
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2019 October - December

Publication Date: 2020 March 13



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, 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

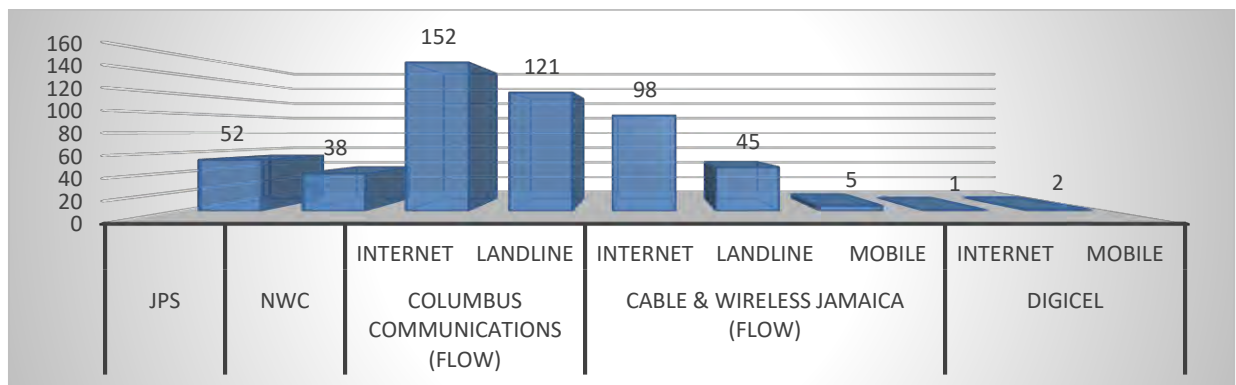
The 2019 October – December period saw the CAU receiving 993 contacts, which represents a 4% decrease over the preceding period and the lowest number of contacts received per quarter throughout the year. The data indicates that the most significant decrease in customer contact related to *Disconnection* (-28%) and *Billing Matters* (-15%) when compared to the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service providers¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 331 (33%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 183 (18%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 224 (23%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 150 (15%)
- Digicel – 54 (5%)
- Private water and/or sewerage providers CanCara Development Ltd., Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML), Richmond Environmental Services Ltd., Runaway Bay Water Company and St. Jago Hills; small telecommunications providers, Dekal Wireless, XtriNet and Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 51 (6%).

While JPS at 331, accounted for the most contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number of contacts – at 152 per 100,000 – in proportion to its internet customer base.

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



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

A total of 4,190 contacts were received in 2019, which represents a 15% increase over the prior year. As is seen in Table 1, JPS, NWC and C&WJ - at 1,571 (37%), 984 (23%) and 713 (17%) respectively - accounted for the highest number of total contacts received for the year.

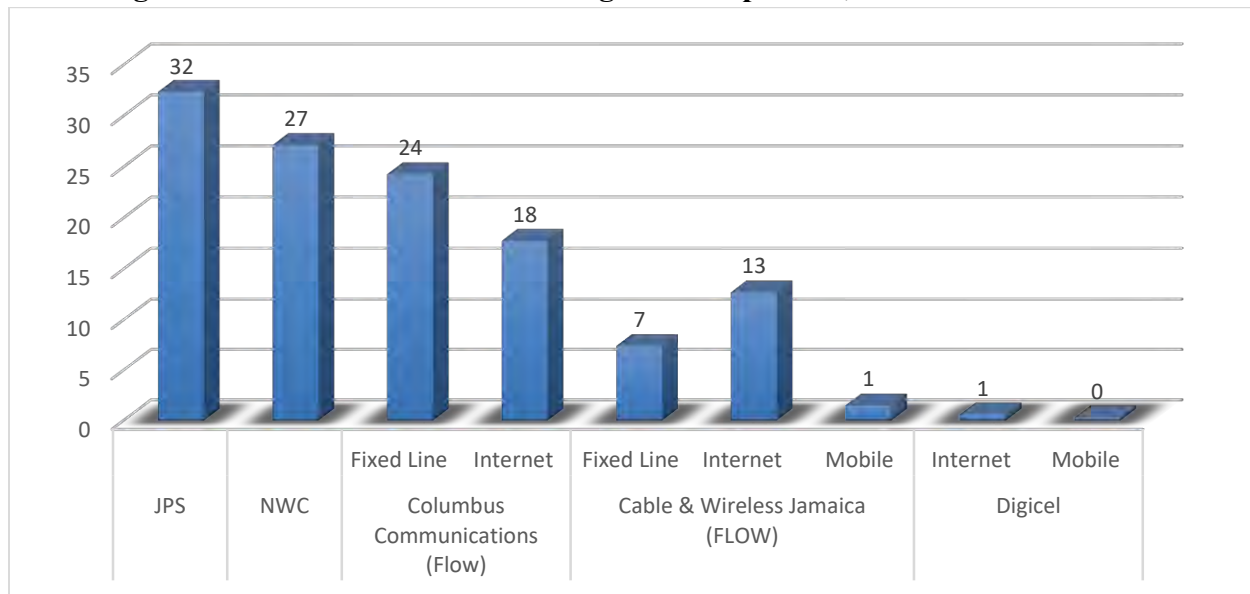
Table 1: Service Provider Contact Summary (2019 January – December)

Service Providers	Review Periods				Total
	Jan -Mar	Apr -Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	
JPS	443	387	410	331	1571
NWC	298	270	233	183	984
C&WJ (FLOW)	143	165	181	224	713
Columbus Communications (Flow)	136	95	105	150	486
Digicel	67	51	64	54	236
Small Telecommunications Providers	10	19	3	9	41
Small Water Providers	9	15	6	12	42
Other/ Not Utility Provider Related	27	24	36	30	117
Total	1133	1026	1038	993	4190

Billing matters continued to be the main reason for utility consumers contacting the CAU despite registering a 15% decrease in contacts when compared with the preceding period. JPS and NWC with 200 (20%) and 129 (13%) of contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing related matters. For 2019, billing matters accounted for 46% of total contacts. Details on the contact categories for the year is provided in Table 8.

As is shown in Figure 2, JPS, at 32, accounted for the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base. NWC and Columbus Communication's fixed and internet services followed with 27, 24 and 18 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 23% of total contacts, remained the second highest reason for customer contact to the CAU. These also accounted for 20% of total contacts throughout 2019.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Over the review period, six (6) new appeals were accepted for investigation with CanCara and JPS each accounting for one (1) while the NWC accounted for the remaining four (4). Requests for information, (case letters), were sent for all new appeals accepted.

Based on the established Service Level Agreements (SLAs), both JPS and NWC agreed to acknowledge our case letters within five (5) business days. As is shown in Table 2, JPS and NWC consistently met the acknowledgement standard throughout 2019.

Table 2: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2019)</i>	CanCara	DEML	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	N/A	100%	100%	100%
<i>April - June</i>	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
<i>July - September</i>	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
<i>October - December</i>	0%	N/A	100%	100%

Commendations to JPS and NWC for the improvement shown in their performance for acknowledgements. For comparison, the average compliance ratings attained by JPS and NWC during 2018 was 58% and 72% respectively.

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Service providers are required to provide responses to our case letters within 30 business days. CanCara was not compliant as its response was submitted outside of the agreed timeline. JPS's response was received within the established timeline while only two (50%) of the four responses from the NWC were received within the agreed timeline (See Table 3).

Table 3: Response to case letters within standard (30 business days)

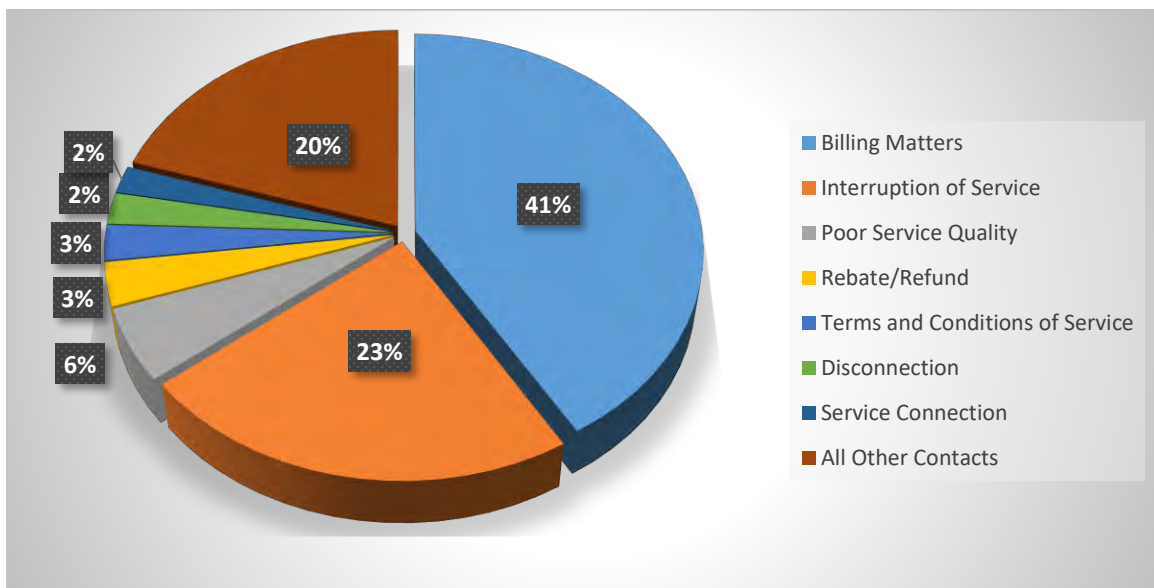
<i>Quarters (2019)</i>	CanCara	DEML	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	N/A	100%	50%	100%
<i>April – June</i>	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
<i>July - September</i>	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
<i>October - December</i>	0%	N/A	100%	50%

With the exception of the January – March period for JPS, and the October – December period for the NWC, both service providers consistently met the agreed timeline to submit responses to case letters during 2019. Accordingly, both service providers attained an average compliance rating of 88%, which is an improvement over the 71% and 74% attained by JPS and NWC in 2018. We encourage the service providers to continue the efforts made to improve on their performance by consistently meeting the agreed timelines.

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

The main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to: billing, interruption of service, poor service quality, rebate/refund, terms and conditions of service, disconnection, and service connection (Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category is provided in Table 7.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

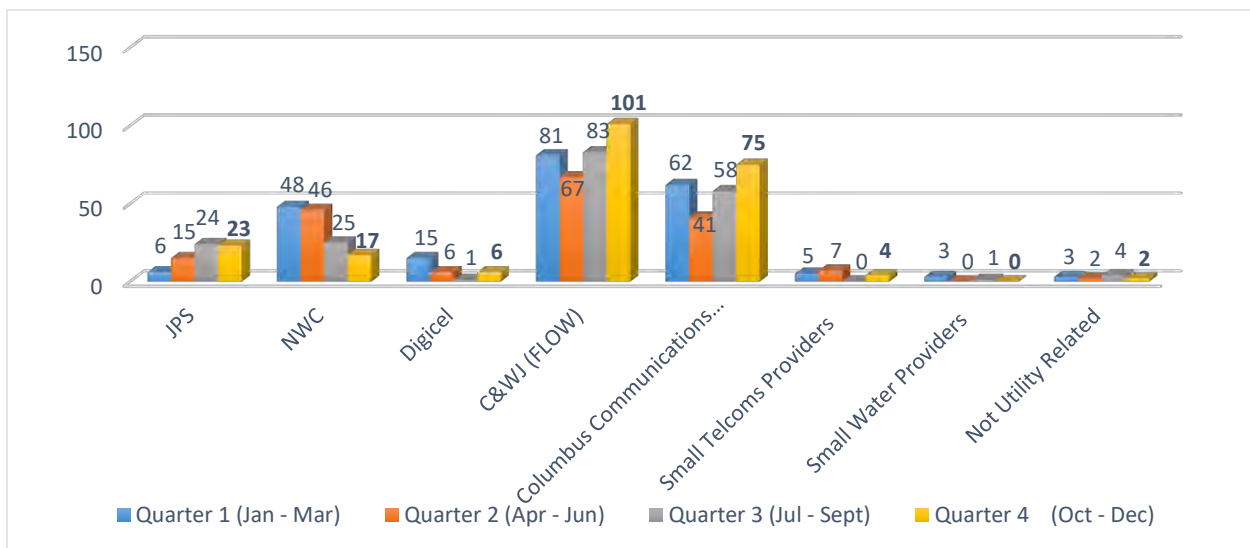
Billing matters continued to be the main reason for customer contact during the 2019 October – December period and represented 41% of total contacts received. These matters included adjustments to customers' accounts, estimated billing, high consumption, disputed charges and billing punctuality.

JPS and NWC accounted for the most billing contacts with 200 (20%) and 129 (13%) respectively. C&WJ (Flow) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 39 (4%) and 20 (2%) respectively, while Digicel, Private Water Providers, and contacts not utility related accounted for the remaining 23 (2%).

(ii) Interruption of Service

At 23% of total contacts, service interruption increased by four percentage points when compared with the preceding quarter. C&WJ (Flow) with 101 (10%) and Columbus Communications with 75 (8%) accounted for the highest number of related contacts (Figure 4). JPS, NWC, Digicel, Private Telecommunications Providers and contacts not utility related accounted for the remaining 5%.

Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts



(iii) Poor Service Quality

Contacts relating to poor service quality increased by three percentage points, to 6%, when compared to the preceding period. C&WJ (Flow) and JPS each accounted for 2% while Columbus Communications (Flow) and Small Telecommunications Providers shared the remaining 2% of these contacts.

(iv) Rebate/Refund

Similar to the two preceding quarters, requests for rebates/refunds represented 3% of total contacts. C&WJ (Flow) and Columbus Communications (Flow) each accounted for 1% while the remaining 1% was shared among JPS, NWC, and Small Telecommunications Providers.

(v) Terms and Conditions of Service

Changes made by service providers to the Terms and Conditions of Service (Contract Terms) accounted for 3% of contacts during the review period. Telecommunications providers Digicel

and C&WJ each accounted for 1% while Columbus Communications and the NWC shared the remaining 1%.

(vi) **Disconnection**

Contacts relating to disconnection decreased by one percentage point, to 2%, when compared with the preceding quarter. Disconnection contacts were received for all service providers except Digicel.

(vii) **Service Connection**

Service connection issues accounted for 2% of contacts received. JPS accounted for 1% while C&WJ, Columbus Communications and NWC shared 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 NWC, small water providers and the JPS. 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?

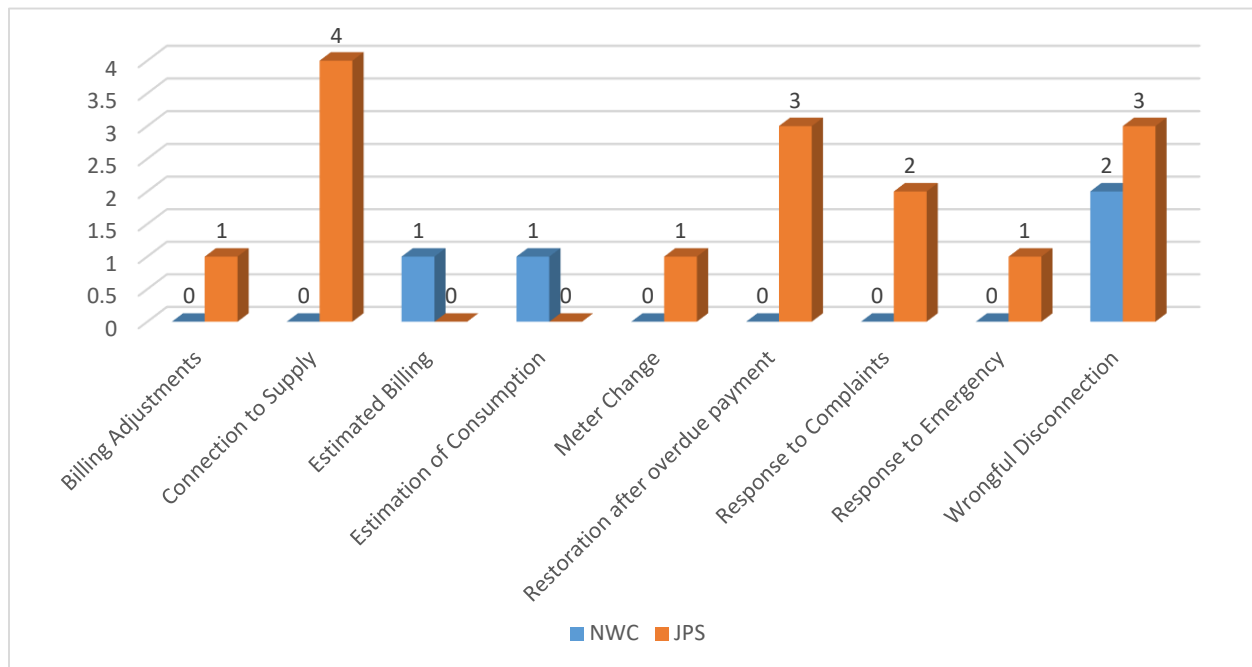
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract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

Nineteen (19) contacts were received from JPS and NWC customers in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards during the review period. This represented three percent (3%) of total contacts received during the review period. JPS and NWC accounted for 15 and 4 contacts respectively, related to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches.

As is seen in Figure 5, *Connection to Supply* accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards for JPS. For the NWC, *Wrongful Disconnection* accounted for the highest incidents in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts

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

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

JPS's compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards performance during the review period, indicate that 17,377 breaches were committed, which represents a 7% increase in the number of breaches compared to the preceding quarter. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$37.2 million, all of which was made by way of automatic compensation.

Similar to the previous quarter, *Estimated Bills* (which restricts JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates without a penalty), *Connection to Supply* (which prescribes the time within which JPS is to make a simple connection) and *Reconnection* (which requires that JPS restores supply with 24 hours of payment of overdue amounts)

accounted for the highest incidents of breaches. Combined, these three standards accounted for approximately 99% of breaches and 98% of compensatory payments.

Throughout 2019, JPS reported that it committed a total of 68,249 breaches which represents a 5% reduction in the number of breaches committed over 2018. Compensation associated with the 68,249 breaches was approximately \$142.5 million, all of which was paid out through automatic compensation.

NWC

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report shows that 520 breaches were committed during the review period, which represents a 21% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$1.76 million while actual payments amounted to \$454,780 (representing 26% of total potential payments) which were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 74% of potential payments not made, represented those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

Similar to the preceding period, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: WGS 7 – Meter Installation (which stipulates that meters should be installed within 30 working days upon request), WGS 1 - Access (which requires that new service connections are made within 10 working days) and WGS 8 – Meter Repair/Replacement (which requires that needed meter repairs or replacements must be completed within 20 working days). Combined, these standards represented 76% and 74% of total breaches and potential payments respectively.

During 2019, the NWC committed a total of 2,096 breaches which attracted potential compensation of approximately \$7.2 million. Actual payments amounted to approximately \$2.5 million, representing 31% of total potential amounts with the remaining 69% not being paid as the required claim forms were not submitted.

Chapter 4: Customer Contact Centre/Call Centre Performance Reports

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

NWC:

The NWC's Call Centre Report for the review period shows some improvements in performance in most of the areas examined. Performance in the *Percentage Service Level* improved by ten percentage points when compared with the preceding period. The maximum time that a customer waited in queue decreased by 54 seconds and the Percentage of Abandon Calls decreased by three percentage points. However, the average length of calls increased by 37 seconds when compared with the preceding period. Further details on the NWC's performance during the review period is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: NWC's Call Centre Performance

		Performance (2019)			
KPIs	KPI Definition	Oct - Dec	Jul - Sept	Ap. - Jun	Jan - Mar
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds ²	65%	55%	54%	64%
<i>Maximum Delay</i>	Maximum time that caller waited in queue	0:19:02	0:19:56	0:19:00	Not Confirmed
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of calls	0:5:14	0:04:37	0:05:21	0:05:08
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	6%	9%	11%	9%

² This represents the measure used by the NWC

JPS:

As is shown in Table 5, JPS's Call Centre performance declined during the review period as the company missed its targets in all three areas on which a report is provided. The JPS report for the period shows that 70% of calls were answered within 20 seconds, which is 10 percentage point below the international standard of 80% and 12% below JPS's target. Additionally, performance on the *Average Length of Calls* and *Percentage of Abandoned Calls* were outside of the set targets of no more than 5 minutes and 8% or less respectively.

Table 5: JPS Call Centre Performance

		Performance 2019			
<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Oct - Dec	Jul - Sept	Apr - Jun	Jan - Mar
<i>Service Level Answer</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds ³	70%	84%	94%	96%
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of calls ⁴	5:28	4:58	4:27	4:27
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced ⁵	22%	16%	10%	11%

³ This represents the measure used by the JPS

⁴ Goal of no more than 5 minutes set by JPS

⁵ Goal of less than or equal to 8% set by JPS

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 70.1% compliance rating for this standard, which represents an 11.5 percentage point decrease over the preceding period. The company has advised that it is in the implementation phase of the procedure that has been developed to monitor and measure its performance against this standard. The standard requires that JPS attains a 100% compliance target.

The OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report, tracks announcements made about scheduled power outages to facilitate ongoing works. During the review period, the report advised of announcements regarding load shedding activities that affected sections of a number of parishes due to unexpected unavailability of some generating units.

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 advanced notice of at least 24 hours, at a 90% attainment rate.

Based on NWC's notifications to the public, the Commission exceeded the established target by attaining a compliance rating of 100% to provide at least 24 hours' advance notice for disruptions of a duration greater than 4 hours. The 100% compliance rating is twenty percentage points more than the compliance rating achieved in the previous period. All five related notifications received were in compliance with the stated target.

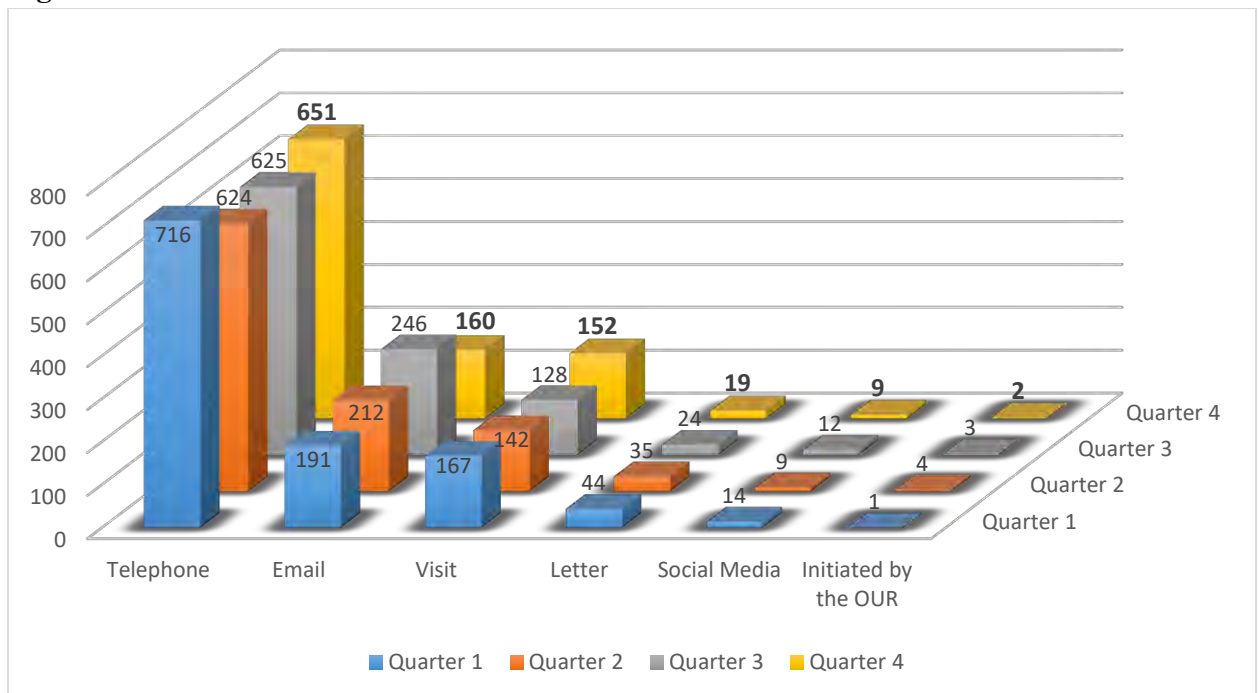
The OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report for the review period showed that the NWC had discontinued its probation order, making the wasting of water an offence, which was previously

implemented due to severe drought conditions. The probation order was lifted as there was increased inflows to the two main catchment areas in Kingston and St. Andrew. However, the NWC encouraged citizens to continue to practice effective water conservation measures.

Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

At 66% the telephone continued to be the most frequently used method for customers contacting the OUR’s Consumer Affairs Unit. Emails and visits followed with 16% and 15% respectively. Letters, social media and contacts initiated by the OUR accounted for the remaining 3% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

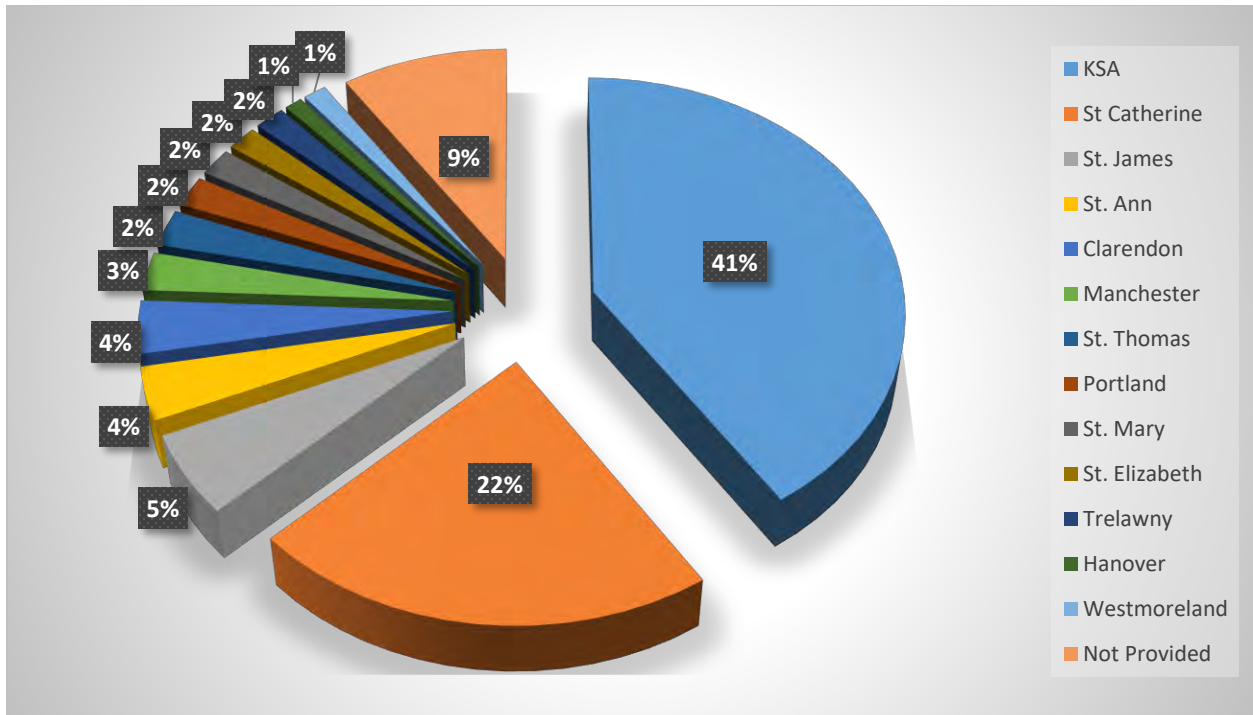
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

Kingston and St. Andrew, at 41%, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. Catherine followed with 22% while St. James accounted for 5%. St. Ann and Clarendon each accounted for 4% with all other parishes each had a share of 3% or less. Nine percent (9%) of the contacts received provided no information on their location/parish or the information was not recorded. Details are provided in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Geographic Distribution of Contacts



Chapter 6: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals⁶

Ten (10) appeals were closed of which 7 (or 70%) were resolved in favour of the service provider, 2 (20%) were resolved in favour of the customer with the remaining one (10%) being resolved through compromise.

Of the closed appeals, 60% were resolved within the OUR's established sixty-five (65) working days for standard Appeals, while the remaining 40% exceeded the timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals⁷

At the end of the review period, five (5) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. All five outstanding appeals are awaiting OUR's action.

JPS accounts for four (4) of the outstanding appeals which relate to two (2) equipment damage, one (1) property damage and one (1) billing related matter. The NWC outstanding appeal relates to a billing matter.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Six (6) new appeals were accepted for investigation for which all relevant information for three (3) were received within the established timeline with the remaining three being received outside of the 30 business days' timeline. Of the six (6) responses received, five (5) - representing 83% - were reviewed and final decisions made and communicated to the customers by way of a Final Letters, within the established 65 working days. For the remaining new appeal, we are awaiting submission of additional information requested from the NWC. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity are provided in Table 11.

Thirty-nine (39) new appeals were accepted for investigation in 2019 of which 29 - representing 74% - were resolved within the established 65 business days.

⁶ Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 9

⁷ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 10

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

An amount of \$400,989.49 was secured for utility customers through the invention of CAU. Of this sum, JPS accounted for the highest share of 75%, while the NWC, Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ accounted for 16%, 5% and 4% respectively.

The total amounts secured for utility consumers, through our intervention, for 2019 was \$2,781,348.95. JPS and NWC accounted for 84% and 10% respectively while the remaining 6% of credits was shared among Columbus Communications (Flow), C&WJ and CanCara.

(ii) Customer Service Improvement Initiatives

The OUR, through the CAU, hosted the annual Quality of Service Symposium during the review period. The symposium, which is attended by service providers' customer service officers and managers, is an event that is used to assess their customer service delivery, identify the service delivery issues/gaps and to discuss strategies to improve customer service delivery. At the 2019 symposium, the Code of Practice – which represents the customer service delivery agreement for the regulated entities – was finalized.

Additionally, in its thrust to continually improve on its processes, the OUR finalized the review and revision of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that have been established with the JPS and the NWC. Following extensive consultation with both entities, the revised SLAs were signed on 2019 November 5 with NWC and 2019 November 7 with JPS for immediate implementation.

List of Tables: 2019 October - December

Table 6: 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	Internet	Landline	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
(ii)	New Complaints	76	34	30	43	15	66	19	7	3	16	4	1	1	315
(iii)	New Enquires	32	20	1	3	7	6	1	1	0	8	2	1	0	82
(iv)	New Opinions	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
(v)	New Referrals	220	125	46	57	21	48	10	4	0	15	3	9	29	587
	Total Contacts	331	183	77	103	44	120	30	12	3	39	9	12	30	993
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Compromise	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(ii)	In Favour of Customer	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	Total Closures	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Total Outstanding Appeals	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

Table 7: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small Telecoms Providers (Dekal Wireless, XtriNet)	Small Water/Sewerage Providers (CanCara, DEML, Runaway Bay, St. Jago Hills, Richmond)	OUR/Other (not utility related)		
Billing Matters	200	129	12	39	20	1	9	1		411
Broken Main	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Customer Service	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0		4
Defective Street Lights	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		4
Disconnection	7	2	0	7	5	1	1	0		23
Equipment Damage	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		6
Guaranteed Standards	15	4	0	0	0	0	0	0		19
Guaranteed Standards Query	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		3
Health & Safety	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	0		9
Illegal Connections	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		7
Interruption of Service	23	17	6	101	75	4	0	2		228
Irregular Supply	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0		10
Leak at Meter	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		2
Metering	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		2
Mobile Data Depletion	0	0	6	7	0	0	0	0		13
Number Portability	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0		6
Other	16	8	9	16	7	0	1	27		84
Payment Arrangement	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		2
Phone Cards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Poor Service Quality	17	0	2	21	12	2	0	0		54
Property Damage	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		4
Reconnection	6	1	0	1	1	0	0	0		9
Rebate/Refund	2	2	0	13	14	1	0	0		32
Service Connection	11	2	0	2	5	0	0	0		20
Terms and Condition of Service	0	1	14	9	2	0	0	0		26
Unable to get through to Provider	0	0	1	5	5	0	0	0		11
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0		2
Total	331	183	54	224	150	9	12	30		993

Table 8: Annual Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Review Periods (2019)				
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Current Quarter (Oct. - Dec.)	Total (Jan - Dec 2019)
Billing Matters	544	489	483	411	1927
Broken Main	3	3	2	1	9
Customer Service	2	8	4	4	18
Defective Street Lights	3	6	6	4	19
Disconnection	31	39	32	23	125
Equipment Damage	32	23	14	6	75
Guaranteed Standards	30	30	25	19	104
Guaranteed Standards Query	1	3	6	3	13
Health & Safety	7	8	13	9	37
Illegal Connections	16	14	10	7	47
Interruption of Service	223	184	196	228	831
Irregular Supply	27	15	15	10	67
Leak at Meter	2	2	6	2	12
Metering	1	3	0	2	6
Mobile Data Depletion	0	0	0	13	13
Number Portability	4	3	2	6	15
Other	93	92	85	84	354
Payment Arrangement	3	2	2	2	9
Phone Cards	1	2	4	0	7
Poor Service Quality	27	24	34	54	139
Property Damage	2	4	3	1	10
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	8	6	7	4	25
Reconnection	3	9	14	9	35
Rebate/Refund	32	30	29	32	123
Service Connection	28	18	19	20	85
Terms & Conditions of Service	0	0	15	26	41
Unable to get through to Service Provider	9	6	10	11	36
Unavailability of Service	1	3	2	2	8
Total	1133	1026	1038	993	4190

Table 9: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	5	5	10
Total	5	5	10

Table 10: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	1	2
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	4	1	5

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

Activity	Service Standards	% Compliance	Comment
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within 2 business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	100%	All six new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	100%	All six 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	83%	Final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline for the five of the six appeals for which all relevant information was received.

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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.
Refund:	Amounts credited to customers' accounts for breaches of the service provider's Terms and Conditions of Service/Contract
Interruption of Service:	Where no service is provided, usually for an extended period.
Equipment Damage:	Damage caused to customers' equipment as a result of alleged action or inaction of their service provider.
Irregular supply:	Where service is not provided regularly and in keeping with the Terms and Conditions of Service/Contract.

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 General 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	30 working days ⁸
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 (Five) working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 (Five) working days ⁹
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

⁸ Where, based on exceptional circumstances, JPS requires additional time to provide the response to a Case Letter, same is to be communicated to the OUR within five (5) working days of the Case Letter date. The rationale for the additional time must be outlined in the request. The OUR will provide a response to the request within two (2) working days.

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

Special Appeals

There are appeals that, based on the nature of the issue, may require expertise and/or resources that do not reside in the designated units of the OUR and JPS to effectively resolve same. Accordingly, the classification of “Special Appeals” was revised to provide additional time to both parties to complete their investigation of these matters.

Where necessary, an additional fifteen (15) working days is allotted to JPS to respond to Follow-up Case Letters sent by the OUR. These appeals will thereafter be reclassified as Special Appeals. The OUR has also reduced its consultation time to review Special Appeals from twenty (20) to fifteen (15) working days. Accordingly, the total time allotted to complete the review of a Special Appeal for JPS is at 95 working days

Recommended Service Levels

1. JPS is expected to respond to **OUR’s Case Letters** regarding customer’s appeals within **thirty (30) working days** of receipt. The company is also expected to acknowledge receipt of our Case Letters within five (5) working days of receipt.
2. JPS is expected to respond to the OUR’s follow-up case letter within FIVE (5) working days of receipt for General appeals. However, where necessary, JPS shall notify the OUR within FIVE (5) working days of receipt of the Follow-up Case letter that additional time is required to provide the response. Such Appeals shall then be reclassified as a Special Appeal with the JPS being allotted a total of twenty (20) working days to provide the response, from the date of the Follow-up Case Letter.
3. The OUR’s Final Letter to the customer is to be dispatched within **eighteen (18) 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.
4. 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)
 - **Ninety-five (95) working days** for Equipment Damage Appeals (which do not require external consultation)
5. 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 ¹⁰
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

Special Appeals

There are appeals that, based on the nature of the issue, may require expertise and/or resources that do not reside in the designated units of the OUR and NWC to effectively resolve same. Accordingly, the classification of "Special Appeals" was revised to provide additional time to both parties to complete their investigation of these matters.

Where necessary, an additional five (5) working days is allotted to the NWC to respond to Follow-up Case Letters sent by the OUR. These appeals will thereafter be reclassified as Special Appeals. The OUR has also reduced its time to review Special Appeal from twenty (20) to fifteen (15) working days; thereby retaining the completion timeline for Special Appeals at 85 working days.

Other Appeals Activities:

Monthly reports detailing the appeals for which the responses are outstanding will be generated and sent to the NWC. Where the responses/updates are not received within ten (10) working days of submission of the report, the matter will be escalated to the Vice President – Investment and Performance Monitoring, 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:

¹⁰ 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

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 for General appeals**. However, where necessary, the NWC shall notify the OUR within **FIVE (5) working days of receipt of the Follow-up Case letter that additional time is required to provide the response**. Such Appeals shall then be reclassified as a Special Appeal with the NWC being allotted a total of **ten (10) working days to provide the response, from the date of the Follow-up Case Letter**.

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 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 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)
KSA	-	Kingston & St. Andrew
NWC	-	National Water Commission (Water & Sewerage Provider)
OUR	-	Office of Utilities Regulation
OURIC	-	Office of Utilities Regulation Information Centre
The Office	-	Comprises 6 members and is headed by a Chairman with the Director General serving as an <i>ex officio</i> member