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# Office of Utilities Regulation

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Consumer Affairs Unit

## Quarterly Performance Report

2018 July - September

Publication Date: December 28, 2018



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**OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION**

36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

**Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report**

**Document Number: 2018/GEN/013/QPR.004**

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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, a public education programme is pursued which includes organizing consultations with stakeholders on pertinent regulatory matters.

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

### **The Intent and Purpose of the Quarterly Performance Report**

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

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

### **Methods of Calculation**

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

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## Executive Summary

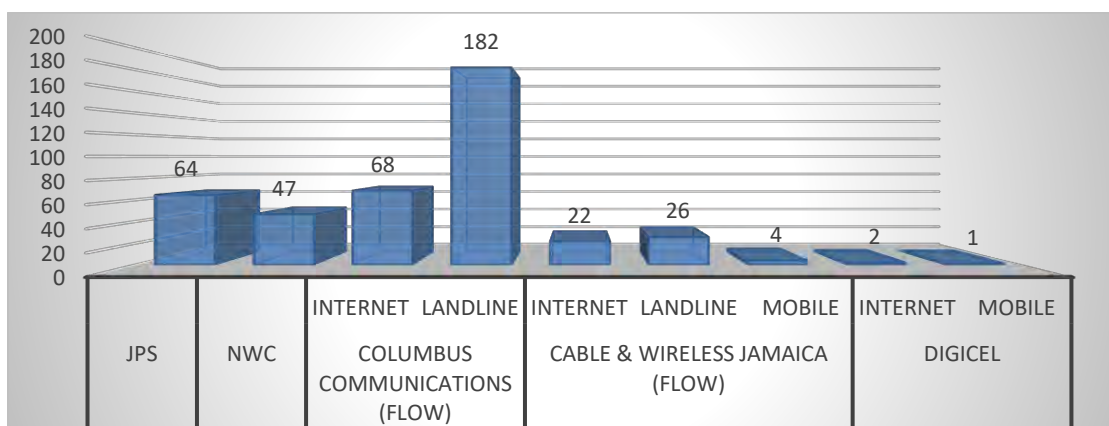
The number of contacts to the CAU increased by 30%, to 930, during the review period compared with the preceding quarter. Contacts relating to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches (88%), Equipment Damage (73%) and Billing Matters (37%) accounted for the most significant increases over the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service providers<sup>1</sup>:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 407 (44%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 223 (24%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 105 (11%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 99 (10%)
- Digicel – 56 (6%)
- Small water and/or sewerage providers CanCara Development Ltd., Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML) and Hampstead Benevolent Society; small telecommunications providers, Dekal Wireless, and Caricel; and, Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 40 (5%).

While JPS at 407, accounted for the most contacts, Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number of contacts – at 182 per 100,000 – in proportion to its landline customer base. (Figure 1)

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

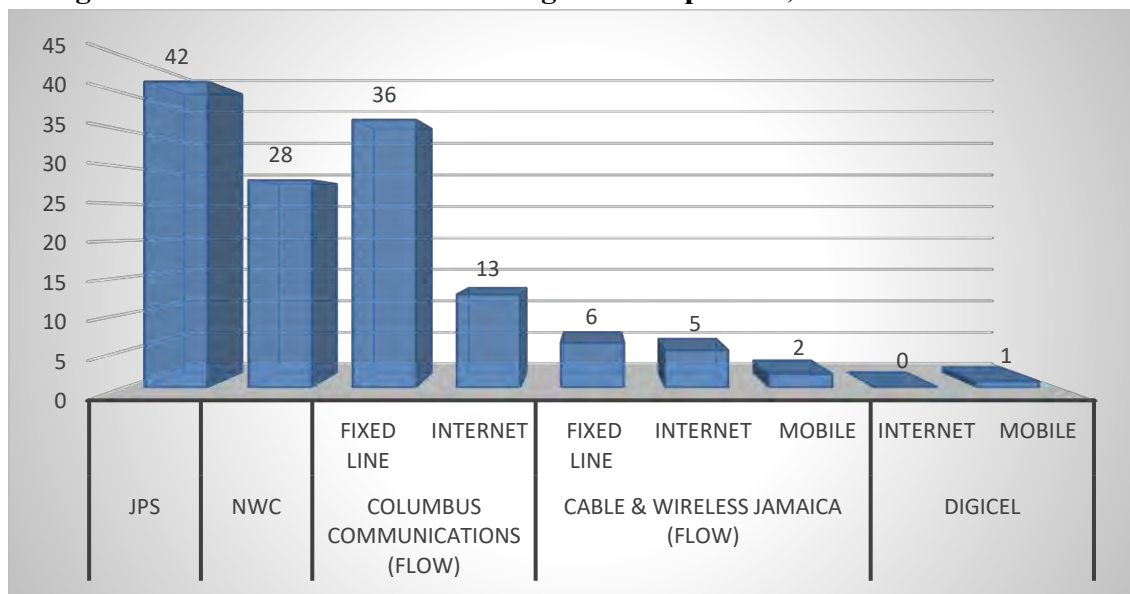


<sup>1</sup> Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 5 on page 22

Billing matters continued to be the main reason for utility consumers contacting the CAU. This showed a 37% increase over the preceding period. As a percentage of total contacts, JPS and NWC with 257 (28%) and 134 (14%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing related matters.

As is shown in Figure 2, JPS, at 42, also accounted for the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base. Columbus Communication's fixed line service and NWC followed with 36 and 28 contacts respectively, per 100,000 of their customer base.

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



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



## Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

### (i) Acknowledgements

Eleven (11) new appeals were accepted for investigation with JPS and NWC accounting for four (4) and seven (7) respectively. Requests for information, in the form of case letters, were sent for all new appeals accepted.

Of the four case letters sent to JPS, acknowledgements were received for two (or 50%), within the agreed timeline. While the NWC submitted six (6) of seven (7) acknowledgements, as is shown in Table 1, it achieved a compliance rate of 43% as only three (3) were received within the specified timeline.

**Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)**

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

### (ii) Response to Case Letters

Of the four case letters sent to JPS, responses for two were due at the end of the review period. JPS submitted the two responses within the agreed timeline; thereby attaining a 100% compliance rate as is seen in Table 2. For the NWC, five of seven responses were due at the end of the review period. The NWC submitted four (80%) of the five response within the agreed timeline (see Table 2).

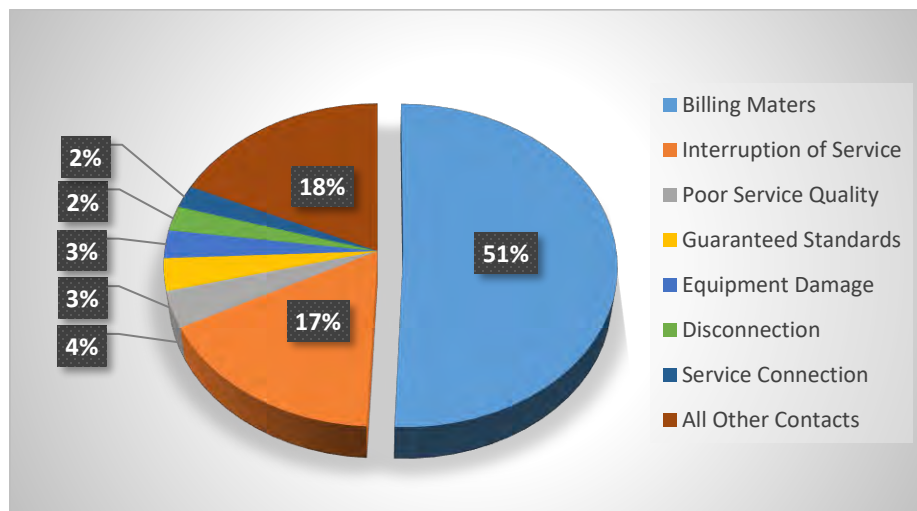
**Table 2: Responses within standard (30 business days)**

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

## Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

The main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to: billing, interruption of service, poor service quality, disconnection, service connection, equipment damage and Guaranteed Standards (Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category is provided in Table 5.

**Figure 3: Main Concerns**



### (i) Billing

Remaining the main reason for customers contacting the OUR, billing matters at 51% saw a three percentage point increase over the preceding quarter. These matters included adjustments to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

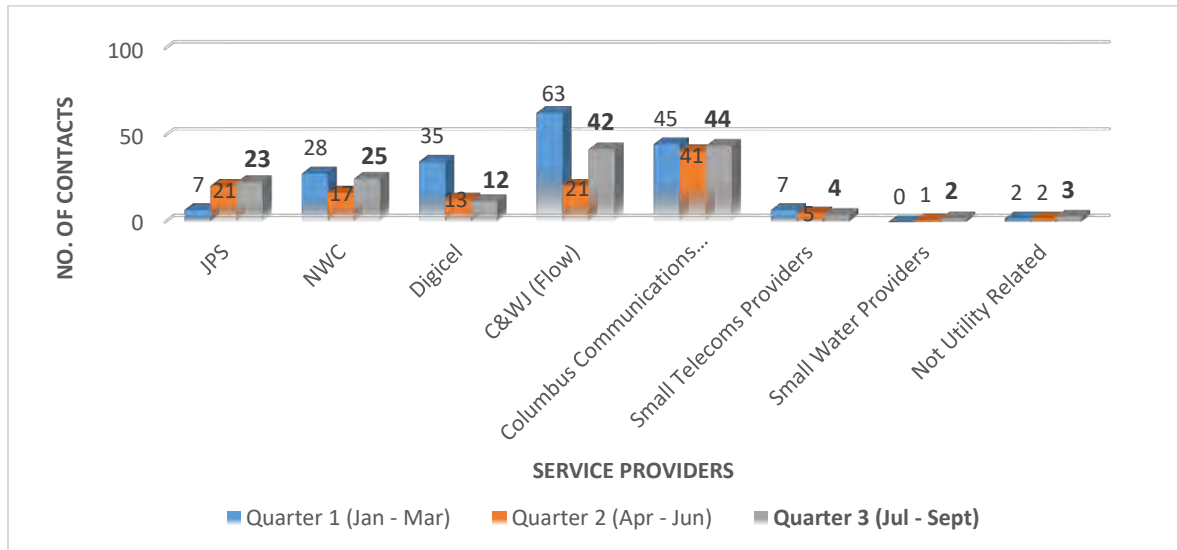
JPS and NWC continued to rack up the most number of billing contacts, accounting for 257 (28%) and 134 (14%) respectively. C&WJ (Flow) accounted for 33 (4%) while Digicel, Columbus Communications, and Private Water Providers accounted for the remaining 5%.

### (ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption contacts remained at 17% when compared with the preceding quarter. As is seen in Figure 4, Columbus Communications (Flow) with 44 (5%) and C&WJ (Flow) with 42

(5%) accounted for highest number of contacts. NWC followed 25 (3%) while JPS and Digicel accounted for 23 (2%) and 12 (1%) respectively.

**Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts**



**(iii) Poor Service Quality**

Similar to the preceding quarter, poor service quality accounted for 4% of total contacts with JPS, C&WJ (Flow), Columbus Communications (Flow) and Digicel each accounted for 1%.

**(iv) Equipment Damage**

Equipment damage issues accounted for 3% of total contacts which is a one percentage point increase over the preceding quarter. These issues also accounted for 6% of contacts relating to JPS.

**(v) Disconnection**

Contacts relating to disconnections fell by one percentage point - to 2% - when compared with the preceding quarter. JPS accounted for 1% while NWC, Digicel, C&WJ, Columbus Communications (Flow), private water providers and private telecommunications providers each shared the remaining 1%.

**(vi) Service Connection**

Service connection matters remained at 2% of total contacts when compared with the preceding quarter. JPS accounted for 1% with NWC, Digicel, C&WJ, Columbus Communications and Private Water Providers sharing the remaining 1%.

### 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?

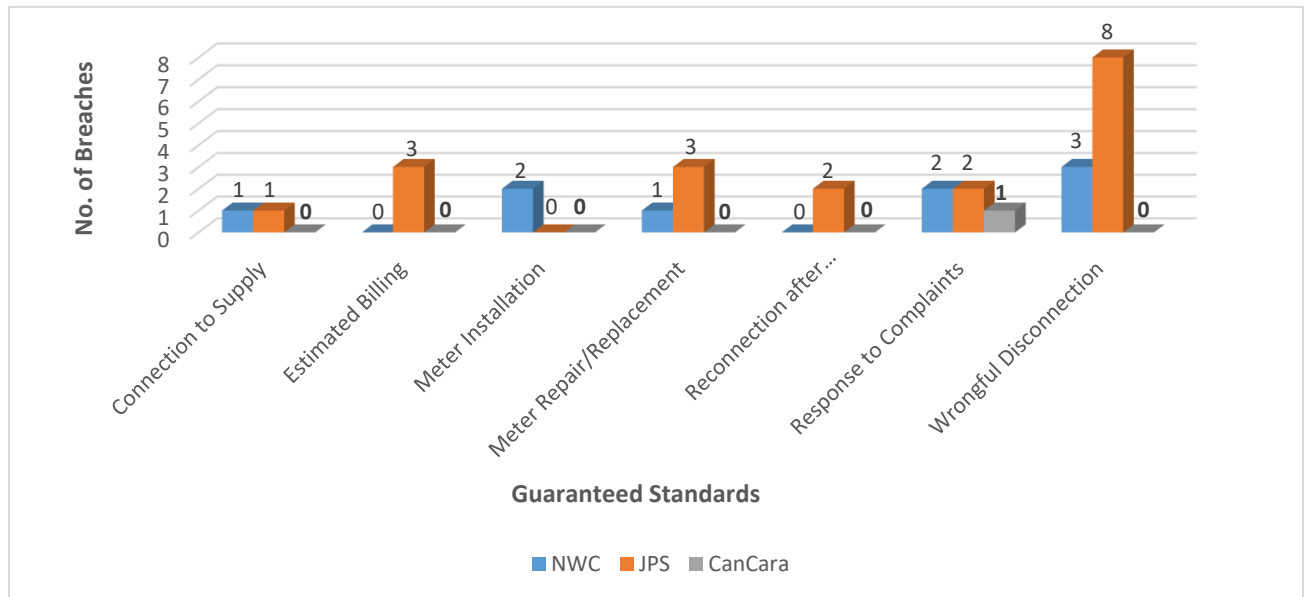
**NWC:** Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will 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 by the OUR in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards from customers of the JPS, NWC and CanCara Development Ltd. (CanCara). This represented three percent (3%) of total contacts received during the review period. The number of alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches per service providers is as follows: JPS – 19, NWC – 9 and CanCara – 1.

As is seen in Figure 5, Wrongful Disconnection accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards for both JPS and NWC. The sole contact in relation to a breach of the Guaranteed Standards for CanCara related to responding to complaints within the specified timeline.

**Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts**

Additionally, the Guaranteed Standards reports submitted by both the JPS and NWC did not reflect the alleged incidents of breaches reported to the OUR. Accordingly, no compensation was made by JPS and NWC for these contacts received by the OUR regarding Guaranteed Standards breaches.

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

The JPS compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards' performance indicated that 17,634 breaches were committed representing a 3% decline in the number of breaches compared to the preceding quarter. These breaches also attracted compensation of \$34.95 million, which was made through automatic compensation.

Similar to the preceding period, 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) and reconnection (which prescribes that disconnected service must be restored within 24 hours of payment of all overdue amounts). Both standards account for approximately 93% and 3% of breaches and 91% and 3% of compensatory payments, respectively.

NWC

The NWC's compliance report on the Guaranteed Standards scheme indicates a total of 550 breaches which represents a 13% decrease over the preceding period. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$1.75 million while actual payments amounted to \$1.16 million (representing 66% of total potential payments) which were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 34% of potential payments, represented those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

For the NWC, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches were WGS 8 – Meter Repair/Replacement (which requires that needed meter repairs or replacements must be completed within 20 working days); and WGS 1 - Access (which requires that new service connections are made within 10 working days). These standards represented 43% and 32% of total breaches and actual payments 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 include a report on the performance of the JPS and NWC Call Centres. Here focus will be placed on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that indicate general customer satisfaction levels for NWC and JPS.

**Table 3: NWC's Call Centre Performance**

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

As is shown in Table 3, the NWC Call Centre Report for the review period shows a decline in performance. Most significant is the decline in the Percentage Service Level which fell to 28% from the 55% achieved in the preceding quarters.

### **JPS:**

As is shown in Table 4, the JPS has maintained a credible Call Centre performance, in that each of the KPIs reported was within its set target. Despite the reduction in the percentage of calls that are answered within 20 seconds, the JPS report indicates that the 92% attained for the reporting

<sup>2</sup> This represents the measure used by the NWC

period has exceeded the international standard of 80%. Additionally, performance on the *Average Length of Calls* and *Percentage of Abandoned Calls* were within the targets set by the company.

**Table 4: JPS Call Centre Performance**

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

<sup>3</sup> This represents the measure used by the JPS

<sup>4</sup> Goal of no more than 5 minutes set by JPS

<sup>5</sup> Less than or equal to 8%



## Chapter 5: Notification of Planned Outages Report

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

### **JPS:**

Under EOS 1, JPS is required to notify customers of planned outages, allowing at least 48 hours (2 days) advance notice. For the review period, JPS reported a 47.7% compliance rating in meeting this standard; which represents a 6.1 percentage point decline over the preceding period. The Company has advised that it is yet to implement measures to ensure that its compliance rating improves.

While these notifications are generally made through the media, the OUR's electronic media monitoring report, did not record any mention of service interruption activities to be conducted by JPS during the review period.

### **NWC:**

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

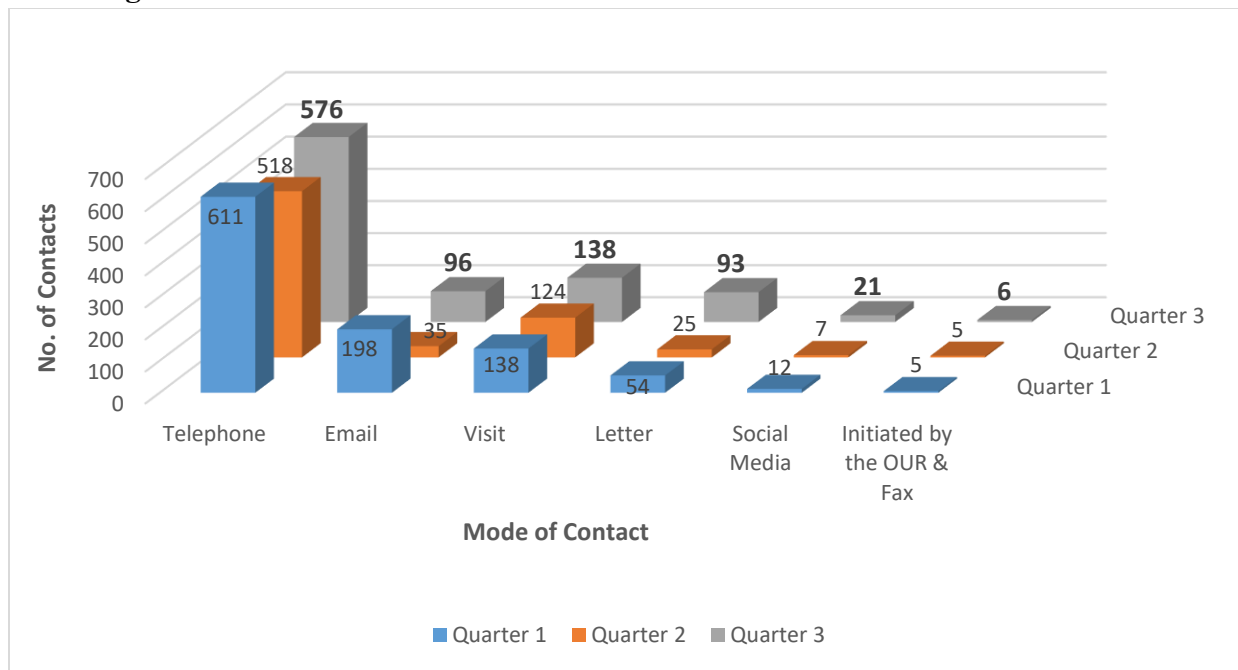
Based on the information reviewed, the NWC attained an 81% compliance rating with the standard to provide at least 24 hours' advance notice prior to disruptions of a duration greater than 4 hours. Of the 43 related notifications received, 35 were in compliance with the stated target.

Additionally, the OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report indicated that a number of advisories were issued relating to the NWC's non-revenue water reduction programme being carried out in the Corporate Area, which resulted in service interruptions, as well as island-wide water restrictions.

## Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

The telephone, at 62% of total contacts continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contacting the CAU. Visits, emails and letters followed with 15%, 10% and 10% of total contacts respectively. Social media and contacts initiated by the OUR accounted for the remaining 3% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

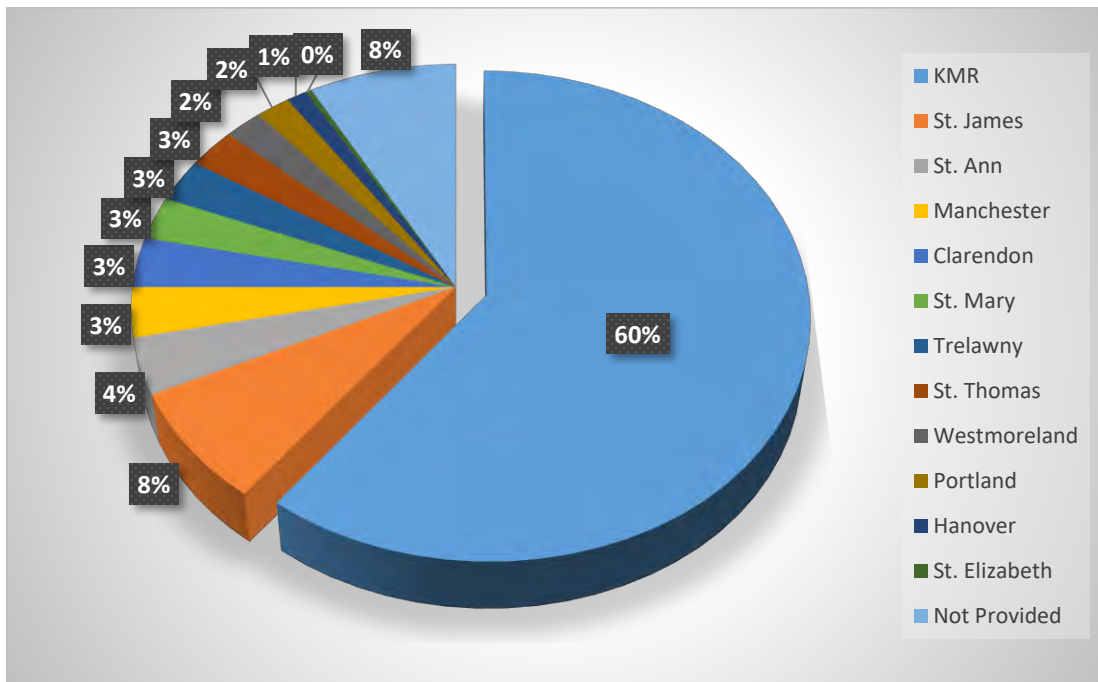
**Figure 6: Methods of Contact**



### Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR), at 60%, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. James, at 8%, accounted for the second highest number of total contacts. St. Ann followed with 4% while Manchester, Clarendon, St. Mary, Trelawny, and St. Thomas each had a share of 3%. The remaining parishes each had a share of 2% or less. Eight percent (8%) of the contacts received provided no information on their location/parish or the information was not recorded. Details are provided in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Geographic Distribution of Contacts**



## Chapter 6: Appeals Performance

### (i) Closure of Appeals<sup>6</sup>

During the reporting period, six (6) appeals were closed of which 4 (or 67%) were resolved in favour of the service provider, one was resolved in the customer's favour while a compromise was reached for the remaining one.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the closed appeals were resolved within the OUR's-established standard of sixty (65) working days while the remaining 33% exceeded the timeline.

### (ii) Outstanding Appeals<sup>7</sup>

At the end of the review period, nine (9) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, four (4) are awaiting responses from the service provider while the remaining five (5) are awaiting action to be taken by the OUR. For one of those awaiting OUR's actions, a final letter has been prepared for approval to dispatch.

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

### Appeals Process Resolution Rate

For the eleven (11) new appeals which were accepted for investigation, seven (7) provider responses were due at the end of the review period. Six (6) of the seven responses due were received within the established 30 working days' timeline with the remaining one being outstanding. Request for additional information was submitted for three of the responses received.

All relevant information was available for only five (5) appeals, of which three (3) were resolved within the 65 working days' timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 60% which is a forty percentage point decrease over the preceding period. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity are provided in Table 8.

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<sup>6</sup> Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 7

<sup>7</sup> Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 8

## Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

### (i) Credits/Compensation

Through the intervention of the CAU, \$999,261.01 was secured for utility customers. Of this amount, JPS, NWC and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 85%, 8% and 6% respectively. The remaining 1% of amounts secured was shared between C&WJ and Digicel.

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

It was brought to the OUR's attention in September that JPS had, since 2016, required customers on its Pay-As-You-Go/ Prepaid Service to pay a monthly customer charge. Given that no monthly customer charge was approved by the OUR for this service, an investigation was launched.

As part of its investigation, the OUR requested information regarding the basis on which the decision was taken by JPS to apply this monthly customer charge to its Prepaid Service. Additionally, JPS was requested to provide information on the number of affected customers and the period within which charge was applied.

JPS has provided the requested information which is being reviewed for a decision on the way forward.

## List of Tables 2018 July - September

Table 5: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&W (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Provider	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Internet	Mobile	DigiPlay				
<b>A</b>	<b>Contacts for the Quarter</b>														
(i)	New Appeals	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
(ii)	New Complaints	91	52	14	22	19	36	32	8	15	1	3	5	4	302
(iii)	New Enquires	37	20	2	2	0	1	4	1	5	0	1	4	1	78
(iv)	New Opinions	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	10
(v)	New Referrals	273	142	1	34	10	17	8	9	10	4	3	5	13	529
	<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>930</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Closure/Resolution of Appeals:</b>														
(i)	Mutually Resolved	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	<b>Total Closures</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Total Appeals from Previous Periods:</b>														
	<b>Outstanding Appeals with OUR</b>														
(i)	Awaiting Final Letters to Customers	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(ii)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	4	0	0											4
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	<b>Total Outstanding Appeals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

Table 6: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&W (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small Telecoms Providers (Caricel, Dekal Wireless, XtriNet)	Small Water/Sewerage Providers (CanCara, DEML, Landmark)	OUR/Other (not utility related)		
Billing Matters	257	134	21	33	19	0	7	1	472	
Broken Main	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Customer Service	2	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	7	
Defective Street Lights	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Disconnection	7	4	1	4	4	1	2	0	23	
Equipment Damage	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	26	
Guaranteed Standards	19	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	29	
Guaranteed Standards Query	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Health & Safety	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	
Illegal Connections	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
Interruption of Service	23	25	12	42	44	4	2	3	155	
Irregular Supply	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	
Leak at Meter	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Metering	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Number Portability	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	
Other	10	8	12	11	10	1	2	11	65	
Payment Arrangement	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Phone Cards	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	
Poor Service Quality	8	2	6	10	8	0	0	0	34	
Property Damage	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Reconnection	6	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	
Redress not Received	1	0	1	2	4	0	0	1	9	
Service Connection	13	2	1	2	2	1	0	0	21	
Unable to get through to Provider	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>930</b>	

Table 7: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
Billing Matters	0	4	4
Total	2	4	6

Table 8: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	2	3	5
Equipment Damage	3	0	3
Property Damage	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>

Table 9: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (Appeals)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>% Compliance</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within 2 business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	82%	Nine (9) of the 11 new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	73%	Eight (8) of the 11 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	60%	Three (3) of five (5) final responses were dispatched within the established timeline.

### List of Figures

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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 <sup>8</sup>
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.

<sup>8</sup> 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

<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Timelines</u></b>
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 <sup>9</sup>
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 working days
Supervisor's Review of Final Letter	2 working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
<b>Total</b>	<b>65 working days</b>

#### 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix 6: List of Acronyms

Can Cara	-	Can Cara Development Limited (Water & Sewerage Provider)
CPA	-	Consumer and Public Affairs Department (OUR)
CAU	-	Consumer Affairs Unit (OUR)
DEML	-	Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (Water and Sewerage Provider)
Dekal	-	Dekal Wireless Ltd. (Telecommunications Provider)
Flow Service	-	Columbus Communications Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) - Telecommunication Provider
FLOW	-	Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (C&WJ) Flow
JPS	-	Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (Electricity Provider)
KMR	-	Kingston Metropolitan Region (Kingston, St. Andrew & St. Catherine)
NWC	-	National Water Commission (Water & Sewerage Provider)
OUR	-	Office of Utilities Regulation
OURIC	-	Office of Utilities Regulation Information Centre
The Office	-	Comprised of 6 members, headed by a Chairman with the Director General serving as an <i>ex officio</i> member