
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2016 July - September

Publication Date: November 24, 2016



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, 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 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 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.

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

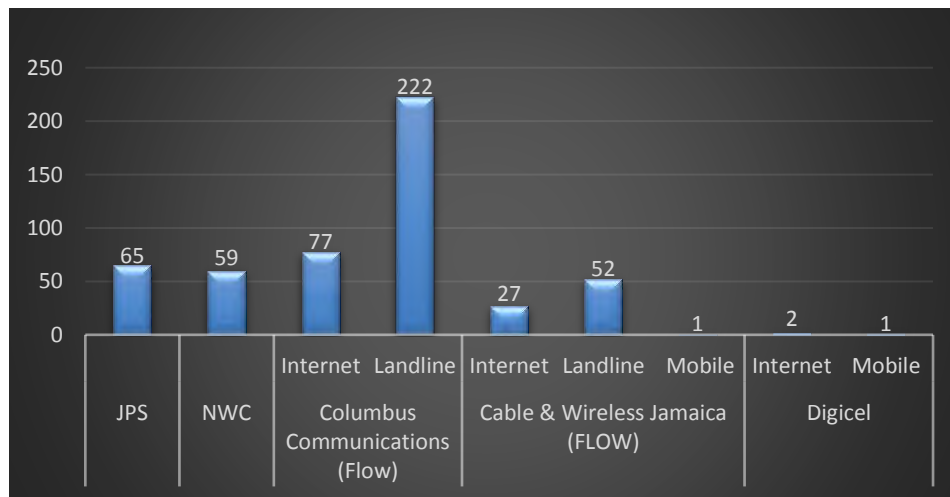
For the 2016 July – September quarter, the CAU received 1,163 new contacts which represent a 34% increase when compared with the preceding quarter. This also represents the highest number of contacts received since 2016. The data indicates a general increase in contacts, over the previous period, for all major areas of concern with the highest (of 90%) relating to interruption of service.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 400 (34%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 282 (24%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (FLOW) – 148 (13%)
- Columbus Communications (FLOW) – 116 (10%)
- Digicel – 74 (6%)
- Small water providers CanCara Development Ltd., Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML) and the National Irrigation Commission; small telecommunications provider Dekal Wireless and OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 142 (13%).

As has been the trend in the previous two reporting periods, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for the highest number of contacts - at 222 per 100,000 - in proportion to its landline customer base. This is despite the JPS having the highest number of actual contacts.

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

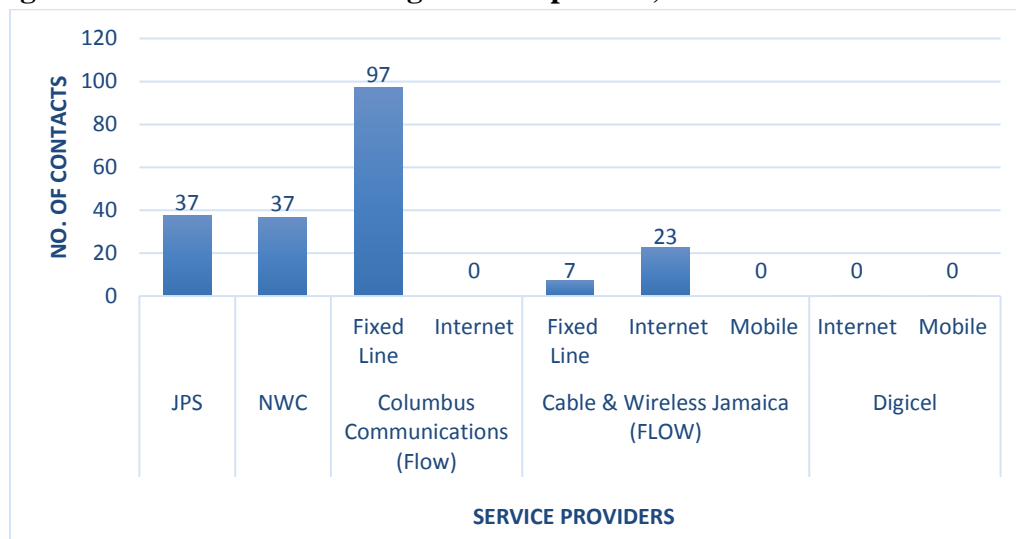


¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 3 on page 19

Matters relating to billing realized a 28% increase over the preceding quarter and remained the predominant reason for customer contact to the CAU. As a percentage of total contacts, the JPS at 20% accounted for the highest number of billing related matters with the NWC following at 15%. Issues relating to service interruption again accounted for the second highest reason for customer contacts, which at 24% represented a seven percentage point increase over the preceding period.

As shown in Figure 2, Columbus Communications (Flow) with 97 contacts for its fixed line service and JPS and NWC each with 37, 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



Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Seventeen (17) new appeals were accepted for investigation during the reporting period, with JPS and NWC accounting for nine (9) and eight (8) respectively. Requests for information, in the form of case letters, were sent to the respective service provider for all new appeals accepted.

JPS acknowledged eight of the nine case letters sent, with an additional one not becoming due by the end of the reporting period. As is seen in Table 1, only six (representing 75%) were received within the established five business days' timeline.

Six acknowledgements were received from the NWC for the eight case letters sent, with an additional one not becoming due by the end of the reporting period. As is seen in Table 1, five (representing 71%) of the acknowledgements received from the NWC were submitted within the established timeline.

Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2016)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	50%	33%
<i>April - June</i>	50%	23%
<i>July - September</i>	75%	71%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

JPS provided responses to five (representing 67%) of the nine case letters that were sent. However, all five responses (representing 100%) were sent within the specified timeline with the remaining four not yet exceeding the due date. As is seen in Table 2, only three (or 60%) of JPS responses were received within the established timeline.

The NWC continued to show significant improvements in its response submission during the review period over the preceding quarters (see Table 2). This improvement has resulted in the Commission being the more responsive service provider for the reporting period, having provided responses to 100% of the case letters sent and within the specified timeline.

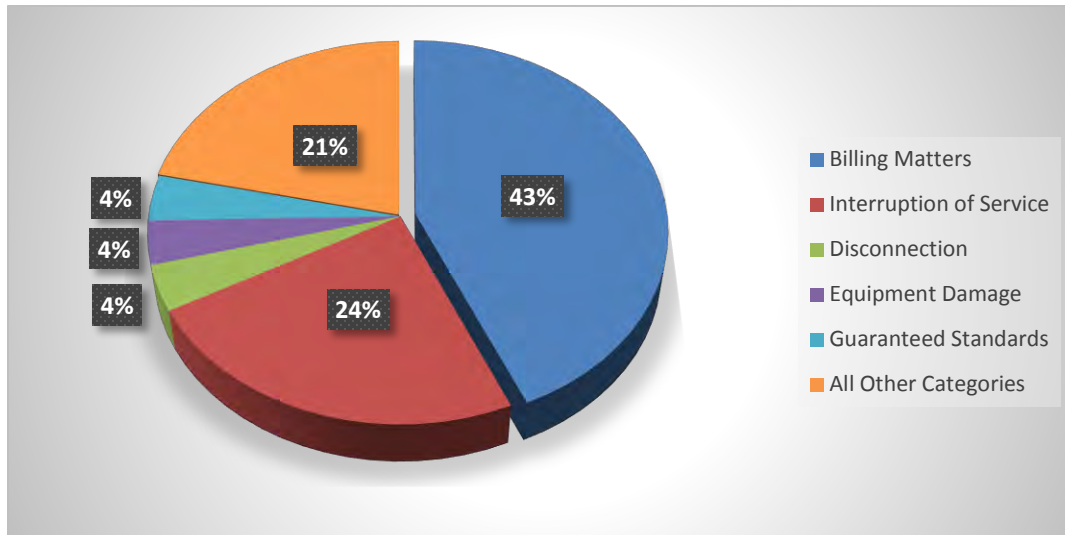
Table 2: Responses within Standard (30 business days)

<i>Quarters</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	50%	22%
<i>April – June</i>	30%	62%
<i>July - September</i>	60%	100%

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

As is shown in Figure 3, the main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to matters of: billing, interruption of service, disconnection, equipment damage, and Guaranteed Standards.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

Billing related matters continued to be the predominant reason for customer contact during the July – September quarter and represented 43% of total contacts received. The billing issues complained about included: adjustments that were applied to customers’ accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

There were 505 billing-related contacts of which JPS and NWC accounted for 231 (or 46%) and 175 (35%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 25 (or 5%) while C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 33 (or 7%) and 24 or (5%) respectively. Billing contacts for small water providers and contacts that were not utility related accounted represented the remaining two percent.

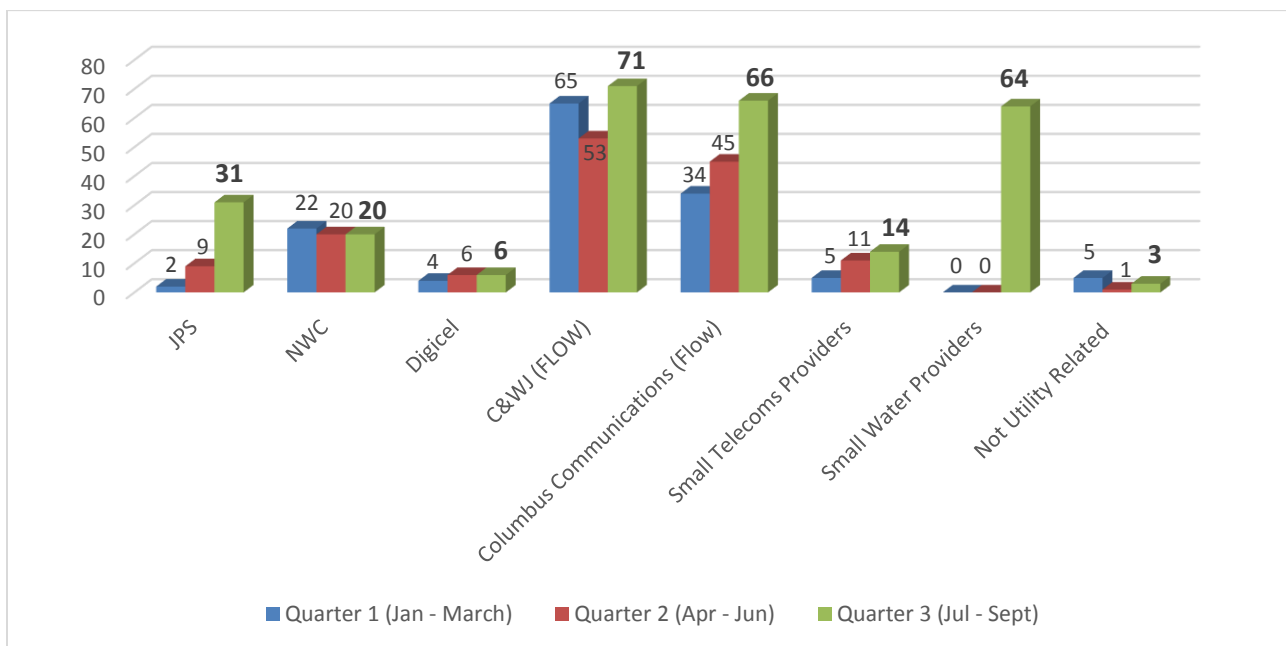
(ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption contacts, at 24%, saw a seven percentage point increase when compared with the preceding quarter. It also represented the highest percentage point movement among the main

reasons for contact, which can be attributed to the significant increase seen in the number of related contacts from DEML customers. Sixty-four (64) contacts, representing 6%, were received from customers of small water provider DEML in relation to service interruption issues. This represents the highest number of contacts received from DEML customers for any reporting period.

However, despite the increase in service interruption contacts for DEML, as is seen in Figure 4, C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number of total contacts at 71 (6%) and 66 (6%) respectively. JPS and NWC accounted for 3% and 2% respectively; while Digicel, Dekal Wireless, and issues not utility service related shared the remaining 1% of service interruption contacts.

Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts



(iii) Disconnection

At 4 % of total contacts, disconnections declined by one percentage point. JPS and NWC each accounted for 1% while all other service providers shared the remaining 2% of disconnection related issues.

(v) Equipment damage

Although equipment damage issues remained at 4% of total contacts when compared to the previous quarter, there was an actual increase for the reporting period from 36 to 43 contacts.

These contacts also represented eleven percent (11%) of contacts specific to the services provided by JPS.

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?

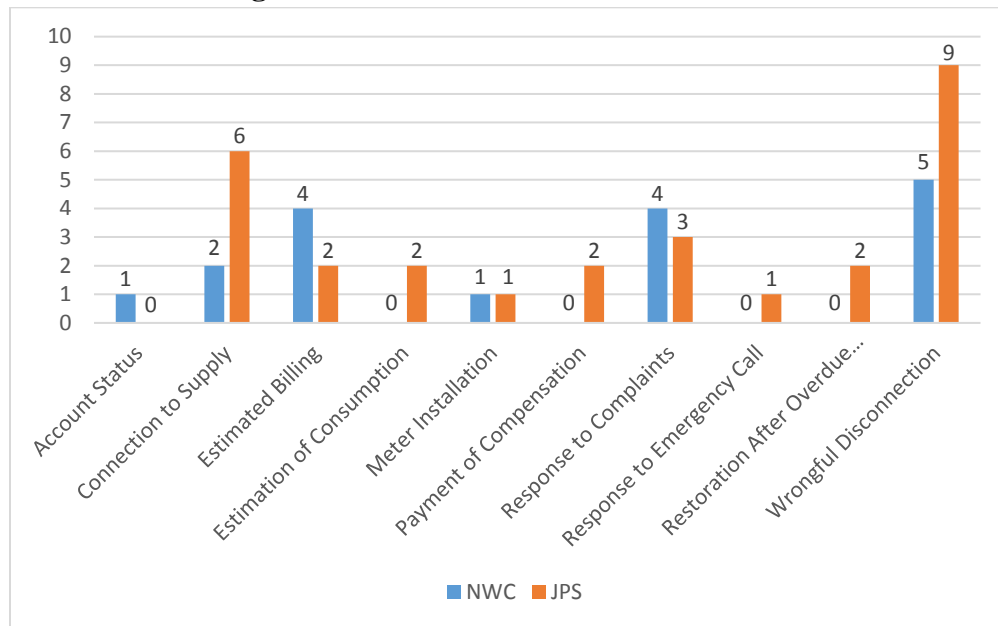
NWC: Compensation for breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract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

In relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards, the CAU received forty-five (45) contacts from customers of the JPS and the NWC. This represented four percent (4%) of total contacts received during the review period and a one percentage point decrease over the preceding quarter. JPS accounted for 28 (or 2%) while the NWC accounted for the remaining 17 (or 2%) of related contacts.

Figure 5 indicates that the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged Guaranteed Standards breaches for JPS related to *Wrongful Disconnection and Connection to Supply*. In the case of the NWC, the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches related to *Payment After Overdue Payments, Estimated Billing and Response to Complaints*.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts

(i) **Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards**

The Guaranteed Standards compliance report from the JPS indicates that a total of 14,425 breaches were committed during the review period. This represents an increase of over 200% in the number of breaches committed when compared to the April - June quarter.

The 14,425 breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$28.2 million, all of which was paid out by way of automatic compensation. Notably, the standard with the highest incidents of breaches was *Estimated Bills*, which restrict the JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates without accruing a penalty.

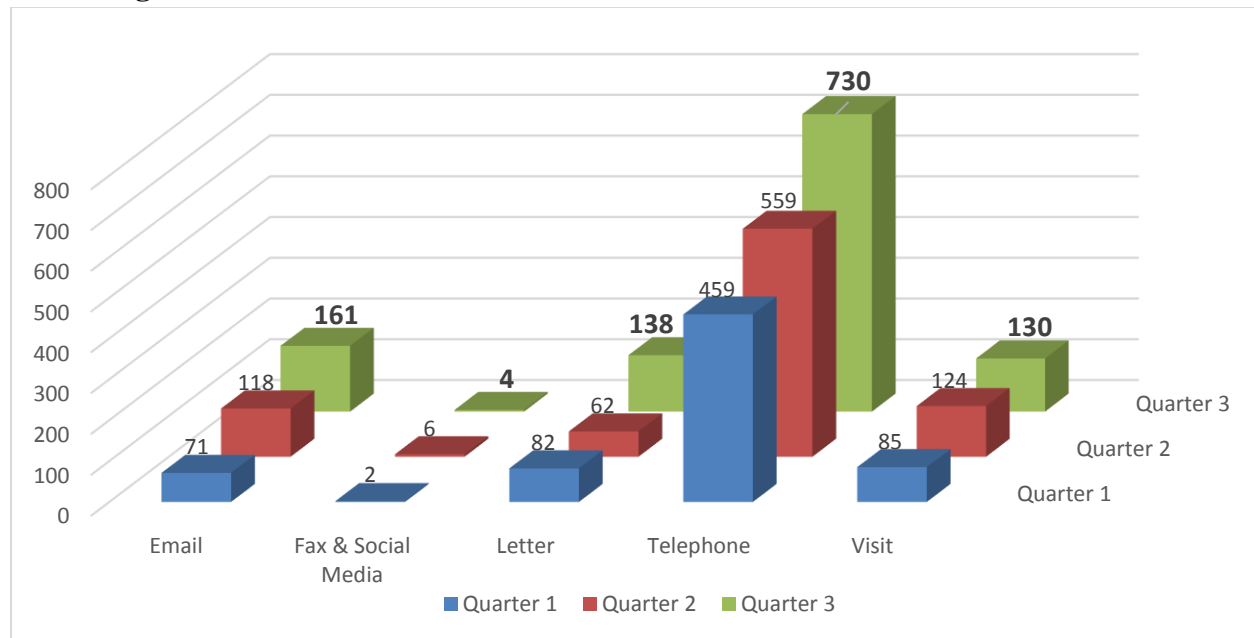
The NWC's compliance report on the Guaranteed Standards scheme for the review period indicated that 424 breaches were committed. These 424 breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$1.33 million while actual payments amounted to \$978,052.2, representing 74% of total potential payments. The payments were by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts.

Similar to the JPS, the standard with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC related to estimated billing; which accounted for 37% of the total breaches.

Chapter 4: Customer Contact Distribution

As is shown in Figure 6, the telephone, at 63% of the total contacts received, continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU. Emails and letters followed at fourteen percent 14% and twelve percent (12%) respectively of total contacts; while visits had a share of eleven percent (11%).

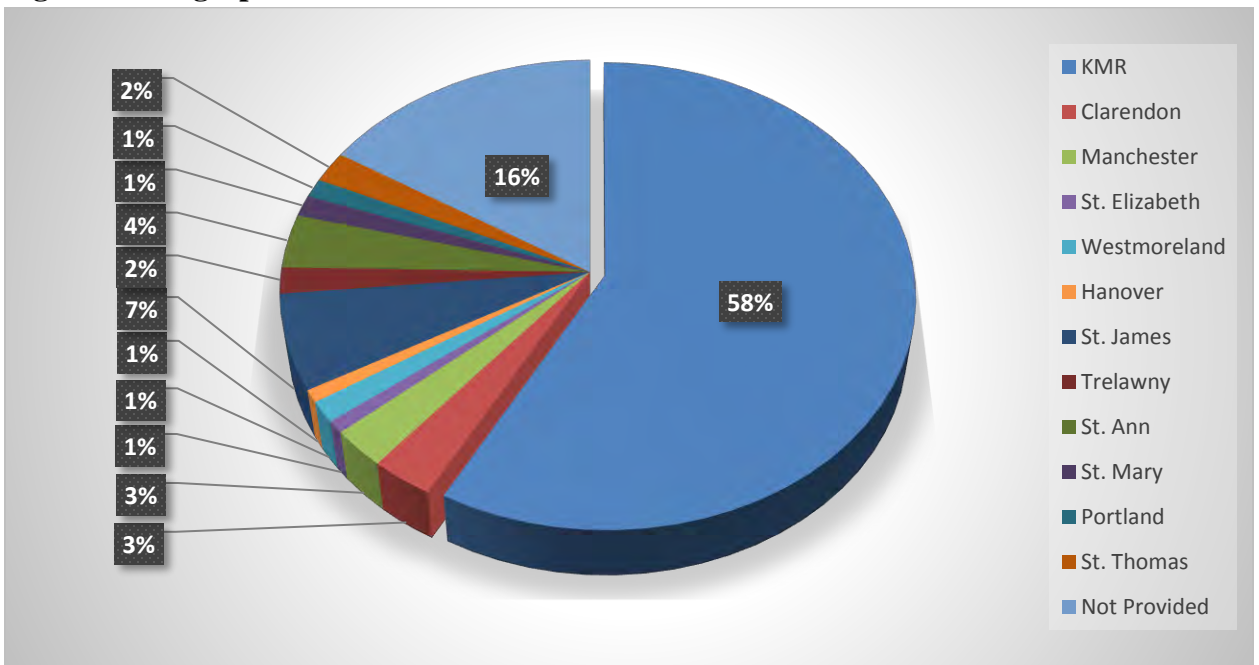
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region at 58%, which is a ten percentage point decline when compared to the preceding April – June quarter (Quarter 2), continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. At 7%, representing a two percentage point increase over Quarter 2, St. James accounted for the second highest number of contacts. St. Ann, Manchester and Clarendon followed with 4% and 3% each respectively, while the remaining parishes each had a share of two percent (2%) or less. Sixteen percent (16%) 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 5: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals ²

During the reporting period, the CAU closed forty-five (45) appeals. Of those closed, seventy-one percent (71%) were in favour of the service providers while sixteen percent (16%) were in favour of the customer. The remaining 13% represents appeals for which a compromise was reached or those that were withdrawn by the customer.

Of the 45 closed appeals, 27 were carried forward from previous periods while the remaining 18 were resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals³

Thirty one (31) appeals remained outstanding at the end of the review period, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, 22 (or 71%) are awaiting responses from the service providers. The remaining 9 (or 29%) are for action to be taken by the OUR and undergoing analysis to decide on the next appropriate action.

Matters relating to billing represent 74% of total outstanding appeals of which JPS and NWC accounts for 16% and 58% respectively. Equipment and property damage appeals, which relate specifically to JPS, also account for 13% of outstanding matters while all other categories for which appeals are outstanding have a share of 3% or less.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Seventeen (17) new appeals were accepted for investigation however, only 12 provider responses were due by the end of the period. Of the 12 responses to be received only 10 (or 83%) were received within the established timeline. A request was made for additional information for one of the responses received thereby leaving nine for closure.

² Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 5.

³ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 6

Of the 9 appeals for which all relevant information was received, six (6) were closed within the 65 business day's timeline while the remaining three are still undergoing analysis. This indicates a resolution rate of 35% for all 17 new appeals and a 67% resolution for those for which all relevant information was received. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity is provided in Table 7.

Chapter 5: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

During the review period, an amount of \$2,371,670.12 was secured for utility customers as a result of our investigation into their appeals. JPS and NWC accounted for 84% and 16% of the credits secured, respectively.

(ii) DEML Service Interruption Issues

Notably, there was a significant increase in the number of contacts received from customers of small water provider Dynamic Environmental Management Limited (DEML) in relation to service interruption. While the actual number of contacts (64) may appear immaterial, it represents the highest number of contacts received in relation to services provided by DEML for any reporting period. For instance, throughout 2015 the highest number of contacts received in relation to DEML was five. For the previous two quarters of 2016, the number of contacts relating to DEML was one and three.

The CAU contacted DEML regarding this issue and was advised that the service interruption was due to failures in the power supply from JPS and the water provider not having any form of alternate power source to operate its pumps. DEML was therefore requested to provide a timeline within which it will acquire alternate sources of power so as to mitigate against a recurrence of service interruption to its customers. While the OUR is aware that DEML is looking into measures to resolve its service interruption issues, the specific timeline for completion of these measures have not yet been received.

List of Tables

Table 3: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities) 2016 July - September

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus Communications		Digicel			Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Digiplay	Internet	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	9	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
(ii)	New Complaints	38	21	3	19	2	10	5	11	1	6	2	64	6	188
(iii)	New Enquires	40	25	0	4	0	5	1	2	0	3	0	1	6	87
(iv)	New Opinions	3	4	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	14
(vi)	New Referrals	310	224	18	95	5	43	49	18	15	17	19	5	39	857
	Total Contacts	400	282	21	119	8	61	55	31	17	26	21	70	52	1163
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	12	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	32
(iv)	Withdrawn by customer/ Time Elapsed	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total Closures	17	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	45
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	4	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	6	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
	Total Outstanding Appeals	10	20	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31

Table 4: Distribution of Contacts by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (Flow)	C&WJ (FLOW)	Dekal Wireless	Small Water Providers (CanCara, DEMLE & NIC)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	
Billing Matters	231	175	25	24	33	1	3	13	505
Broken Main	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Customer Service	1	2	7	6	4	0	0	0	20
Defective Street Lights	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Disconnection	14	11	4	3	9	2	0	2	45
Equipment Damage	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43
Guaranteed Standards	28	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	45
Guaranteed Standards Query	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Health & Safety	5	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	8
Illegal Connections	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Interruption of Service	31	20	6	66	71	14	64	3	275
Irregular Supply	2	13	0	0	0	0	1	0	16
Metering	1	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	10
Number Portability	0	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	8
Other	26	13	18	12	11	1	1	22	104
Payment Arrangement	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Phone Cards	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	6
Poor Service Quality	2	1	1	0	6	0	0	3	13
Property Damage	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Reconnection	1	3	1	0	3	1	0	2	11
Redress not Received	0	3	2	0	2	0	0	1	8
Security Deposit	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Service Connection	1	3	1	0	4	2	0	3	14
Unable to get through to provider	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	400	282	74	116	148	21	70	52	1163

Table 5: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	Small Water Providers	
Billing Matter	11	25	2	38
Disconnection	0	1	0	1
Equipment/Property Damage	5	0	0	5
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	17	26	2	45

Table 6: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	Columbus Communications (FLOW)	
Billing Matters	5	18	0	23
Disconnection	0	0	1	1
Equipment Damage	4	0	0	4
Leak at Meter	0	1	0	1
Metering	0	1	0	1
Property Damage	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	10	20	1	31

Table 7: 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	94%	Of the 17 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	67%	Nine (9) provider responses were received for which six (6) final responses was dispatched within the established timeline.

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- Figure 6: Methods of Contact
- Figure 7: Geographic Distribution of Contacts

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 ⁴
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**.

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.

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 ⁵
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

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.

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. (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	-	The Director General and both Deputy Directors General