); small telecommunications providers Caricel, Dekal Wireless, Island Networks Limited (IslandNet) and Logic One (LO); and, Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 35 (3%).

While JPS, with 397, accounted for the highest number for total contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for the highest number of contacts – at 202 per 100,000 – in proportion to its landline customer base.

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

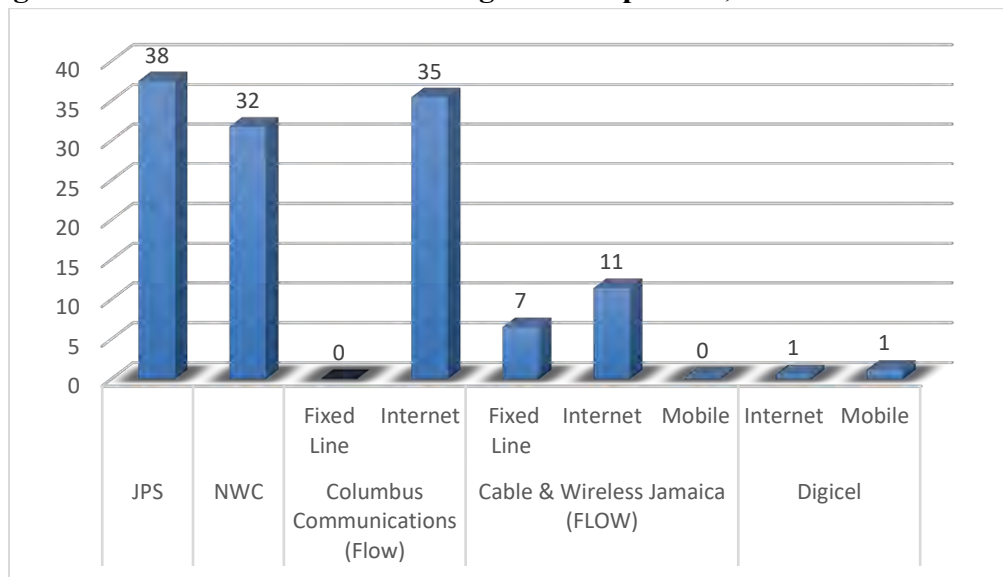


¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 4 on page 21

Billing matters remained at 49% of total contacts when compared to the preceding period and continued to be the main reason for utility consumers contacting the CAU. As a percentage of total contacts, JPS (at 24%) accounted for the highest number of billing related matters with the NWC following with 16%.

As shown in Figure 2, JPS, at 38, also accounted for the greatest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base. Columbus Communications (Flow) and NWC followed with 35 and 32 contacts respectively.

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



Similar to the preceding quarter, service interruption issues represented 15% of total contacts and remained the second highest reason for customer contact.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Eleven (11) new appeals were accepted for investigation over the review period of which JPS and NWC accounted for eight (8) and three (3) 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, JPS submitted acknowledgements for two of the eight case letters which represents a compliance level of 25%. No acknowledgement was received from the NWC for the three case letters sent.

These low percentages indicate a decline in both service providers' responsiveness in relation to acknowledging our correspondence and within the agreed 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%
<i>July – September</i>	25%	0%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

As is shown in Table 2, both JPS and NWC showed a decline in response to our case letters when compared to the previous two quarters. Of the eight case letters sent to JPS, responses were provided for five (63%); however, only four (50%) were received within the agreed timeline. The NWC provided responses for two of the three (67%) case letters sent with both being received within the agreed timeline.

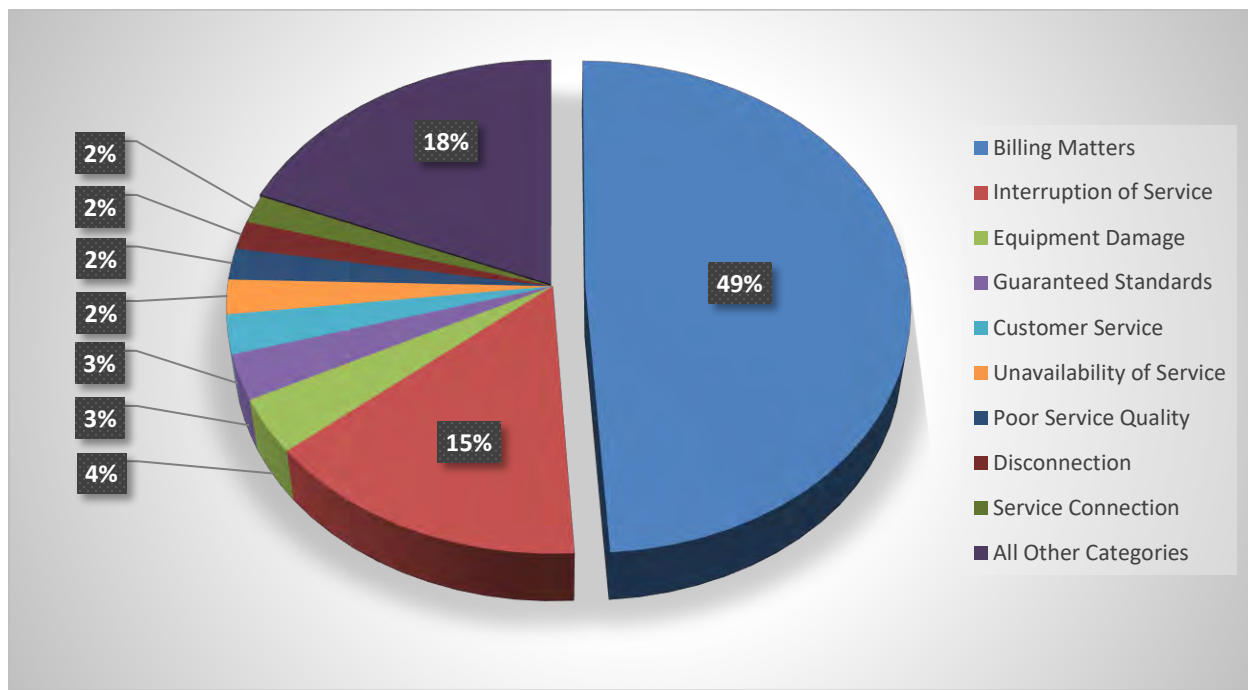
Table 2: Responses within standard (30 business days)

<i>Quarters (2017)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	86%	90%
<i>April – June</i>	100%	100%
<i>July - September</i>	50%	67%

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

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

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

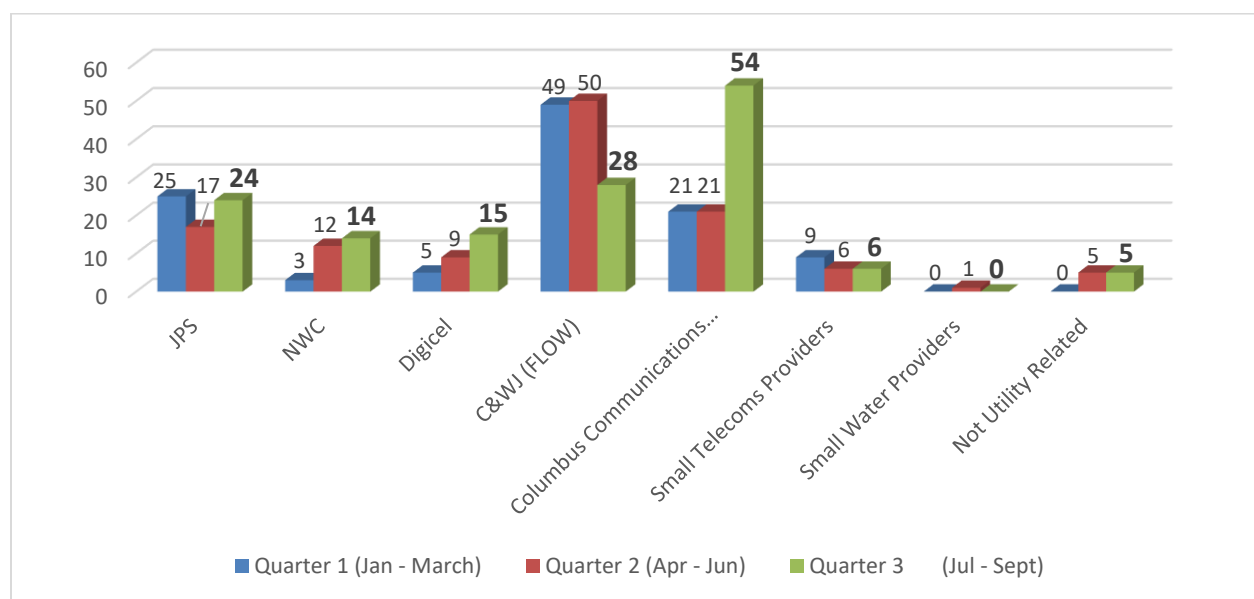
Like the preceding period, billing matters at 49% of total contacts, continued to be the predominant reason for customer contact during the 2017 July – September quarter. The billing issues complained about included adjustments applied to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

A total of 973 contacts were received of which 477 (49%) related to billing matters. Of the 973 contacts, billing matters for JPS and NWC accounted for 232 (24%) and 151 (16%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 35 (4%) while Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ (FLOW) accounted for 28 (3%) and 25 (2%) respectively.

(ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruptions remained at 15% of total contacts, similar to the previous quarter. As is seen in Figure 4, Columbus Communications (FLOW) and C&WJ (FLOW) with 54 (6%) and 28 (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) Equipment damage

The reporting period saw a one percentage point increase, to 4%, in equipment damage issues over the previous quarter. Of the 35 related contacts received, JPS accounted for 32 while three related to services provided by Columbus Communications (Flow).

(iv) Customer Service

During the reporting period, 25 (3%) contacts were received in relation to the poor quality of customer service received from the main telecommunications providers (Digicel, C&WJ – Flow, and Columbus Communications – Flow). These service providers each accounted for 1% of total contacts received.

(v) Disconnection

For the reporting period, contacts relating to disconnections saw a two percentage point decline, to 2%, when compared to the April – June quarter. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 1% while the remaining 1% was shared among JPS, NWC, Digicel and C&WJ (Flow).

(vi) Poor Service Quality

Poor service quality accounted for 2% of total contacts with Digicel accounting for 1% with JPS, NWC, Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ (Flow) sharing the remaining 1%.

(vii) Unavailability of Service

Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for 1% of contacts related to unavailability of service while C&WJ (Flow) and Digicel shared the remaining 1%. 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.

(viii) Service Connection

Service connection issues accounted for 2% of total contacts with JPS accounting for 1% while the remaining 1% was shared among NWC, C&WJ (Flow), Columbus Communications (Flow) and Digicel.

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?

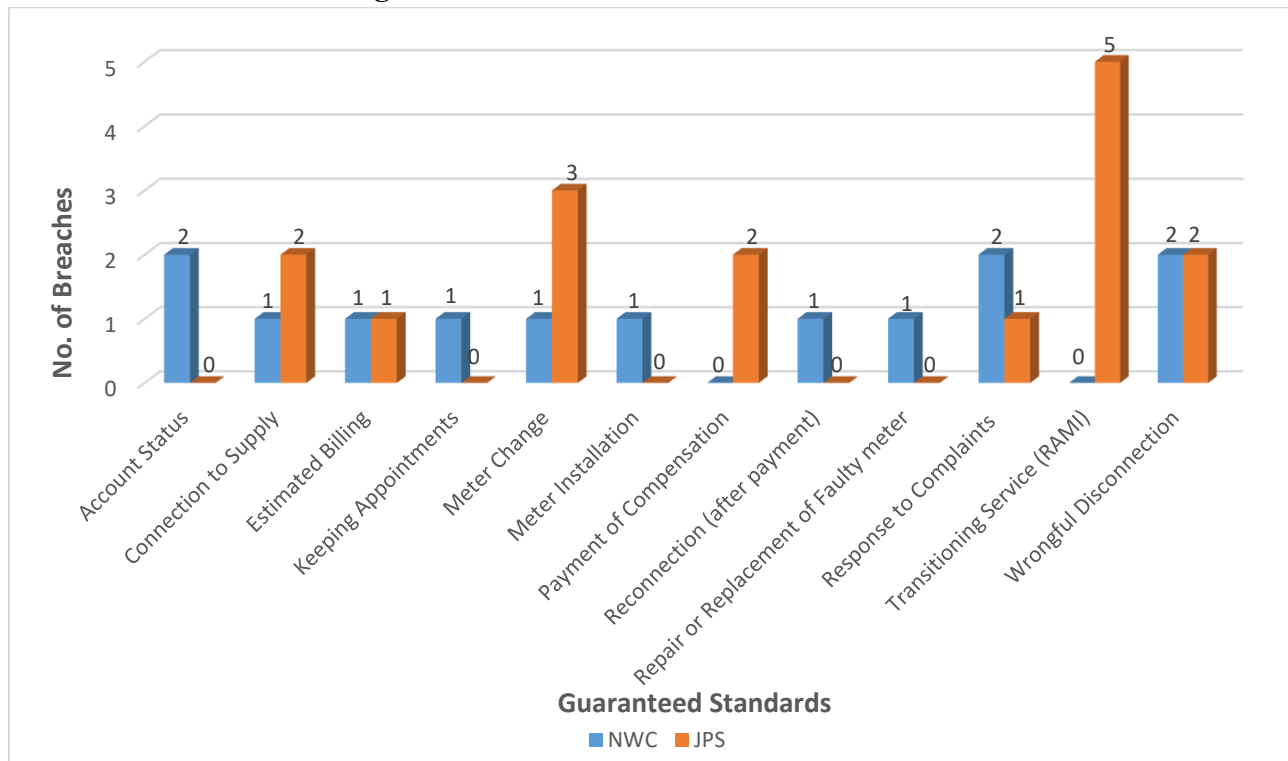
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract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

Twenty-nine (29) contacts were received in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards from customers of the JPS and the NWC. Similar to the preceding two quarters, this represented three percent (3%) of total contacts received during the review period. JPS and NWC accounted for 16 and 13 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 13,569 breaches were committed during the review period; which represents a 15% decline in the number of breaches compared to the preceding quarter. These breaches also attracted compensatory payments of \$27,828,045, 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 from sending more than two consecutive estimates without a penalty). Estimation of consumption (which prescribes the methodology to be used by JPS when computing estimated consumption) and Reconnection (which specifies that disconnected service is to be restored within 24 hours of payment of overdue amounts inclusive of the reconnection fee). These three standards account for approximately 99% of total breaches and compensatory payments.

NWC

For the review period, the NWC's compliance report on the Guaranteed Standards scheme indicated that there were 672 breaches, representing a 19% decline in the number of breaches over the preceding period. These 672 breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$2,133,796.98 while actual payments amounted to \$912,914.14, representing 43% of total potential payments which were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts.

Similar to the preceding review period, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches were WGS 10(b) – Exceptional Meter Reading, WGS 1 – Access and WGS 10(a) – Meter Reading. These standards represented 34% and 23% and 19% 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 the reporting on the Call Centre performance for the review period will only reflect that of the NWC as the JPS has not submit the required information for inclusion in this report.

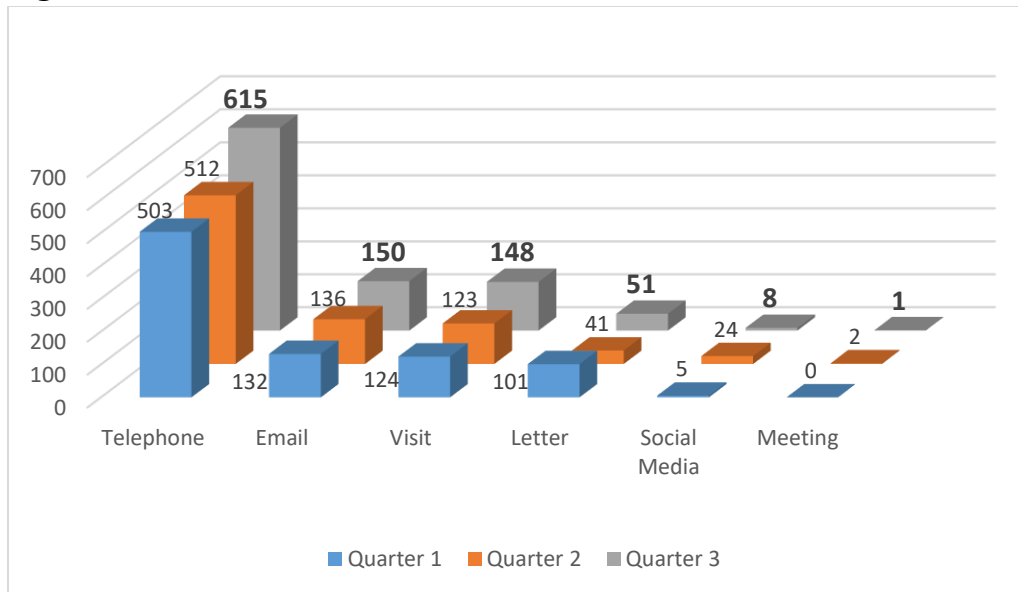
Table 3: NWC's Call Centre Performance

<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Performance
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds	74%
<i>Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average Length of Calls	Three minutes and twenty-eight seconds (3:43)
<i>Percentage of Abandoned Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	13%

Chapter 5: Customer Contact Distribution

The telephone, at 63% of the total contacts, continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU. Emails, visits and letter represented 16%, 15% and 5% of total contacts respectively. Social media and outreach meeting accounted for the remaining 1% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

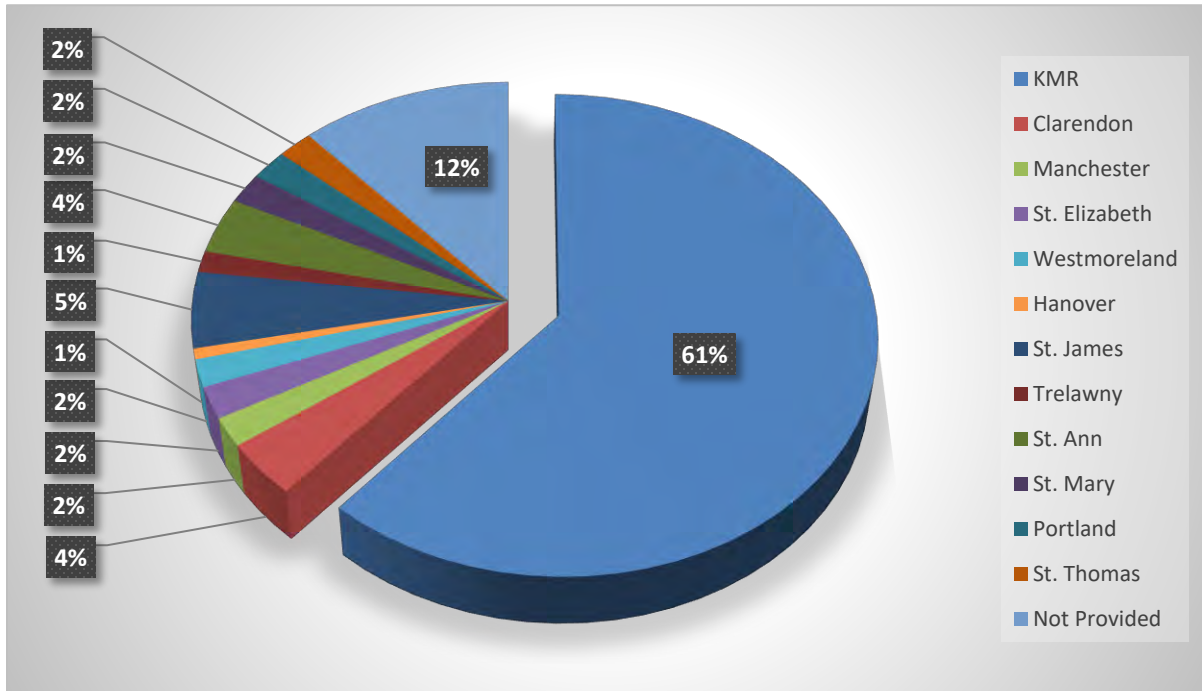
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

At 61%, the Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR) continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. 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 and St. Ann followed with 4% each while the remaining parishes each had a share of 2% or less. Twelve percent (12%) 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

Sixteen (16) appeals were closed over the reporting period. Of those closed, sixty-two percent (62%) were in favour of the service providers, compromise was reached for thirteen percent (13%) while the remaining twenty-five percent (25%) were resolved in the customer's favour.

Twelve (12), or 75%, of the closed appeals were resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days while the remaining 4 (25%) exceeded the established closure timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals³

At the end of the review period, six (6) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, two (2) are awaiting responses from the service providers while the remaining four (4) are for action to be taken by the CAU/OUR.

Of the six (6) outstanding appeals, JPS accounted for three (3) equipment damage, one (1) property damage and one (1) billing related matter. The NWC accounted for the one (1) remaining outstanding appeal which is billing related.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Eleven (11) new appeals were accepted for investigation with ten provider responses being due at the end of the review period. Seven (7) of the ten responses due were received with six (6) being within the established 30 working days timeline.

Six of the seven appeals for which all relevant information was received were resolved within the 65 working days' timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 86% and is a six percentage point increase over the preceding quarter. 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

During the review period, \$117,896.79 was secured for utility customers through our appeals process. JPS, at 63%, accounted for the greatest share of the credits secured, followed by the NWC at 32%. C&WJ accounted for the remaining 5%.

Correction: In the previous April – June quarter, it was reported that an amount of \$661,528.67 was secured for utility customers. Based on a subsequent review, that amount has been reduced by \$59,008.68 which had been included in the sum for the NWC. Consequently, the amended amount secured for the April – June period was 602,519.99 with the NWC maintaining the greatest share of \$519,100.19 (or 86%).

(ii) Digicel Quarterly Meeting

Following on the decision to host quarterly meetings with the major service providers, one such meeting was held with Digicel on 2016 July 6. A critical matter that was discussed related to the issue of credit depletion due to data usage and was flagged by the CAU which had noticed an increase in contacts from Digicel customers about this matter.

Digicel advised that it is aware of the issue and was in the process of implementing measures to resolve the issue. The measures to be implemented include a reconfiguration of the system which would result in a ceiling being set for data allotment under a prescribed plan. This configuration will not allow access to data once a customer's data plan expires.

Further, where data is depleted on handsets with LTE feature, Digicel advised that the company will absorb all associated costs until the end of 2017 when the proposed system changes were fully implemented.

By way of correspondence of 2017 September 1, Digicel further advised that every effort was being made to resolve the credit depletion issue and that rebates or compensation was paid to affected customers where applicable. Additionally, the company will be exploring public education campaign to provide customers with information on how data works.

The OUR will continue to monitor Digicel's response to this issue until we are satisfied that same is resolved.

List of Tables 2017 July - September

Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	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	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
(ii)	New Complaints	22	19	1	6	0	6	2	0	3	10	1	0	3	73
(iii)	New Enquires	24	29	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	2	2	1	2	66
(iv)	New Opinions	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
(v)	New Referrals	324	188	9	44	20	38	75	19	32	43	10	3	13	818
	Total Contacts	379	241	10	50	22	46	78	19	38	55	13	4	18	973
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
	Total Closures	9	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
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)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total Outstanding Appeals	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (Flow)	C&WJ (FLOW)	Small Telecoms Providers (Can-Cara & DEML)	Small Water Providers (Caricel, Dekal, IN & LO)	OUR/Other (not utility related)		
Billing Matters	232	151	35	28	25	1	3	2	477	
Broken Main	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Customer Service	0	0	14	6	5	0	0	0	25	
Defective Street Lights	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Disconnection	4	4	3	5	2	0	0	0	18	
DigiPlay	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	9	
Equipment Damage	32	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	35	
Guaranteed Standards	16	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	
Guaranteed Standards Query	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
Health & Safety	9	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	14	
Illegal Connections	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Interruption of Service	24	14	15	54	28	6	0	5	146	
Irregular Supply	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Leak at Meter	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
Metering	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Number Portability	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	8	
Other	11	15	19	5	5	1	0	6	62	
Payment Arrangement	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	
Phone Cards	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	
Poor Service Quality	4	2	6	4	2	1	0	1	20	
Property Damage	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Reconnection	5	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	10	
Redress not Received	0	1	5	4	2	3	0	0	15	
Removal of Utility Pole	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Security Deposit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Service Connection	10	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	18	
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	3	2	5	6	5	1	0	0	22	
Total	379	241	112	124	82	13	4	18	973	

Table 6: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matter	2	7	9
Equipment Damage	7	0	7
Total	9	7	16

Table 7: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	1	2
Equipment Damage	3	0	3
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	5	1	6

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 11 new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	91%	Ten of the eleven 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	86%	Seven (7) provider responses were received for which six (6) final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline.

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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