
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2020 January - March

Publication Date: 2020 June 30



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report

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The Role and Objectives of the OUR

The Office of Utilities Regulation Act of 1995 established the Office of Utilities Regulation (**OUR**) as a body corporate. Under the Act, the OUR is charged with the responsibility of regulating the provision of utility services in the electricity, telecommunications and water and sewerage sectors. The objectives are to:

- Ensure that consumers of utility services enjoy an acceptable quality of service at a reasonable cost;
- Establish and maintain transparent, consistent and objective rules for the regulation of utility service providers;
- Promote the long-term efficient provision of utility services for national development consistent with Government policy;
- Provide an avenue of appeal for consumers who have grievances with the utility service providers;
- Work with other related agencies in the promotion of a sustainable environment; and, 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

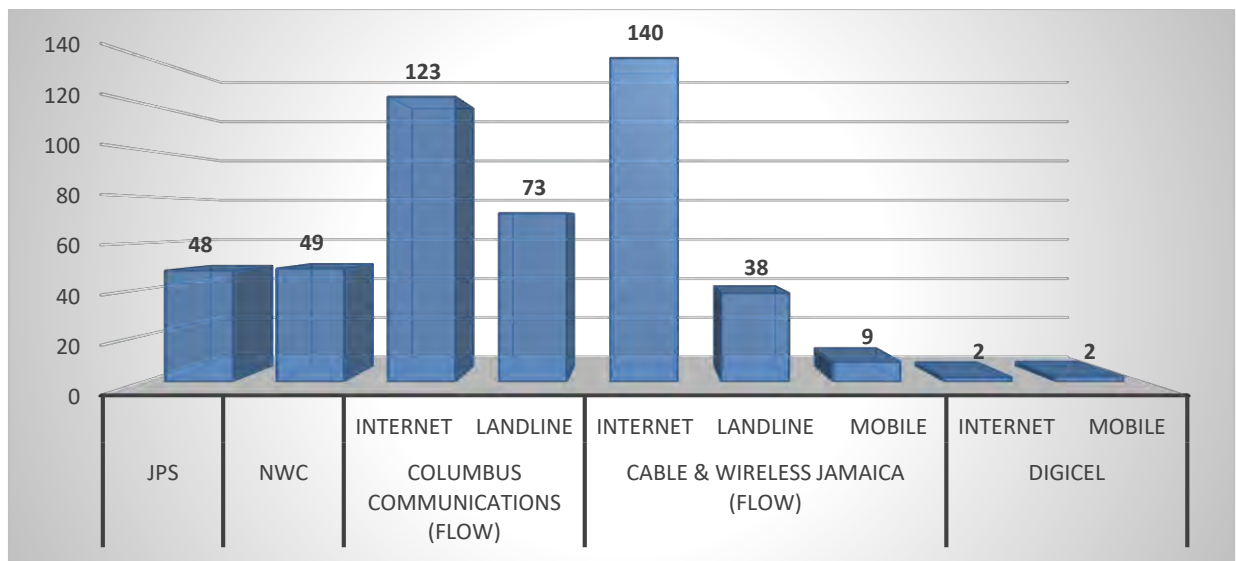
The first quarter of 2020 saw the CAU receiving 1,033 contacts, which represents a 4% increase over the preceding period. The data indicate that the most significant increase in customer contact related to *Refund/Rebate* (41%) and *Disconnection* (22%) compared to the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service providers¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 303 (29%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 268 (26%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 234 (23%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 115 (11%)
- Digicel – 71 (7%)
- Private water and/or sewerage providers CanCara Development Ltd. and St. Jago Hills Development Company Ltd.; small telecommunications providers, Dekal Wireless, Logic One and XtriNet and Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 42 (4%).

While JPS at 303, accounted for the most contacts, Figure 1 shows that C&WJ (Flow) accounted for the highest number– at 140 per 100,000 – in proportion to its internet customer base.

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

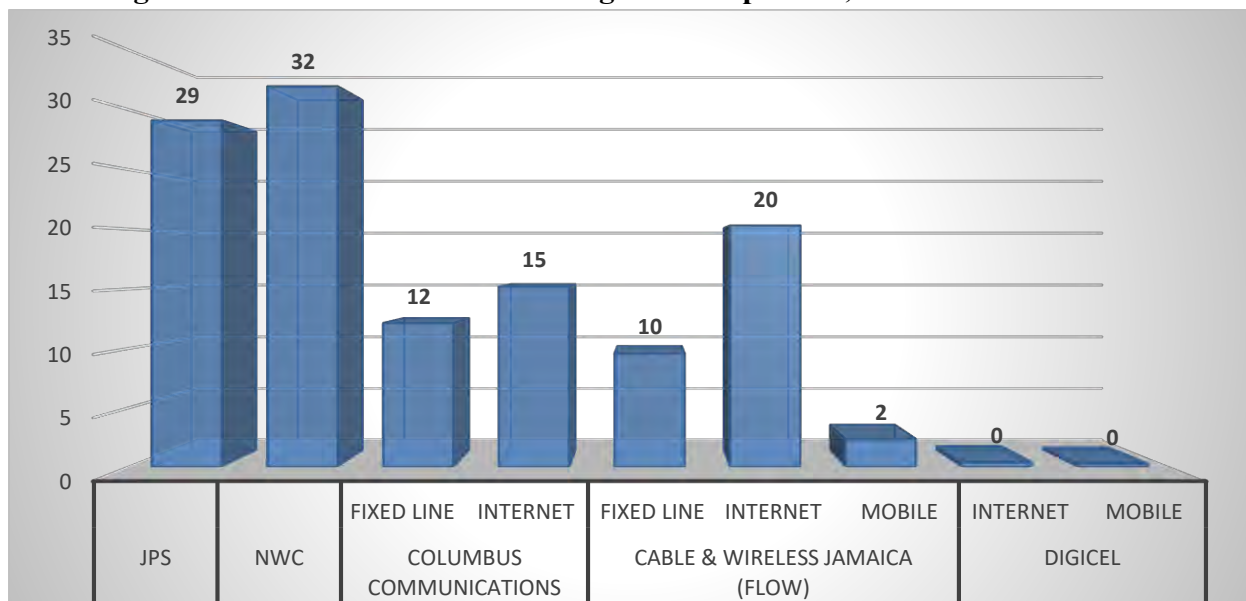


¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 5 on page 23.

Like the preceding period, billing matters represented 41% of total contacts and continued to be the main reason for utility consumers contacting the CAU. JPS and NWC with 180 (17%) and 151 (15%) of contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing related matters.

As is shown in Figure 2, NWC, at 32, accounted for the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base. JPS and C&WJ (Flow) internet service followed with 29 and 20 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 20% of total contacts, remained the second highest reason for customer contact to the CAU.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Fourteen (14) new appeals were accepted for investigation with JPS accounting for eight (8) and the NWC, six (6). 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 the OUR's case letters within five (5) business days. As is shown in Table 1, service providers achieved a commendable compliance rating of 100% for acknowledgements.

Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2020)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	100%	100%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Service providers are required to provide responses to our case letters within 30 business days. However, due to the health and safety measures imposed by the Government of Jamaica in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NWC requested and was granted an additional 10 working days to submit responses to four of the case letters sent during the reporting period.

For JPS, response to seven (7) of the eight case letter were due by the end of the reporting period. JPS submitted all 7 responses, thereby attaining a 100% compliance rating, within the established timeline.

Of the six (6) responses received from the NWC, only three (3), representing 50%, were received within the agreed timeline (see Table 2). Two were received within the established 30 working days while one was received within the approved additional 10 working days.

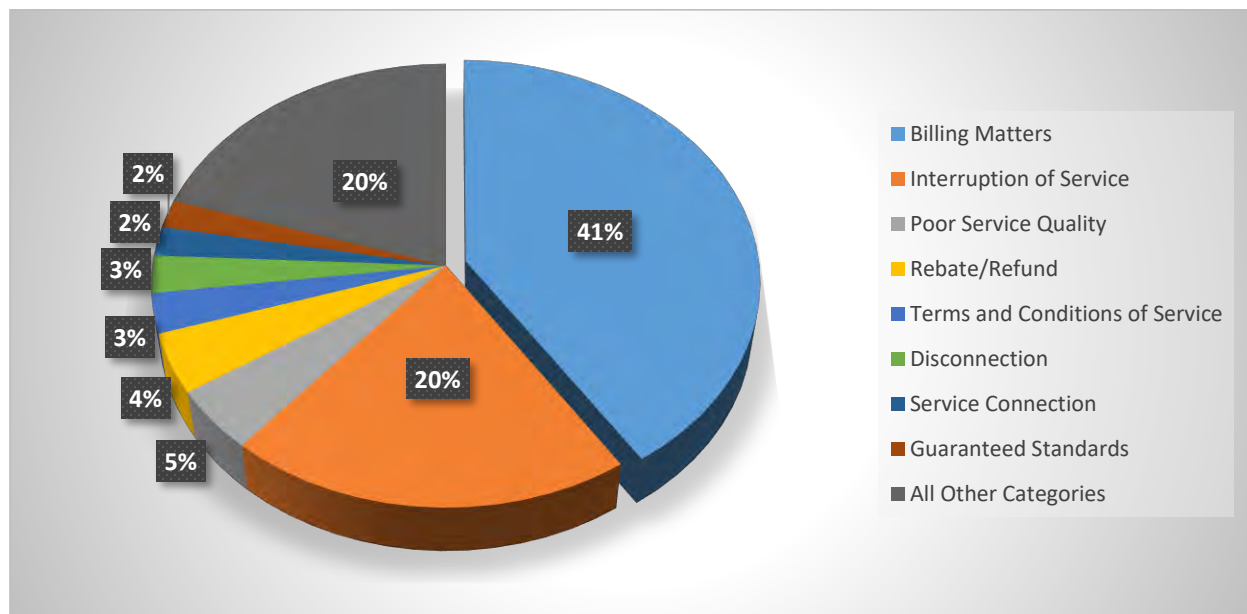
Table 2: Response to case letters within standard (30 business days)

<i>Quarters (2020)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	100%	50%

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, service connection and Guaranteed Standards (Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category is provided in Table 6.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

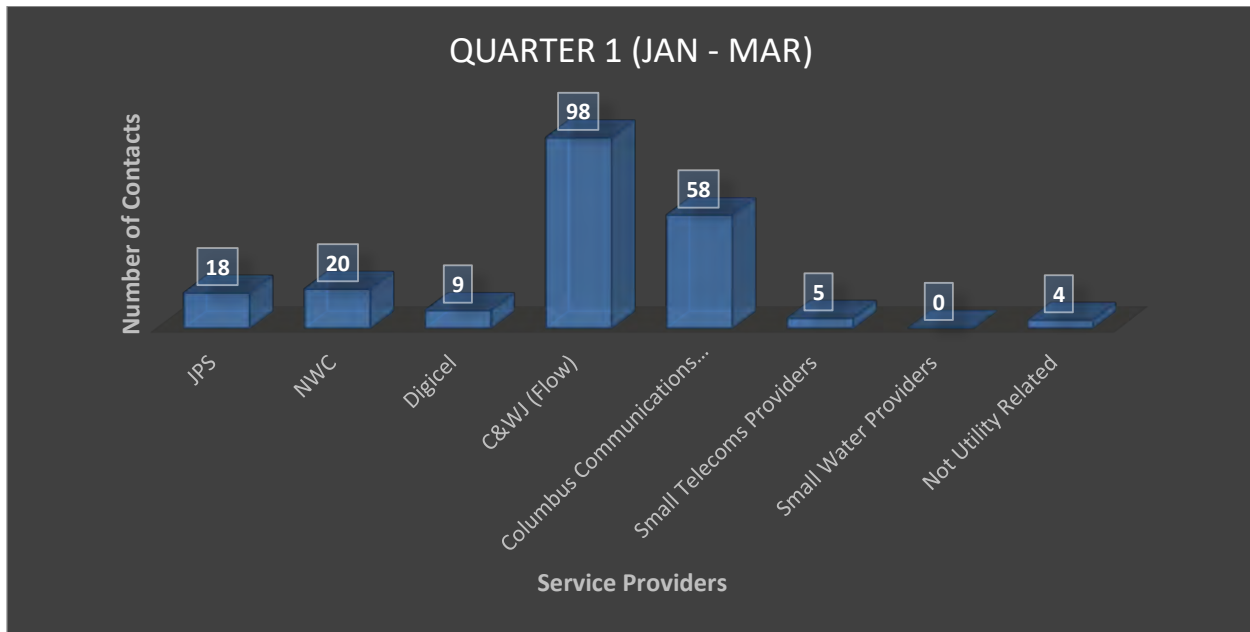
Billing matters continued to be the main reason for customer contact during the 2020 January – March period and represented 41% of total contacts received. These matters included adjustments to customers' accounts, estimated billing, high consumption, disputed charges and billing punctuality.

JPS and NWC accounted for the most billing contacts with 180 (17%) and 151 (15%) respectively. C&WJ (Flow) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 57 (6%) and 15 (1%) respectively, while Digicel, Private Telecommunications Providers, Private Water Providers, and contacts not utility related accounted for the remaining 17 (2%).

(ii) Interruption of Service

At 20% of total contacts, service interruption decreased by three percentage points when compared with the preceding quarter. C&WJ (Flow) with 98 (9%) and Columbus Communications with 58 (6%) accounted for the highest number of related contacts (Figure 4). JPS, NWC, Digicel, small 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 decreased by one percentage point, to 5%, when compared to the preceding period. C&WJ (Flow) accounted for 2% while Columbus Communications (Flow) Digicel and JPS each accounted for 1% of these contacts.

(iv) Rebate/Refund

Requests for rebates/refunds saw a 41% increase in the number of contacts over the preceding period and realized a one percentage point increase, to 4%, of total contacts compared to the preceding period. C&WJ accounted for 23 (2%) and Columbus Communications accounted for 15 (1%) of these contacts respectively, while the remaining 1% was shared among Digicel, NWC and contacts not utility related.

(v) Terms and Conditions of Service

Similar to the preceding period, 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 JPS shared the remaining 1%.

The changes referred to under the Terms and Conditions of Service (Contract Terms) include:

Telecommunications

- Contacts relating to changes to the provisions in existing plans (eg. reduced data allotment or minutes in plans)
- Contacts relating to the Fair usage policy (eg. changes made to unlimited plans)

JPS

- JPS denying service to new customer although outstanding charges are with the previous account holder. JPS is going against its T&C as charges are tied to the account holder.

(vi) Disconnection

Contacts relating to disconnection increased by one percentage point, to 3%, when compared with the preceding quarter. JPS and C&WJ (Flow) each accounted for 1% of these contacts while the remaining 1% was shared among Columbus Communications (Flow), Digicel and NWC.

(vii) Service Connection

Similar to the preceding period, service connection issues accounted for 2% of contacts received with JPS and C&WJ (Flow) each accounting for 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 utility account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

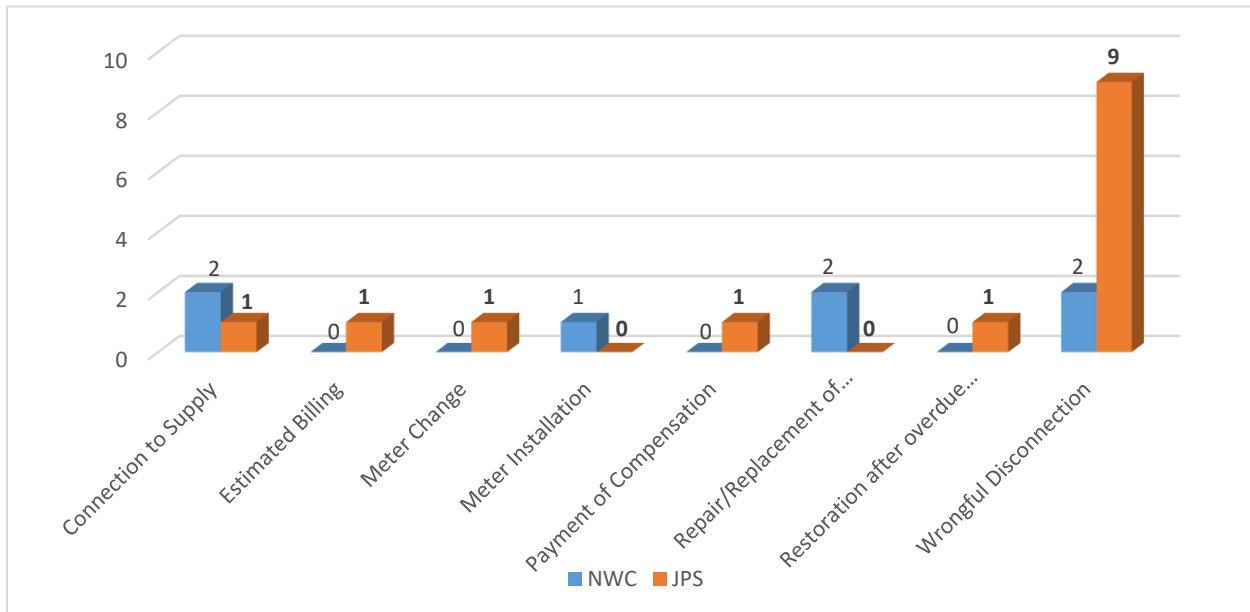
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract 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-one (21) contacts were received from JPS and NWC customers to the OUR in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards. This represented two percent (2%) of total contacts received. JPS and NWC accounted for 14 and 7 contacts respectively, related to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches.

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 JPS. For the NWC, *Connection to Supply*, *Repair/Replacement of Faulty Meter* and *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

JPS²

JPS's compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards' performance indicated that 13,071 breaches were committed during January and February. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$28 million, all of which was made by way of automatic compensation.

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

² JPS's Guaranteed Standards Report for Quarter 1 represented performance for January and March only. In keeping with its License provisions, JPS advised that it has submitted a request to the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology for a suspension of the Guaranteed Standards and is awaiting a response.

supply with 24 hours of payment of overdue amounts) accounted for the highest incidents of breaches. These standards accounted for approximately 99% of breaches and compensatory payments, respectively.

NWC

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report indicates that 557 breaches were committed during this quarter, which represents a 7% increase when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$1.98 million while actual payments amounted to approximately \$1 million. The actual payments represented 51% of total potential payments and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 49% of potential payments not made, represented those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

The standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: WGS 7 – Meter Installation (which stipulates that meters should be install within 30 working days upon request); WGS 1 - Access (which requires that new service connections are made within 10 working days); WGS 8 – Meter Repair/Replacement (which requires that needed meter repairs or replacements must be completed within 20 working days); and WGS 10(a) – Meter Reading (which restricts the NWC to sending no more than two consecutive estimates, where it has access to its meter). These four standards represented 86% of total breaches and 82% of potential payments.

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 twenty-two percentage points when compared with the preceding period. The maximum time that a customer waited in queue decreased by 17 seconds and the Percentage of Abandon Calls decreased by seven percentage points. However, the average length of calls increased by 43 seconds when compared with the preceding period. Details on the NWC's performance during the review period is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: NWC's Call Centre Performance

<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Performance (2020)
		Jan - Mar
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds ³	87%
<i>Maximum Delay</i>	Maximum time that caller waited in queue	0:18:45
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of calls	0:5:57
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	2%

³ This represents the measure used by the NWC

JPS:

As is shown in Table 4, JPS performed credibly in two of the three areas. The JPS report for the period indicates that 88% of calls were answered within 20 seconds, which exceeded the international standard of 80% and JPS's performance target of 82%. Additionally, performance on the *Average Length of Calls* was within the target set by the company during the review period. However, JPS's performance of 12% on the *Percentage of Abandoned Calls* was outside of the set target of 8% or less during the reporting period.

Table 4: JPS Call Centre Performance

		Performance 2020
<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Jan - March
<i>Service Level Answer</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds ⁴	88%
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average length of calls ⁵	4:23
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced ⁶	12%

⁴ Goal of 82% set by JPS

⁵ Goal of no more than 5 minutes set by JPS

⁶ 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. JPS reported an 84.2% compliance rating for this standard, which represents a 14.1 percentage point increase/improvement over the preceding period. However, JPS fell 15.8 percentage points short of attaining the established target of 100%.

The OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report for the review period included announcements made about scheduled power outages to facilitate maintenance and/or ongoing works.

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.

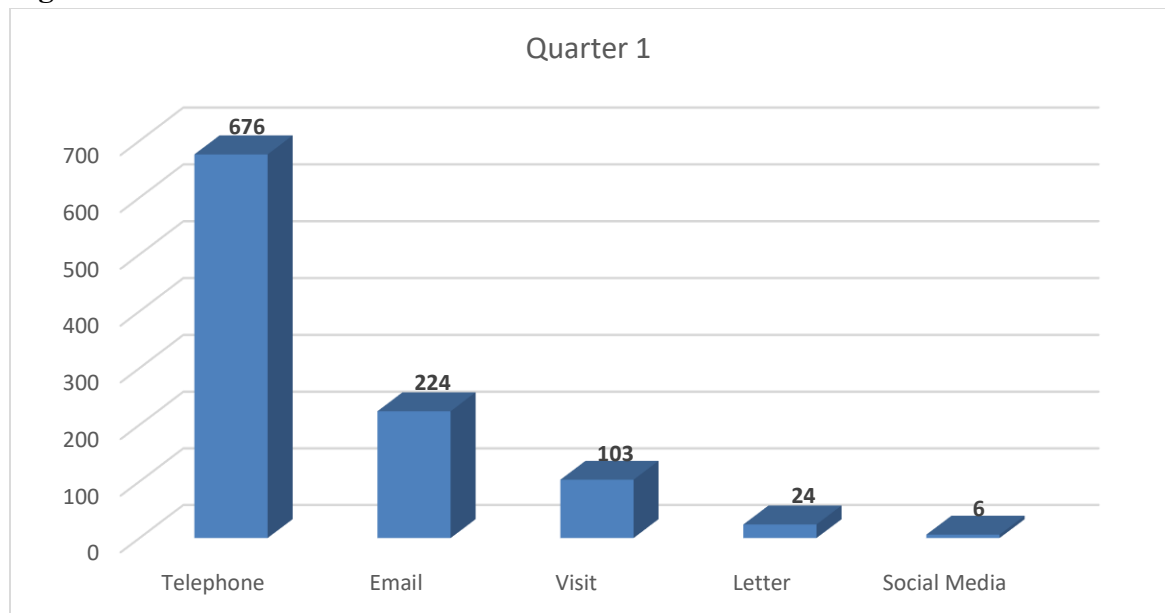
Based on NWC's notifications to the public, they attained a compliance rating of 86% to provide at least 24 hours' advance notice for disruptions of a duration greater than 4 hours. This compliance rating is eighteen percentage points less than that achieved in the previous period and 4 percentage points less than the established target. Of the 21 related notifications received, eighteen were in compliance with the stated target.

The OUR's Electronic Media Monitoring Report for the review period also advised of notifications issued by the NWC which alerted customers of scheduled service disruptions. In addition, the report mentioned that, in January, water restrictions/scheduling activities would be implemented in Portmore, St. Catherine and St. Andrew due to a significant shortfall in capacity.

Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

At 65%, the telephone continued to be the most frequently used method for customers contacting the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit. Emails and visits followed with 22% and 10% respectively. Letters and social media contacts accounted for the remaining 3% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

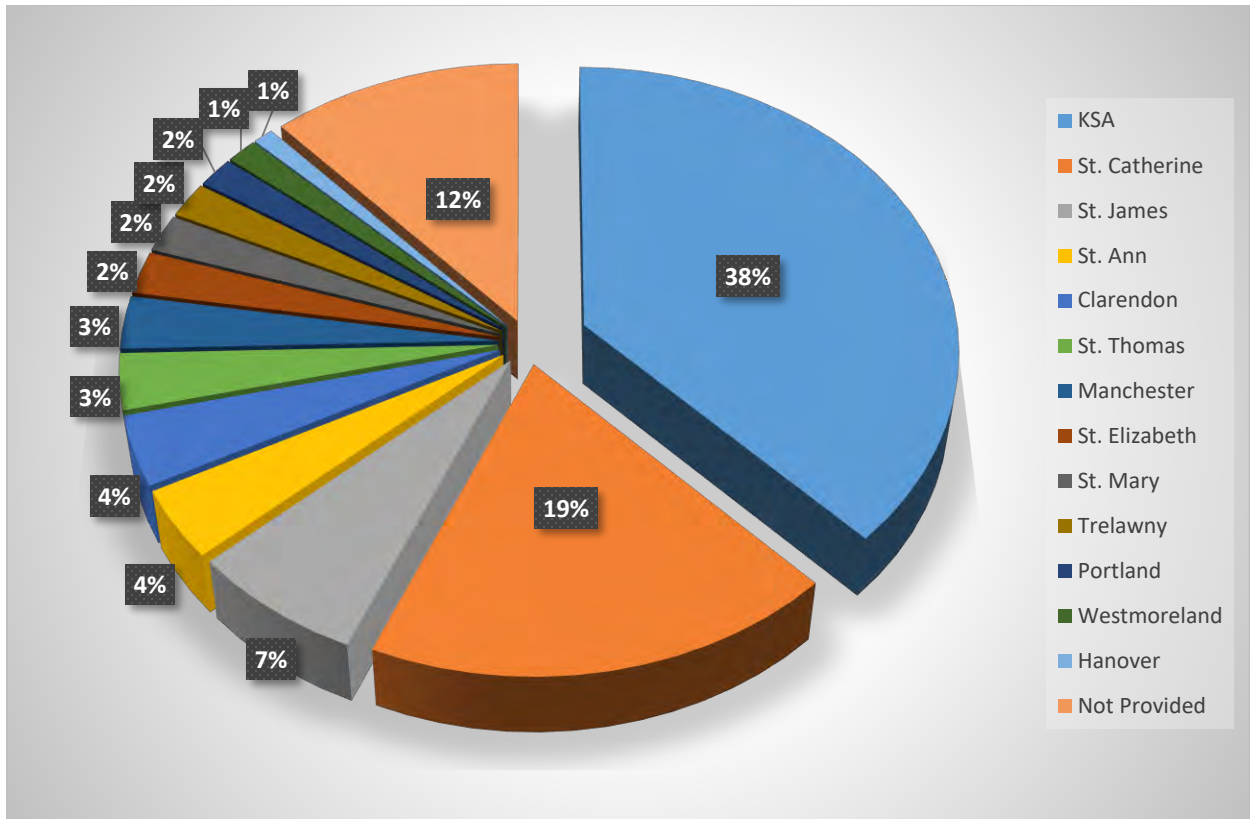
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

Kingston and St. Andrew, at 38%, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. Catherine followed with 19% while St. James accounted for 7%. St. Ann and Clarendon each accounted for 4%. All other parishes each had a share of 3% 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 ⁷

During the review period, seven (7) appeals were closed and of this 6 (or 86%) were resolved in favour of the service provider while the remaining one was resolved through compromise. Additionally, all seven appeals were resolved within the established sixty-five (65) working days.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals⁸

At the end of the review period, six (6) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Four of the outstanding appeals are awaiting OUR's action while the remaining two are awaiting responses from the NWC.

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 two NWC outstanding appeals are in relation to billing matters.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Fourteen new appeals were accepted for investigation for which: all relevant information for eight (8) were received within the established timeline; one response was received outside of the 30 business days and extended timelines; four responses remain outstanding while the timeline for the remaining response had not expired.

Of the nine responses received, eight (8) - representing 89% - were reviewed and final decisions made and communicated to the customers, by way of Final Letters, within the established 65 working days. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity are provided in Table 9.

⁷ Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 7

⁸ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 8

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

The sum of \$57,938,436.56 was secured for utility customers through the invention of CAU. Of this sum, JPS paid out the highest share of \$57,829,404.88 (99%), majority of which was credited to one of its largest customers, the NWC. The remaining 1% of credits/compensation to customers was shared among C&WJ (Flow), Columbus Communications (Flow), Digicel and the NWC.

(ii) JPS Tariff Consultations

The OUR, in fulfilment of its mandate to protect utility consumers' interests, conducted public consultations as part of the tariff review process for JPS. The public consultations are designed to provide an opportunity for dialogue on the tariff application among all stakeholders.

Eight (8) public meetings and two (2) business meetings were scheduled to be held across the island as part of the consultation process between 2020 March 10 and 25. However, the OUR was only able to host town hall meetings in St. Elizabeth (2020 March 10) and Manchester (2020 March 11) due to the health and safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the guidelines issued by the Government on public gatherings.

The views expressed by JPS customers in Manchester and St. Elizabeth in relation to the tariff application included:

- (a) JPS's request for a rate increase being deemed unreasonable and unjustified mainly due to issues with service reliability, poor service quality and JPS's inability to effectively address electricity theft;
- (b) Complaints about the long wait time to speak with a customer service representative at the call centre;
- (c) Complaints about delays in getting a response to complaints and the lack of a payment arrangement facility;
- (d) Complaints relating to the non-repair of malfunctioning streetlights and/or lack of streetlights in their communities.

List of Tables: 2020 January - March

Table 5: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Internet	Landline	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
(ii)	New Complaints	72	36	29	32	18	45	9	11	1	9	2	2	4	270
(iii)	New Enquires	36	28	6	2	6	2	2	1	0	10	0	0	3	96
(iv)	New Opinions	1	4	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
(v)	New Referrals	186	160	75	54	44	49	7	8	2	29	6	3	22	645
	Total Contacts	303	234	110	88	70	97	18	20	3	48	8	5	29	1033
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Compromise	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
	Total Closures	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
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)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total Outstanding Appeals	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

Table 6: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small Telecoms Providers (Dekal Wireless, Logic One, XtriNet)	Small Water/Sewerage Providers (CanCara, St. Jago Hills)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	
Billing Matters	180	151	11	57	15	1	4	1	420
Broken Main	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Customer Service	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Defective Street Lights	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Disconnection	11	3	1	10	3	0	0	0	28
Equipment Damage	15	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	16
Guaranteed Standards	14	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
Guaranteed Standards Query	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Health & Safety	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8
Illegal Connections	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Interruption of Service	18	20	9	98	58	5	0	4	212
Irregular Supply	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Leak at Meter	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Metering	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Mobile Data Depletion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number Portability	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
Other	17	8	26	34	4	1	0	21	111
Payment Arrangement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phone Cards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poor Service Quality	7	2	7	18	12	1	0	0	47
Property Damage	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	11
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Reconnection	6	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	11
Rebate/Refund	0	3	2	23	15	0	0	2	45
Service Connection	8	5		7	1	0	1	0	22
Terms and Condition of Service	1	0	13	13	3	0	0	0	30
Unable to get through to Provider	1	1	0		0	0	0	0	2
Unavailability of Service - No Faci	0	1	0		0	0	0	0	1
Total	303	234	71	268	115	8	5	29	1033

Table 7: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers			Total
	Can-Cara	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	0	3	4
Equipment Damage	0	3	0	3
Total	1	3	3	7

Table 8: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	2	3
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	4	2	6

Table 9: 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 14 new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	86%	Twelve (12) of 14 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	89%	Final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline for eight of the nine 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 from consumers who feel that particular action(s) of a utility service provider might have been in breach of their Terms and Conditions or might have been unfair to them. The OUR provides investigation for complaints as is necessary. Acceptance of complaints does not require submission of a written response from the service provider.
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.
Equipment Damage:	Damage caused to customers' equipment as a result of alleged action or inaction of their service provider.
Interruption of Service:	Where no service is provided, usually for an extended period.
Irregular supply:	Where service is not provided regularly and in keeping with the Terms and Conditions of Service/Contract.
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

Resolution: Where the OUR communicates its decision on customers' appeals and complaints

Resolution Rate: The percentage of resolutions that are made within the established timelines

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 ⁹
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 ¹⁰
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

⁹ 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.

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.

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 ¹¹
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:

¹¹ 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