
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2018 January - March

Publication Date: June 25, 2018



36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

Consumer Affairs Unit: Quarterly Performance Report

Document Number: 2018/GEN/007/QPR.002

Publication Date: June 25, 2018

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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.

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

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Executive Summary

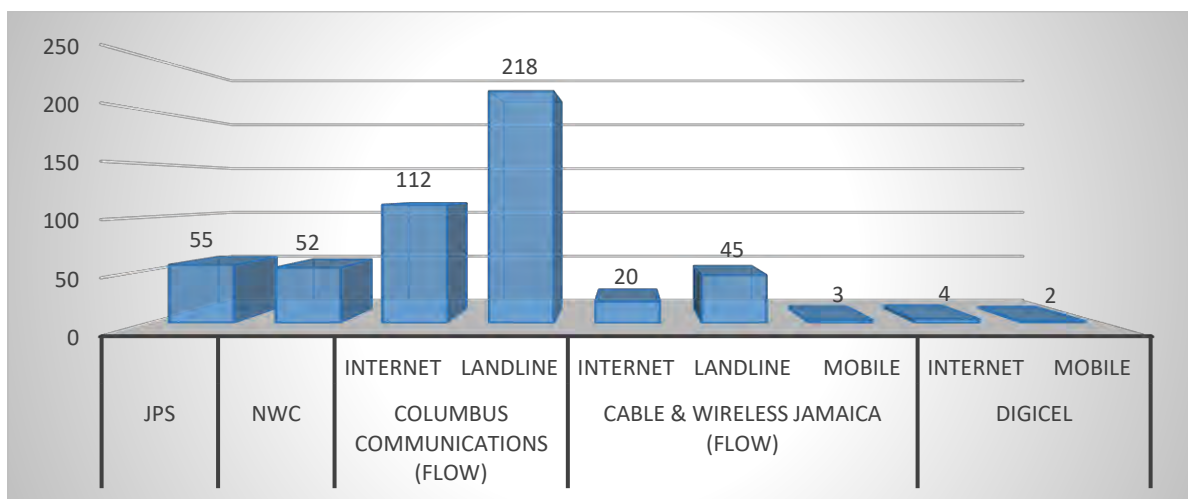
For 2018 January – March the CAU received 1,018 contacts which represents a three percent (3%) decline over the preceding quarter. Contacts relating to service interruption dropped by 22%, customer service, by 21% and alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards, by 31%. This accounted for the most significant declines when compared with the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service providers¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 346 (34%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 250 (24%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 142 (14%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 142 (14%)
- Digicel – 97 (10%)
- Small water providers CanCara Development Ltd., Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML) and Landmark Developers Ltd.; small telecommunications providers, Dekal Wireless and Logic One; and, Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 41 (4%).

While JPS at 346 accounted for the highest number for total contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number of contacts – at 218 per 100,000 – in proportion to its landline customer base.

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

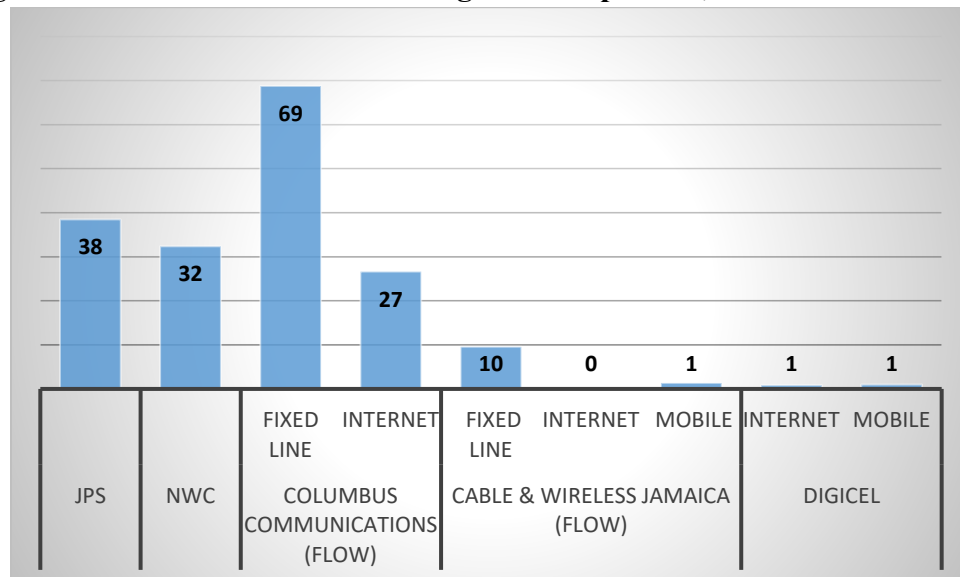


¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider are on page 22 Table 4

Billing matters continued to be the main reason utility consumers contact the CAU and at 49% it represents a three percentage point increase in these contacts when compared to the preceding quarter. As a percentage of total contacts, JPS and NWC with 238 (23%) and 154 (15%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing related matters.

While JPS and NWC accounted for the highest number of billing contacts as a percentage of the total number of contacts, Figure 2 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) at 69, accounted for the greatest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base in relation to its fixed line service. JPS and NWC followed with 38 and 32 contacts respectively.

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



In keeping with the usual trend, service interruption issues, which represented 18% of total contacts, remained the second highest reason for customer contact during the reporting period.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Fifteen (15) new appeals were accepted for investigation during the review period. DEML, JPS and NWC accounted for one (1), six (6) and eight (8) respectively with information being requested, via case letters, for all new appeals accepted.

DEML acknowledged our correspondence within the agreed timeline. Of the six (6) case letters sent to JPS, acknowledgements were received for 5 (representing 83%). For the NWC, acknowledgements were received for six (6) of the eight (8) case letters sent with five (63%) being submitted within the agreed timeline.

Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2018)</i>	DEML	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	100%	83%	63%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

For JPS, all five of the six responses which were due at the end of the review period were received. However, only two (or 40%) were received in keeping with the established timeline. Of the eight case letters sent to NWC, responses for five due at the end of the review period were received within the agreed timeline. DEML also provided its response within the specified time.

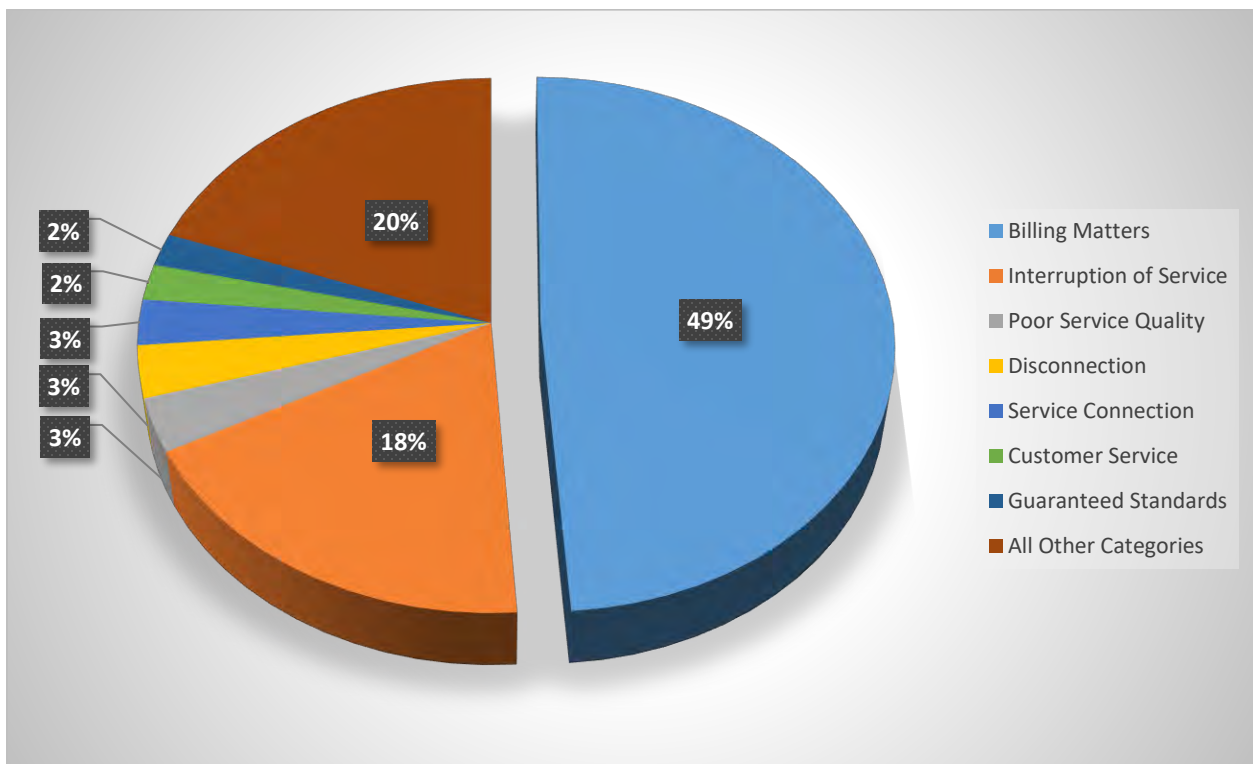
Table 2: Responses within standard (30 business days)

<i>Quarters (2018)</i>	DEML	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	100%	40%	100%

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, customer service, and Guaranteed Standards (see Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category are provided in Table 5.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

At 49%, billing matters continued to be the main reason for customers contact during the January - March quarter. The billing issues complained about included adjustments to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

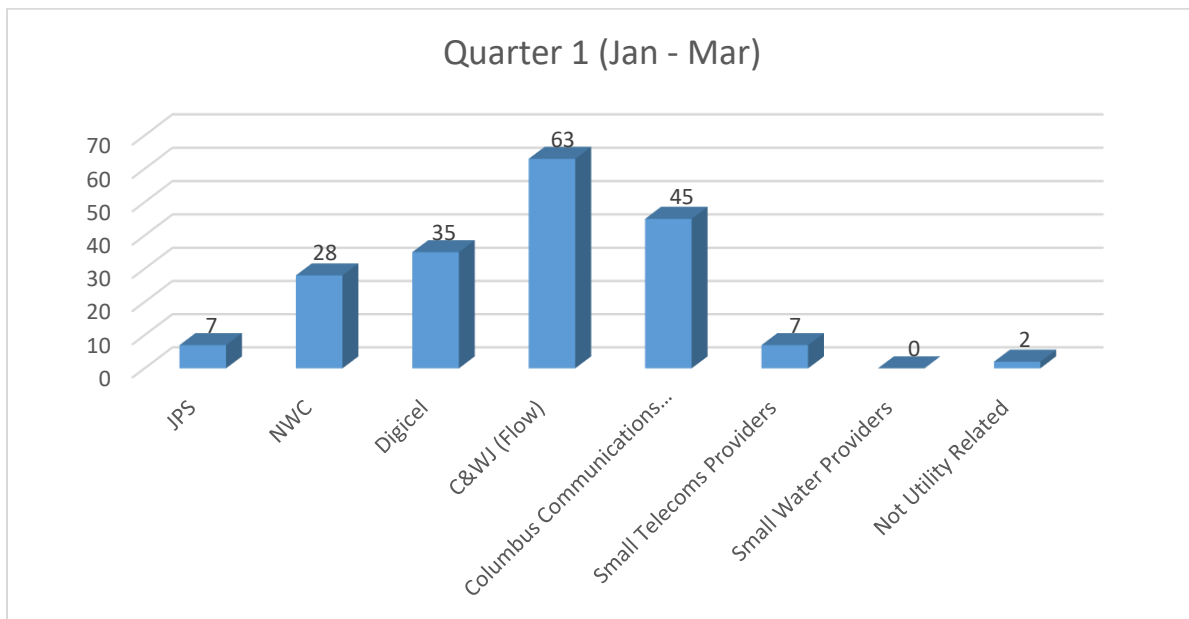
Of the 1,018 contacts received, 498 (49%) related to billing matters. JPS and NWC accounted for 238 (23%) and 154 (15%) respectively. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 38 (4%) while C&WJ and Digicel accounted for 33 (3%) and 30 (3%) respectively. Small Water Providers

and contacts in the category of “Other/Not Utility Related” accounted for the remaining 5 (1%) of billing matter contacts.

(ii) **Interruption of Service**

Service interruptions contacts, at 18%, decreased by five percentage points when compared with the preceding quarter. As is seen in Figure 4, C&WJ (Flow) with 63 (6%) and Columbus Communications (Flow) with 45 (4%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number for service interruption issues. Digicel and NWC each accounted for 3% while JPS and Dekal Wireless each had a share of 1%.

Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts



(iii) **Poor Service Quality**

Poor service quality represented 3% of total contacts with the main telecommunications providers, C&WJ – Flow, Columbus Communications – Flow and Digicel each accounting for 1%.

(iv) **Disconnection**

Contacts relating to disconnections increased by one percentage point to 3% when compared with the preceding quarter. Columbus Communications (Flow), JPS and NWC each had a share of 1%.

(v) Service Connection

Service connection matters represented 3% of total contacts with C&WJ (Flow), Columbus Communications (Flow) and JPS each accounting for 1%.

(vi) Customer Service

Issues relating to customer service practices represented 2% of total contacts which is shared equally between C&WJ (Flow) and Digicel.

Chapter 3: Guaranteed Standards Performance

(i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?

The Guaranteed Standards are performance measures that guide the provision of utility services delivered by the National Water Commission (NWC), small water providers and the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. If the companies fail to honour the agreement, the affected customer is entitled to compensation which is applied as a credit to their account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

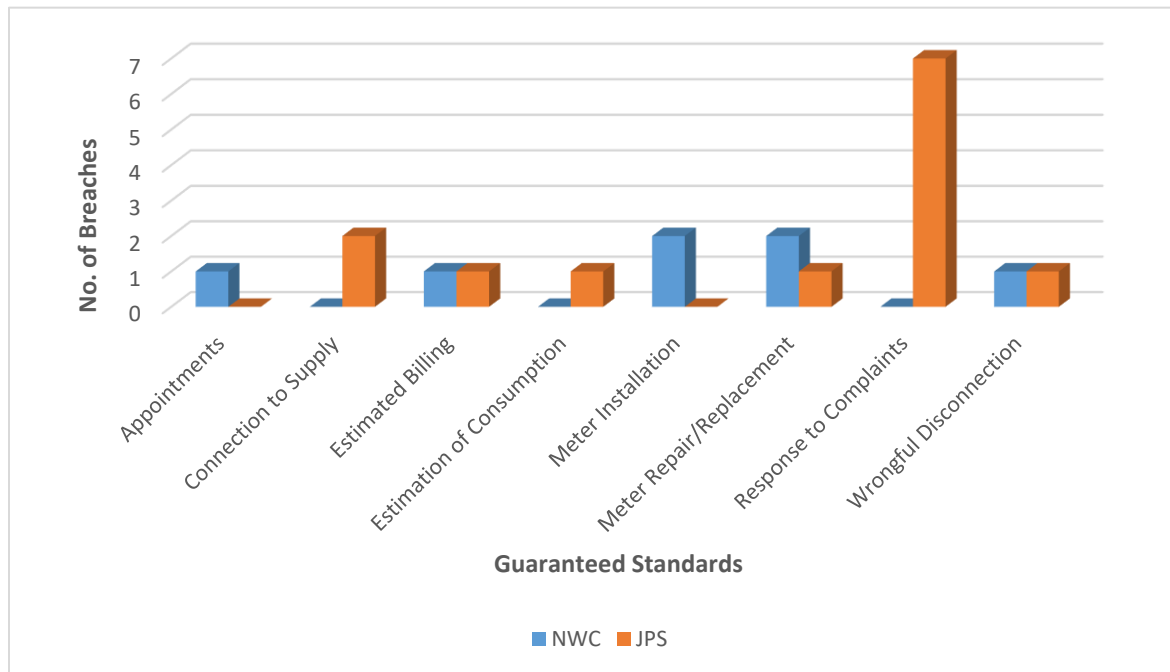
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract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

JPS: Residential customers: equivalent to the reconnection fee; Commercial customers: four (4) times the customer charge. Breaches of individual standards will attract compensation of up to eight (8) periods of non-compliance.

(iii) Quarterly report of breaches

Twenty (20) contacts were received in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards from customers of the JPS and the NWC. This represented two percent (2%) of total contacts received during the review period, which is a one percentage point reduction over the preceding period. JPS and NWC accounted for 13 and 7 contacts respectively, relating to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards.

As is seen in Figure 5, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches for JPS related to *Response to Complaints*. In the case of the NWC, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches related to *Meter Installation* and *Meter Repair/Replacement*.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

For the review period, JPS' compliance report on its performance on the Guaranteed Standards indicated that a total of 20,121 breaches were committed during the review period; which represents a 5% increase in the number of breaches over the preceding quarter. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of \$40,750,371.00, all of which was paid out by way of automatic compensation.

The standards with the highest incidents of breaches related to: Estimated Bills (which restricts JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates without a penalty) and Estimation of Consumption (which prescribes the methodology to be used by JPS when computing estimated consumption). These standards account for 90% and 7% of total breaches and compensatory payments respectively.

NWC

The Guaranteed Standards Compliance Report for the NWC indicates that 361 breaches were committed during the review period, which represents a 25% decrease over the preceding period. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$1,182,848.68 while actual payments amounted to \$643,459.52, representing 54% of total potential payments, which were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 46% 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 1 – Access and WGS 8 – Meter Repair/ Replacement. These represented 42% and 23% of total breaches respectively. They also represent 40% and 22% of total 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 will be placed on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that indicate general customer satisfaction levels (See Table 3).

Table 3: NWC's Call Centre Performance

<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Performance Jan-March 2018	Performance Oct-Dec 2017
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds ²	55%	
<i>Maximum Delay</i>	Maximum time that a caller waited in queue	Fourteen minutes and ten seconds (14:10)	
<i>Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)</i>	Average Length of Calls	Three minutes and fifty-two seconds (3:52)	
<i>Percentage of Abandon Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	31%	

The NWC Call Centre Report for the review period indicates a reduced level of performance when compared with the preceding quarter in all the areas measured in Table 3. The service level was reduced by 19 percentage points; the maximum time that a caller waited in queue increased by two minutes and forty-eight seconds (2:48); average length of calls increased by one minute and thirty-one seconds (1:31); and percentage of abandon calls increased by 18%.

² This represents the measure used by the NWC and JPS

JPS:

The report received from JPS on its performance against the Quality of Service Standard which relates to Call Centre Responsiveness (EOS 10), indicates a compliance rating of 98%; which is a 3.5% percentage point increase over the preceding quarter. This standard measures the percentage of calls that are answered within 20 seconds.

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 forms 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 60.4% compliance rating in meeting this standard; which is an improvement of 1.7 percentage points over the preceding period. The Company has advised that it will be implementing measures to ensure that its compliance rating improves.

NWC:

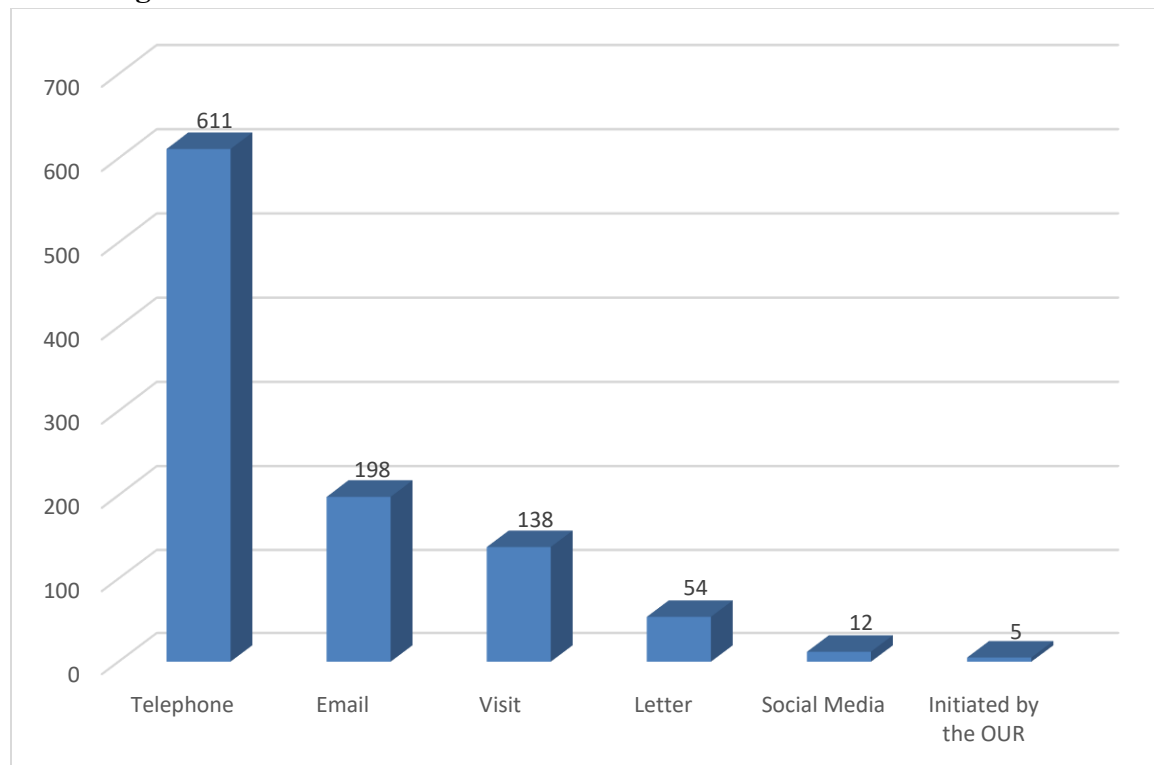
The NWC's performance target provides for 12 hours' advance notification of planned service interruptions of a duration of no more than 4 hours. However, where a planned interruption is expected to be for more than four hours, the NWC is required to give an advanced notice of at least 24 hours.

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 21 related notifications received, only 17 were in compliance with the stated target.

Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

At 60% of total contacts, the telephone continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU. Emails, visits and letter followed with 19%, 14% and 5% of total contacts respectively. Social media and contacts initiated by the OUR accounted for the remaining 1% of contacts. Figure 6 provides further details.

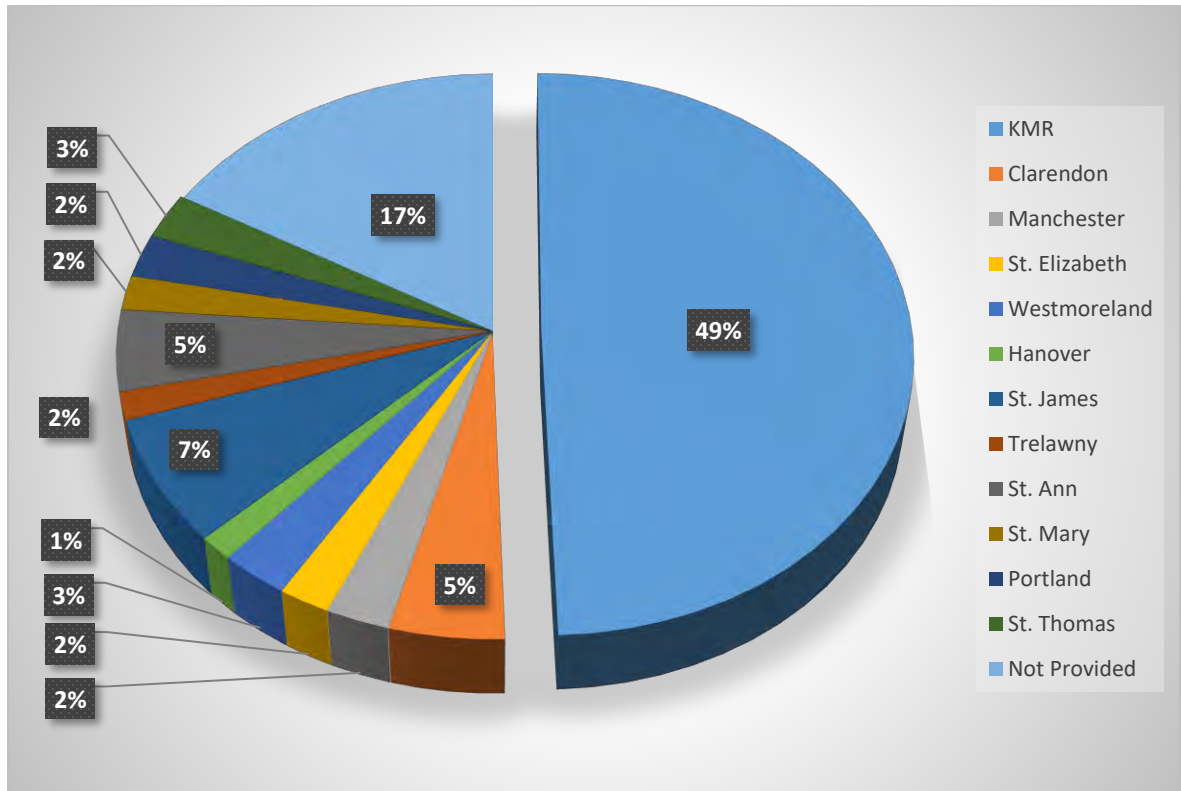
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR) at 49%, which represents an 11% decrease when compared to the preceding quarter, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. At 7%, St. James accounted for the second highest number of total contacts. Clarendon and St. Ann followed with 5% each while Westmoreland and St. Thomas each had a share of 3%. The remaining parishes each had a share of 2% or less. Seventeen percent (17%) 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 Appeals³

Fourteen (14) appeals were closed all of which were resolved in favour of the service providers. Twelve (or 86%) of the 14 closed appeals were resolved within the OUR's-established standard of sixty (65) working days while the remaining two exceeded the timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals⁴

At the end of the review period, twelve (12) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, one (1) is awaiting response from the service provider while the remaining eleven (11) are for action to be taken by the CAU/OUR. For four of the 11 awaiting OUR's actions, final letters were prepared to be dispatched.

Of the 12 outstanding appeals, JPS accounted for five (5) equipment damage, one (1) property damage and one (1) billing related matter. The NWC accounted for the 5 remaining outstanding appeal which are billing related.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Of the fifteen (15) new appeals which were accepted for investigation, 11 provider responses were due at the end of the review period. All 11 responses due were received with eight (8) being within the established 30 working days' timeline.

Ten (10) of the 11 appeals for which all relevant information was received were resolved within the 65 working days' timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 91% which is a five percentage point increase over the preceding period. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity are provided in Table 8.

³ Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 6

⁴ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 7

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

Through the intervention of the CAU, \$195,342.33 was secured from JPS for utility customers during the review period. The amounts secured represents reversal of charges that were disputed by customers.

(ii) Complaints regarding St. Jago Hills Development Company Ltd.

The St. Jago Hills Citizens' Association representing consumers in St. Jago Hills, in Sligoville, St. Catherine, sought our intervention to resolve the issue of prolonged disruption in their water supply as well as concerns about the quality of the water they receive. The residents are served by licenced water provider, St. Jago Hills Development Company Ltd (St. JHDC).

The residents reported that they had a disruption in their water supply from 2017 October to February 2018, which remained unresolved despite communication with their service provider. In our effort to have the customers' issues addressed, the OUR made contact with the principals of St. JHDC which included hosting a meeting on Wednesday, 2018 February 21. At the meeting, ST. JHDC confirmed the issues outlined by the residents and indicated the challenges that were being experienced and the measures being taken to having them addressed. Following the meeting the residents water supply was restored on 2018 February 28.

List of Tables 2018 January - March

Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Provider	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Digisplay	Internet	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	15
(ii)	New Complaints	37	20	4	22	2	13	6	2	8	16	4	1	2	137
(iii)	New Enquires	29	13	0	1	3	1	3	0	2	3	1	2	1	59
(iv)	New Opinions	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
(v)	New Referrals	273	209	12	79	16	74	45	9	28	27	14	6	9	801
	Total Contacts	346	250	16	104	22	88	54	12	38	47	19	10	12	1018
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	11	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
	Total Closures														
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Awaiting Final Letters to Customers	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
(ii)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total Outstanding Appeals	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12

Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small Telecoms Providers (Dekal Wireless)	Small Water Providers (CanCara, DEML, St. Jago Hills)	OUR/Other (not utility related)		
Billing Matters	238	154	30	33	38	0	4	1		498
Broken Main	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0		6
Customer Service	1	1	12	7	1	0	0	0		22
Defective Street Lights	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		10
Disconnection	6	8	1	6	9	1	1	0		32
Equipment Damage	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		16
Guaranteed Standards	13	7	0	0	0	0	0	0		20
Guaranteed Standards Query	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		6
Health & Safety	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	0		16
Illegal Connections	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		3
Interruption of Service	7	28	35	63	45	7	0	2		187
Irregular Supply	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0		13
Leak at Meter	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	0		7
Metering	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0		9
Number Portability	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	0		6
Other	10	4	10	9	12	2	3	9		59
Payment Arrangement	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0		2
Phone Cards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Poor Service Quality	5	1	6	6	10	4	1	0		33
Property Damage	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		5
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		2
Reconnection	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0		6
Redress not Received	2	1	0	6	4	0	0	0		13
Removal of Utility Pole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Security Deposit	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0		2
Service Connection	11	1	0	4	9	3	0	0		28
Unable to get through to Provider	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Unavailability of Service - No Facility	0	1	2	5	8	1	0	0		17
Total	346	250	97	142	142	19	10	12		1018

Table 6: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matter	5	3	8
Equipment Damage	6	0	6
Total	11	3	14

Table 7: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	5	6
Equipment Damage	5	0	5
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	7	5	12

Table 8: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (Appeals)

Activity	Service Standards	% Compliance	Comment
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within 2 business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	80%	Twelve (12) of the 15 new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	87%	Thirteen (13) of the 15 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	91%	Eleven (11) provider responses were received for which ten (10) final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts

- Appeal:** Any contact in which the utility company has completed an investigation into a customer's complaint, the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome and writes to the OUR asking for an independent investigation of the matter.
- Complaint:** Any contact expressing dissatisfaction with the handling of a complaint by the utility company and to which the OUR takes steps to resolve without conducting a formal investigation.
- Customer Contact:** Any contact made to the OUR to register an appeal, inquiry, opinion, etc. Contact can be made through the telephone, post, electronic channels (emails, website, and Facebook page) and visits.
- Enquiry:** Any contact requiring verification/confirmation of information relating to the OUR, a utility service, policy and/or practice, etc.
- Opinion:** Any contact expressing a view about the actions, practice or terms of service, etc. of a utility company or the OUR.
- Referral:** Any contact advised by the OUR to consult the relevant utility company because the complainant had not initially utilized or exhausted the complaint procedure within the relevant utility company.

Appendix 2: Statement on Confidentiality of Telecommunications Service Provider Information

Information on the customer base of the telecommunication companies was used in some of the calculations contained in the QPR, pursuant to Section 7A of the Telecommunication Act – Amended. The referenced section states, in part:

“...the following information is not required to be regarded and dealt with as secret and confidential namely -

- (a) information that will facilitate customers in their choice of facilities or specified services and the development of the telecommunications industry; and
- (b) information relating to the –
 - (i) quality of service measurements;
 - (ii) prices charged to customers or to other licensees;
 - (iii) network coverage of licensees;
 - (iv) market share of licensees;
 - (v) volume of services of licensees however measured
 - (vi) subscriber base of licensees; and
 - (vii) capacity and usage of international submarine cables

Appendix 3: Appeals Process

The activities of utility companies are guided by “terms and conditions” within their license and/or Act. There are occasions, however, when consumers feel that particular action(s) of a utility company might have been in breach of the utility’s “terms and conditions” or might have been unfair to them. In such circumstances, the OUR is an avenue for recourse in having any such wrong investigated and addressed through our appeals process.

Prior to submitting an appeal to the OUR, consumers are expected and encouraged to first take the complaint, or issues giving rise to the complaint, up to the level of a senior officer at the respective utility company. The hearing of grievances is a consumer’s right and utilities are obliged to review such matters with the aim of having the issue addressed or clarified.

Appendix 4: CAU Internal Performance Standards

Process Timeline for Equipment Damage Appeals

<u>Description</u>	<u>Timelines</u>
Acknowledging correspondence & Assigning Appeal	2 (Two) working days
Case Letter Preparation	5 (Five) working days
Receive JPS’ Response/Update	15 – 25 working days
Review of Provider Response & prepare Follow-Up (F/U) Case letter or issue Directive (where necessary)	15 working days
Receive response to F/U Case Letter	5 (Five) working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 (Five) working days ⁵
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.

⁵ Subsequent to the review of the providers’ response to OUR’s Case Letter, Follow-up Case Letter or Directive issued, the appeal may be escalated to the Supervisor, Manager or Director and would then be treated as a Special Appeal.

Recommended Service Levels

1. JPS is expected to respond or provide an update to **OUR's Case Letters** regarding customer's appeals (not related to equipment damage) within **FIFTEEN (15) working days** of receipt. The company is also expected to acknowledge receipt of our Case Letters within five (5) working days of receipt.
2. Where only an update is provided within fifteen (15) working days, the complete response is expected to be submitted to the OUR within ten (10) working days of receipt of the update.
3. JPS is expected to provide all information requested regarding equipment damage appeals within thirty (30) working days of receipt of our Case Letter.
4. JPS is expected to respond to the **OUR's follow-up case letter** within **FIVE (5) working days of receipt**.
5. The OUR's Final Letter to the customer is to be dispatched within **TWENTY-THREE (23) working days** of receipt of utilities' response (where no Follow-up Case Letter was sent). JPS will be provided with a copy of the Final Letter.
6. The OUR is expected to complete investigations of JPS appeals within the following timelines:
 - **Sixty-five (65) working days** for GENERAL APPEALS (which do not require external consultation)
 - **Seventy-Five (70) working days** for Equipment Damage Appeals (which do not require external consultation)
 - **Eighty-five (85) working days** for SPECIAL APPEALS (Appeals which require external consultation)
7. The Utility company is to extend the hold on the customer's account for **THIRTY (30) days** subsequent to receiving OUR's final response to allow the customer to make arrangements for the balances that are outstanding and/or give the customer time to appeal to the Director – Consumer & Public Affairs.

Appendix 5: Process Timelines for NWC Appeals

<u>Description</u>	<u>Timelines</u>
Acknowledging correspondence & Assigning Appeal	2 working days
Case Letter Preparation	5 working days
Receive NWC's Response/Update	30 working days
Review of Provider Response & prepare Follow-Up (F/U) Case letter or issue Directive (where necessary)	10 working days
Receive response to F/U Case Letter	

	5 working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 working days ⁶
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 working days
Supervisor's Review of Final Letter	2 working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
Total	65 working days

Other Appeals Activities:

- On **day ten (10)** after dispatch of the case letter, the Consumer Affairs Officer (CAO) will remind the service provider of its obligation to send a response within 20 days of receipt of the case letter.
- If the utilities' responses raise further questions or do not adequately address the queries posed by OUR, a *follow-up case letter* is sent to the utilities by OUR within **TEN (10) working days** of receipt of the utility's response.
- Beginning January 2014, monthly reports detailing the appeals for which the responses are outstanding will be generated and sent the NWC. Where the responses/updates are not received within fifteen working days (15) of submission of the report, the matter will be escalated to the Vice-President for Customer Services, NWC, for action.

Similarly, the CAU will provide NWC with a monthly update on appeals for which our responses are outstanding.

As a consequence, the following are the proposed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to which the utility companies will be accountable. It is being recommended that the following be agreed upon by all parties and published:

Recommended Service Levels

NWC is expected to respond to **OUR's Case Letters** regarding customer's appeals within **thirty (30) working days** of receipt. The Commission is also expected to acknowledge receipt of our Case Letters within five (5) working days.

⁶ 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 member and is headed by a Chairman with the Director General serving as an *ex officio* member.