
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2015 July - September

Publication Date: 2015 December 31



36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report

Document Number: 2015/GEN/007/QPR.004

Publication Date: 2015 December 31

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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 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, to act independently and impartially.

The Consumer and Public Affairs Department

Through the Consumer and Public Affairs Department (CPA), 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. 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 to it 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 in regard to the services provided by the companies. Feedback from consumers garnered at town meetings, public fora and the media are also key sources for opinions and activities of utility services.

A consumer survey is conducted every 18 - 24 months which seeks consumer feedback on a whole range of consumers' issues. Additionally, an aggressive public education programme is pursued which includes organizing consultations with stakeholders on pertinent regulatory matters.

The PAU manages the public education programme, media relations and the website while the Information Centre (OURIC), inter alia, provides information in keeping with the requirements of the Access to Information Act. The OUR through CPA 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. Specifically, the report for the period (July- September 2015) utilizes the 2015 customer information base submitted to the OUR by the service providers.

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 heterogenous 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

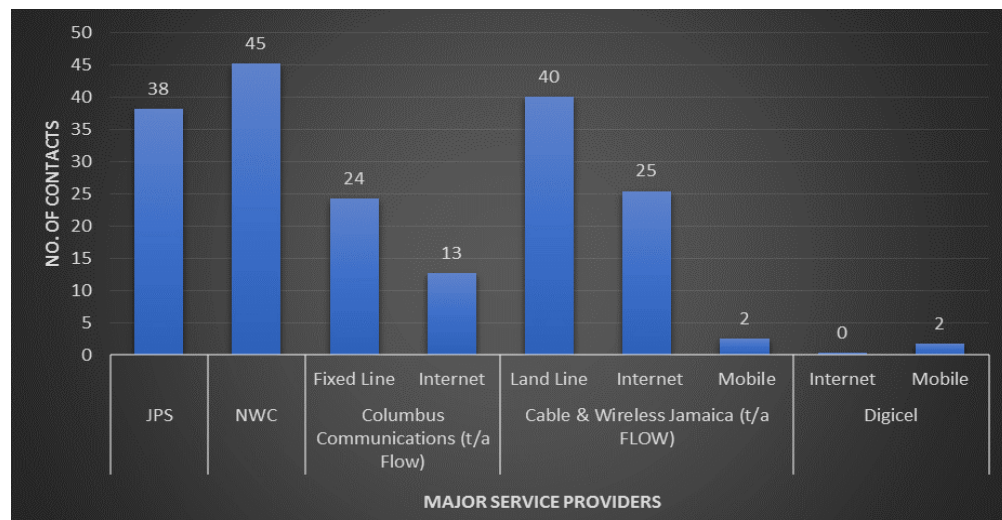
The CAU received 651 new contacts for the 2015 July – September quarter, representing a 3% reduction in the number of contacts received over the preceding quarter. With three hundred and thirty-five (51%) billing matters and ninety-nine (15%) interruption of service issues, these areas continued to be the main reasons for customer contact.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 227 (35%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 213 (33%)
- Digicel – 40 (6%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. t/a FLOW – 132 (20%)
- Columbus Communications t/a FLOW, small water providers Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML), and Runaway Bay Water Company Ltd.; small telecommunications provider Dekal Wireless and OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 39 (6%).

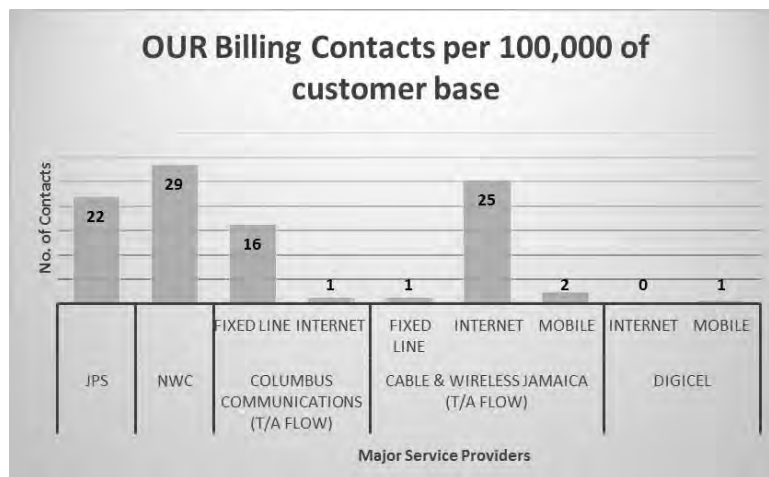
Despite the JPS having the highest number of actual contacts to the CAU, as shown in Figure 1, the NWC accounted for the highest number of contacts - 45 per 100,000 - in proportion to its customer base. C&WJ (t/a FLOW) accounted for the second highest in relation to the number of landline related contacts.

Figure 1: Distribution of Contacts per 100,000 of Customer Base



There was an overall 6% decline in the number of billing related contacts when compared to the preceding period. As shown in Figure 2, the NWC, at 29, C&WJ (t/a FLOW) with 25 for internet service and JPS with 22 were the top three service providers with the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of their customer base.

Figure 2: Distribution of Billing Contacts per 100,000 of Customer Base



While realizing a marginal 3% point reduction when compared to the preceding quarter, telecommunications provider C&WJ (t/a FLOW) for the second consecutive quarter accounted for the highest share of contacts relating to service interruptions. For the reporting period, of the 99 service contacts received, C&WJ (t/a FLOW) accounted for 48. The NWC also realized a significant increase in the number of service interruption contacts to the CAU, moving from 9 to 23 (or 156%) when compared to the 2nd quarter. The OUR will therefore be requesting information from the Commission on the number of similar contacts received as well as the possible cause for the increase.

The NWC continues to be delinquent in providing responses to information requested in relation to customers' appeals. Despite past discussions with senior personnel at the Commission, the issue of lack of responsiveness remains unresolved. At the end of the review period, 94 appeals remained outstanding, of which the NWC accounted for 82%. Of the total outstanding NWC appeals, responses have not been received for 72 (94%). In light of this longstanding issue with the NWC, the Office will be resorting to such legal and regulatory options as are available to secure improved compliance by the NWC.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Nineteen (19) requests for information (Case Letters) in relation to customers' appeals, were sent to the respective service providers. Of the 19 Case Letters, seven (7) were sent to JPS of which three (or 43%) were acknowledged within the established timeline. Eleven (11) case letters were sent to the NWC of which 10 (or 91%) were acknowledged, 3 of which were within the agreed timeline. The remaining one Case Letter was sent to Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. which was acknowledged within the five business day timeline.

(ii) Response to Case Letters

JPS provided responses to six (6) of the 7 Case Letters sent. This represented an 86% response rate. All 6 responses were received within the established timeline.

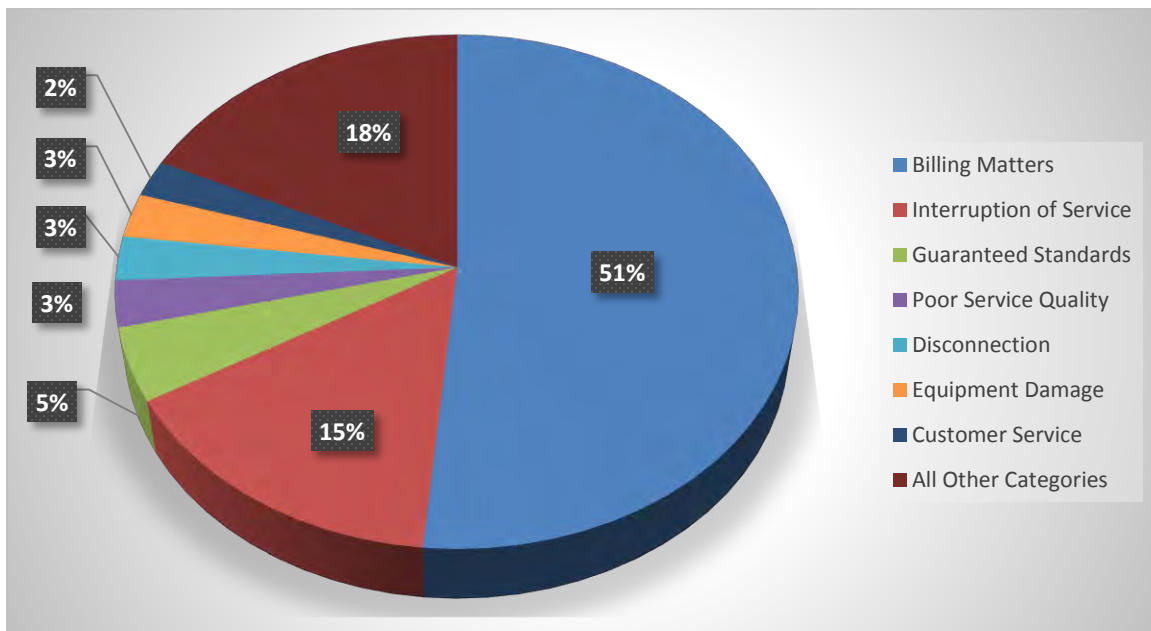
For the NWC, of the 11 Case Letters sent, 4 responses were received. However two (2) did not include all the information requested and was classified as incomplete. No explanation was offered for the information omitted. Additionally, none of the responses submitted were received within the established 30 working days timeline.

At the end of the review period no response had been received from DEML for the one Case Letter sent. It should be noted, however, the stipulated response had not expired.

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

Figure 3 shows that the main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to matters of: Billing, Service Interruption, Guaranteed Standards, Poor Service Quality, Disconnection, Equipment Damage and Customer Service.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

Billing related matters including adjustments that were applied to customers' accounts, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing were the main reasons for consumer contacting the OUR during this period. These matters represented fifty-one percent (51%) of total contacts for the quarter, which is a two (2) percentage point decrease in similar contacts made over the last period.

Of the 335 (representing 51%) billing contacts, JPS and NWC accounted for 131 (or 20%) and 135 (21%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 19 (or 3%) of billing related contacts while C&WJ (t/a FLOW) accounted for the remaining 43 (or 7%).

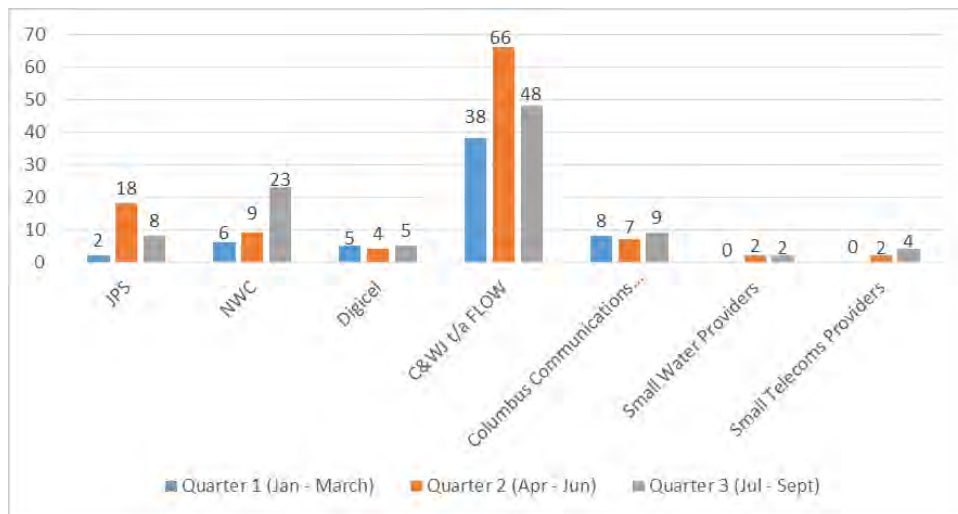
(ii) Interruption of Service

There was a one percentage point reduction in the number of contacts received pertaining to interruption of service, dropping to 15% from the 16% received in the preceding quarter. As seen

in Figure 4, C&WJ (t/a FLOW) continued to account for the highest share of these contacts at 7%, despite there being a 3 percentage point decline when compared with the previous quarter.

The NWC also realized a significant increase, from 9 to 23 (or 156%), in related contacts when compared to the 2nd quarter. With this increase in the number of contacts the Commission, at 4%, accounted for the second highest share of service interruption contacts. The JPS, Digicel, Flow, and Dekal Wireless each had an equal share of 1%.

Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts



(iii) Poor Service Quality

Nineteen (or 3%) of total contacts received related to poor service quality. C&WJ (t/a FLOW) accounted for 9 (or 1%) of contacts received while the remaining 10 (or 2%) of contacts was shared among JPS (2), NWC (1), Digicel (1), Columbus Communications t/a Flow (2), Dekal Wireless (3) and RBWC (1).

(iv) Disconnection

Disconnections accounted for three percent (3%) of total contacts received. Contacts from JPS accounted for 2% of disconnection related issues while C&WJ (t/a FLOW) accounted for the remaining 1%.

(v) Equipment Damage

Equipment damage accounted for three percent (3%) of total contacts received. These contacts also represented eight percent (8%) of contacts specific to the services provided by JPS.

(vi) Customer Service

Contacts relating to Customer Service accounted for 2% of total contacts received. C&WJ (t/a FLOW) accounted for 1% while Digicel, JPS, NWC and Dekal Wireless 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 National Water Commission (NWC), small water providers and the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. If the companies fail to honour the agreement, the customer is entitled to compensation which is applied as a credit to the account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

NWC: Compensation for 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.

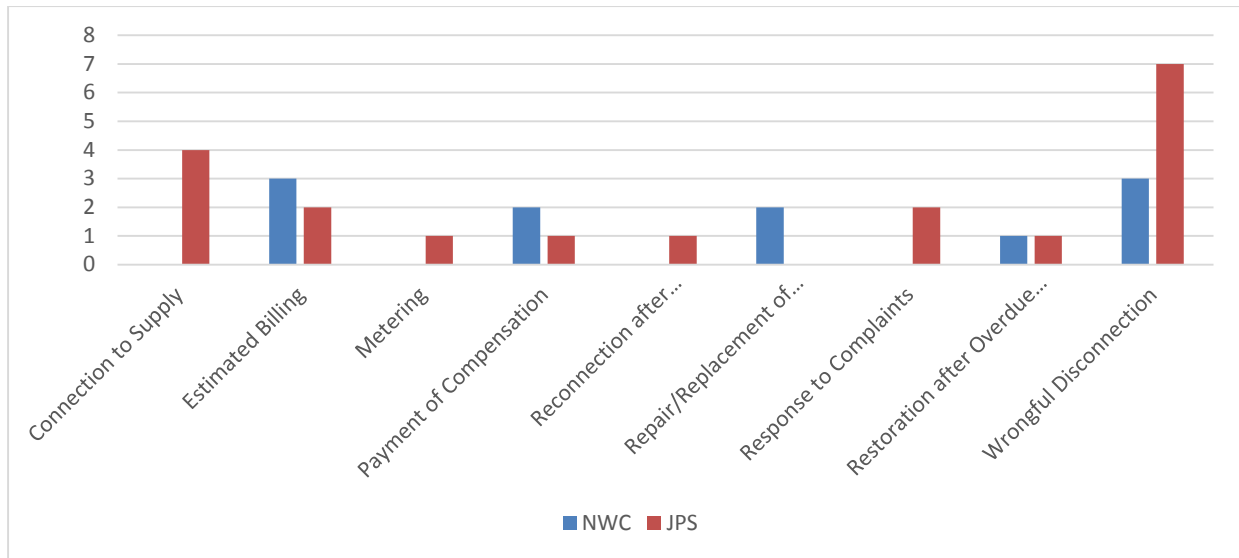
(iii) Quarterly Report of Breaches

The CAU fielded thirty (30) contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards by the JPS and the NWC. This represented five percent (5%) of total contacts received during the review period, which represented a two percentage point drop over the preceding quarter. JPS accounted for 19 (or 3%) while the NWC accounted for the remaining 11 (or 2%) of related contacts.

As shown in Figure 5 and similar to the previous reporting period, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches for JPS related to *Wrongful Disconnection*. The other alleged breach most complained about related to *Connection to Supply*.

In the case of the NWC, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches related to *Estimated Billing* and *Wrongful Disconnection*.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts



(i) Utilities' Performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS has again advised that it continues to experience challenges in its ability to collect and report on its performance under the Guaranteed Standards since the upgrade of its Customer Information System in 2014 August. In light of the challenges being experienced, the company has advised that it will only be able to provide the compliance reports on a monthly basis for the period 2015, June – September. Accordingly, JPS has submitted monthly compliance reports for June and July. The reports for August and September were not received at the time of writing. Despite the challenges, the OUR will request that these outstanding reports be received by December 31, 2015. JPS has further advised that it will resume reporting on a quarterly basis in 2016 January.

Based on the compliance report submitted for the month of July, JPS reported a total of 10,253 breaches which has a potential pay-out of approximately \$20.65 million. Actual pay-outs amounted to \$5,380,430, representing 26% of total potential payments. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of total payments was by way of automatic compensation. It is also important to note that of the total compensatory payments made, \$4.96 million (or 92%) resulted from the four additional standards which began attracting automatic compensation on 2015 June 1.

The Guaranteed Standard EGS 7, which relates to the company sending more than two consecutive estimated bills, continued to records the highest number of breaches. This standard accounted for

64% of total breaches. The company reported no breach for nine of the seventeen established standards.

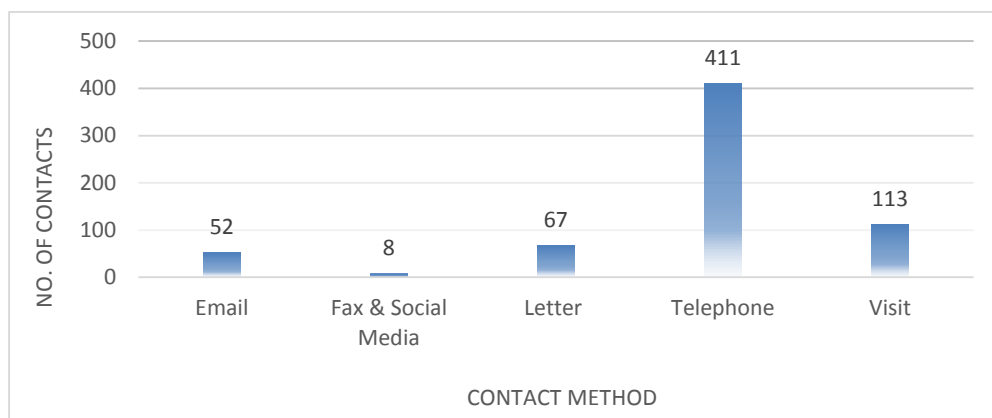
The NWC's compliance report on its performance under the Guaranteed Standards scheme for the review period indicated a total of 753 breaches being committed, representing a 45% increase when compared with the 2nd quarter. These 753 breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$2.33 million while actual payments amounted to \$568,635.00, representing 24% of total potential payments. These payments were by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts.

Similar to the 1st and 2nd quarters, the standard recording the highest number of breaches was WGS 4(b) which relates to the NWC's delay in completing investigation or updating customers within 30 working days after receipt of their complaints. This standard accounted for 58% of total breaches.

Chapter 4: Customer Contact Distribution

As shown in Figure 6, the telephone continues to be the method most frequently used by utility consumers to make contact with the CAU, representing sixty-three percent (63%) of the total contacts received. Visits accounted for eighteen percent (18%) while contacts made via letter and email represented 10% and 8% respectively. The remaining 1% of contacts was received via fax or social media.

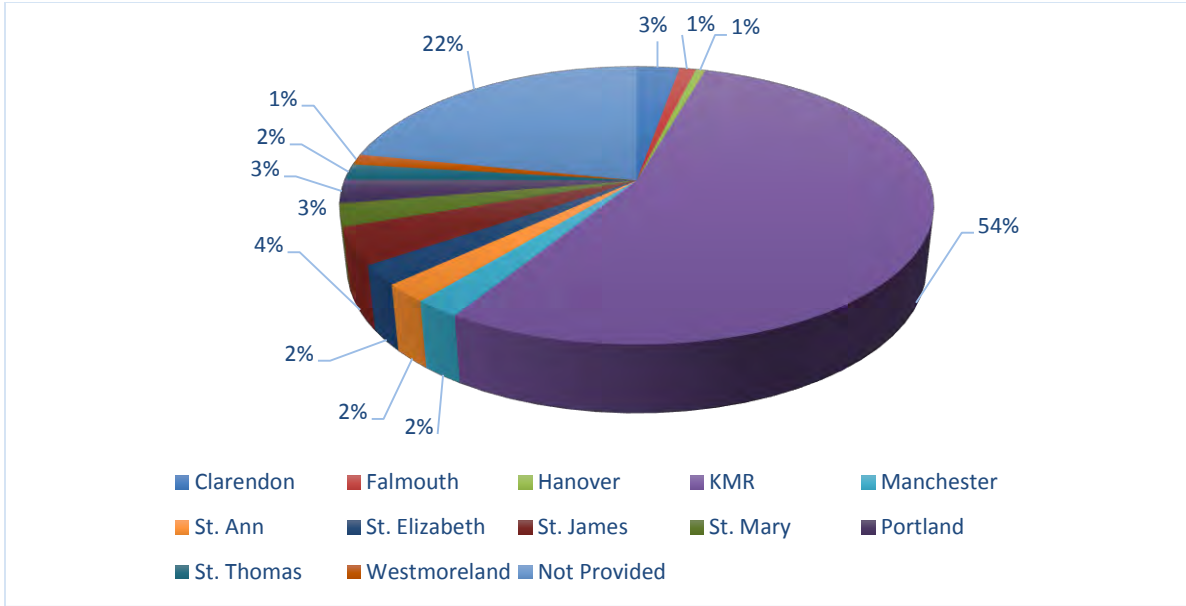
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region continued to account for the highest number of total contacts at fifty-four percent (54%). St. James followed at 4%. Clarendon and Portland both had a share of 3% each, while the remaining parishes each had a share of two percent (2%) or less. Twenty-two (22%) of the contacts received provided no information on their location/parish or the information was not recorded. (See Figure 7)

Figure 7: Geographic Distribution of Contacts



Chapter 5: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals ¹

During the review period, the CAU closed thirty (30) appeals. Of those closed, sixty percent (60%) were in favour of the service providers while seven percent (7%) were in favour of the customer. Twenty percent (20%) were withdrawn with majority being NWC customers who opted to pursue the amnesty initiative on offer. The remaining thirteen percent (13%) of closed appeals included those that were resolved via mutual agreement/ compromise or those that fell outside OUR's jurisdiction.

Of the 30 closed appeals, sixteen (16) were carried forward from previous periods while the remaining fourteen (14) represent appeals that were received and resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals²

At the end of the reporting period, ninety-four (94) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. The NWC accounted for the greatest share of outstanding appeals at 82% while the JPS had a share of 16%. The remaining 2% was shared between Columbus Communications t/a Flow and St. Jago Developers Ltd.

Of the outstanding appeals, six percent (6%) and seventy-six percent (76%) represented billing complaints from JPS' and NWC's customers, respectively. One billing related matter remains outstanding for Columbus Communications t/a Flow and small water provider St. Jago Developers Ltd. JPS also accounted for 9% of the equipment and property damage matters while the remaining categories has a share of 2% or less.

¹ Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 3

² Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 4

Chapter 5: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

An amount of \$3,319,596.31 was secured for utility customers as a result of our investigation into their appeals, which represented a 111% increase over the amounts secured in the 2nd quarter. JPS accounted for ninety-nine (99%) of the credits secured while the NWC and Digicel shared the remaining 1%.

(ii) NWC's Payment Compliance Initiative

The OUR issued its decision on the proposal submitted by the NWC to implement a Payment Compliance Initiative. The initiative involves providing an incentive (\$250) to those customers who pay their bills in full on, or before, the due date while applying an equivalent penalty for late payments. The initiative formally took effect on 2015 September 2. NWC had initially implemented the programme without the requisite approval and consequently it was halted upon the OUR's intervention.

The NWC Payment Compliance Initiative is similar to the Late Payment Fee/ Early Payment Incentive programme which was introduced by the JPS in July 2013. Both programmes were approved by the OUR in an effort to assist the service providers to improve on its receivables while simultaneously provide an option to disconnection within the specified grace period.

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Table 1: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities) 2015 July - September

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (t/a FLOW)			Columbus Communications (t/a Flow)	Digicel	Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related)	Total
				Landline	Mobile	Internet						
A	Contacts for the Quarter											
(i)	New Appeals	10	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	22
(ii)	New Complaints	17	12	4	1	3	3	1	1	0	0	42
(iii)	New Enquires	20	13	5	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	45
(iv)	New Opinions	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(vi)	New Referrals	179	171	83	19	17	16	36	8	4	2	535
	Total Contacts	227	213	92	20	20	19	40	10	5	5	651
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:											
	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Outside of jurisdiction	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Resolved in Favour of Customer	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Resolved in Favour of Utility	13	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
	Withdrawn by customer	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Total Closures	20	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:											
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR											
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	7	72	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	80
	Total Outstanding Appeals	15	77	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	94

Table 2: Distribution of Contacts by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (t/a Flow)	C&WJ (t/a FLOW)	Dekal Wireless	Small Water Providers (DEML & RBWC)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	
Billing Matters	131	135	19	5	43	0	2	0	335
Customer Service	1	2	3	0	8	1	0	0	15
Disconnection	10	1	1	0	5	1	0	0	18
Equipment Damage	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Guaranteed Standards	19	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
Health & Safety	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Illegal Connections	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Interruption of Service	8	23	5	9	48	4	2	0	99
Irregular Supply	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Metering	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Number Portability	0	0	4	0	7	0	0	0	11
Other	9	18	7	3	11	0	0	5	53
Payment Arrangement	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Poor Service Quality	2	1	1	2	9	3	1	0	19
Property Damage	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Reconnection	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Redress not Received	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Removal of Pole	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Service Connection	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Total	227	213	40	19	132	10	5	5	651

Table 3: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (t/a FLOW)	
Billing Matters	12	7	1	20
Equipment Damage	6	0	0	6
Metering	0	1	0	1
Other	1	0	0	1
Property Damage	0	1	0	1
Wrongful Disconnection	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	20	9	1	30

Table 4: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Distribution of Appeals Outstanding					
Complaint Category	Service Providers				Total
	JPS	NWC	Columbus Communications (t/a Flow)	St. Jago Developers	
Billing Matters	6	71	1	1	79
Disconnection	0	1	0	0	1
Equipment Damage	6	0	0	0	6
Leak at Meter	0	2	0	0	2
Metering	0	2	0	0	2
Other	0	1	0	0	1
Property Damage	2	0	0	0	2
Total	15	77	1	1	94

Table 5: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (Appeals)

Activity	Service Standards	% Compliance	Comment
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within 2 business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	100%	
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	84%	Of the 19 Case Letters sent, 16 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	100%	Six (6) final responses were dispatched within the established timeline. Four were completed based on receipt of all relevant information from the service providers while two were reviewed in-house.

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- Figure 6: Methods of Contact
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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

<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 ³
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)

Process Timeline for Equipment Damage Appeals

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.

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**.

³ 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.

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 ⁴
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

⁴ Subsequent to the review of the providers response to OUR's Case Letter, Follow-up Case Letter or Directive issued, the appeal may be escalated to the Supervisor, Manager or Director and would then be treated as a Special Appeal.

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.

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

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

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

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

- **EIGHTY-FIVE (85) working days** for SPECIAL APPEALS (Appeals which require external consultation)

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

Appendix 6: List of Acronyms

CanCara	-	CanCara Development Limited (Water & Sewerage Provider)
CPA	-	Consumer and Public Affairs Department (OUR)
CAU	-	Consumer Affairs Unit (OUR)
DEML	-	Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (Water and Sewerage Provider)
Dekal	-	Dekal Wireless Ltd. (Telecommunications Provider)
Flow Service	-	Columbus Communications Jamaica Ltd. t/a Flow (Telecommunication Provider)
FLOW	-	Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (C&WJ) t/a FLOW
JPS	-	Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (Electricity Provider)
KMR	-	Kingston Metropolitan Region (Kingston, St. Andrew & St. Catherine)
NWC	-	National Water Commission (Water & Sewerage Provider)
OUR	-	Office of Utilities Regulation
OURIC	-	Office of Utilities Regulation Information Centre
The Office	-	The Director General and both Deputy Directors General