
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2016 October - December

Publication Date: March 3, 2017



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. We have normalized the numbers of contacts by expressing them as per the customer base. This 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:

Collette Goode, Consumer Affairs Specialist – Policy

Email: collette.goode@our.org.jm

OR

Yvonne Nicholson – Director, Consumer & Public Affairs

Email: yvonne.nicholson@our.org.jm

Executive Summary

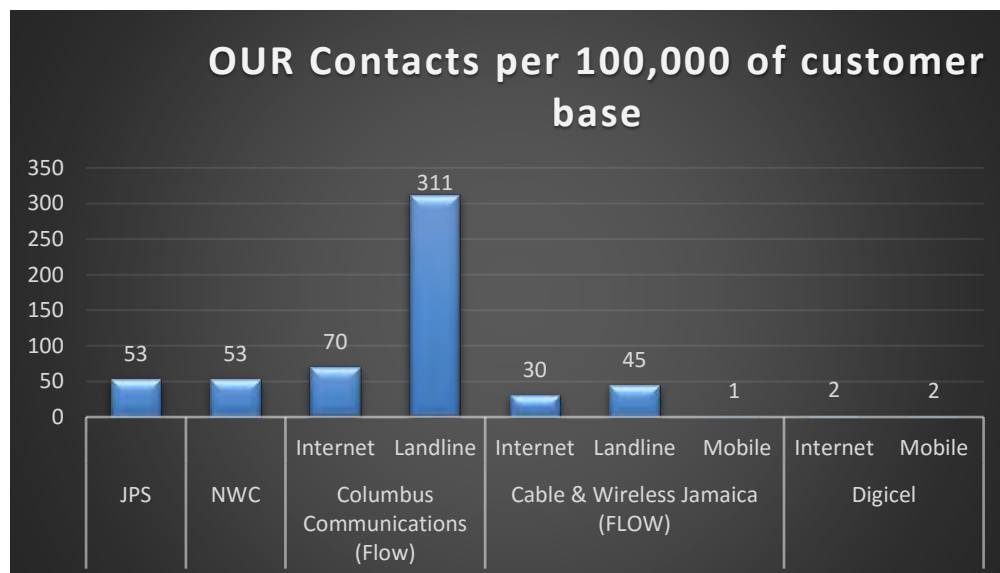
New contacts totaling 1,023 received by the CAU over the 2016 October – December quarter, represent a 12% decrease compared with the preceding quarter. The data indicates a general decrease in contacts, compared with the July - September period, for all areas of major concern.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 327 (32%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 254 (25%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (FLOW) – 139 (14%)
- Columbus Communications (FLOW) – 132 (13%)
- Digicel – 109 (11%)
- 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) – 62 (5%).

Despite JPS (at 327) showing the highest number to total contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for the highest number of contacts - at 311 per 100,000 - in proportion to its landline customer base.

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



¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 4 on page 23

As shown in Table 1, 3,754 contacts were received during 2016 which represents a 46% increase over the prior year. Throughout 2016, the data indicate increases in the main areas of concern as the reasons for contacts to the CAU.

Further, Table 1 indicates that in keeping with the usual trend, JPS and NWC - at 32% and 28% respectively - accounted for the highest number of total contacts received for 2016.

Table 1: Service Provider Contact Summary (January – December 2016)

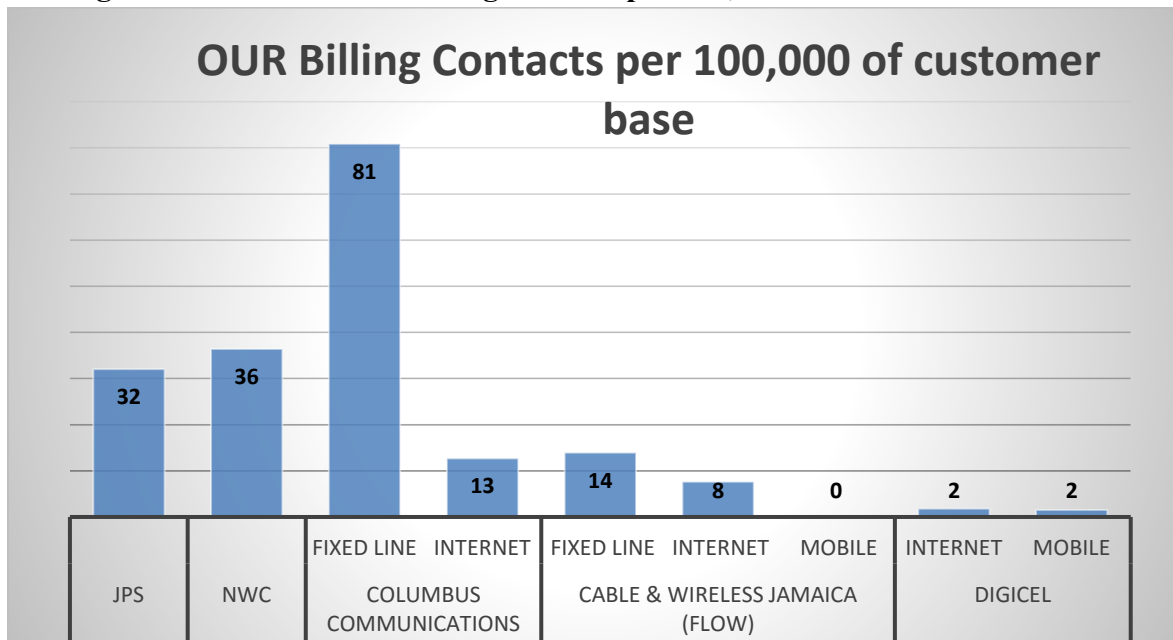
Service Providers	Review Periods				Total
	Jan – Mar	Apr – Jun	Jul – Sept	Oct - Dec	
JPS	205	283	400	327	1,215
NWC	218	281	282	254	1,035
C&WJ (Flow)	142	110	148	139	539
Columbus Communications (Flow)	80	91	116	132	419
Digicel	25	41	74	109	249
Small Water Providers	4	5	70	10	89
Small Telecommunications Providers	7	14	21	18	60
Other/Not Utility Provider Related	<u>18</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>148</u>
TOTAL	699	869	1163	1023	3754

While realizing no change in the number of contacts from the previous period, billing matters remained the dominant reason for persons contacting the CAU. As a percentage of total contacts, the JPS (at 19%) accounted for the highest number of billing related matters with the NWC following at 17%.

Issues relating to service interruption again accounted for the second highest reason for customer contacts, which at 16%, represent a forty-one percent decrease when compared to the preceding period.

As shown in Figure 2, Columbus Communications (Flow) with 81 contacts for its fixed line service, JPS and NWC with 32 and 36 respectively, 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

Twenty-three (23) new appeals were accepted for investigation with JPS and NWC accounting for nine (9) and fourteen (14) respectively. Case letters, were dispatched for twenty-two (22) of the new appeals accepted.

Eight (8) case letters were sent to JPS of which five (5), or 63%, were acknowledged. However, as is seen in Table 1, only four (representing 50%) were received within the established timeline of five business days.

The NWC submitted fourteen acknowledgements for all the case letters sent. As is seen in Table 2, all 14 (representing 100%) of the acknowledgements received were within the established timeline.

In contrast to 2015, the NWC began 2016 with the lowest acknowledgement rate of 33%. However, NWC's significant improvement has resulted in the Commission ending 2016 on a high note, with a 100% acknowledgement rating.

Table 2: 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%
<i>October - December</i>	50%	100%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Of the 8 case letters sent to JPS, responses were due for 6 within the review period. JPS provided five responses (representing 83%) which as is seen in Table 3, were received within the established timeline.

The NWC provided responses to thirteen of the fourteen case letters. However, two of the responses provided were incomplete, thereby resulting in a response rate of 79%. As is shown in Table 3, only nine (or 64%) of the NWC responses were received within the established timeline.

Table 3: Responses within Standard (30 business days)

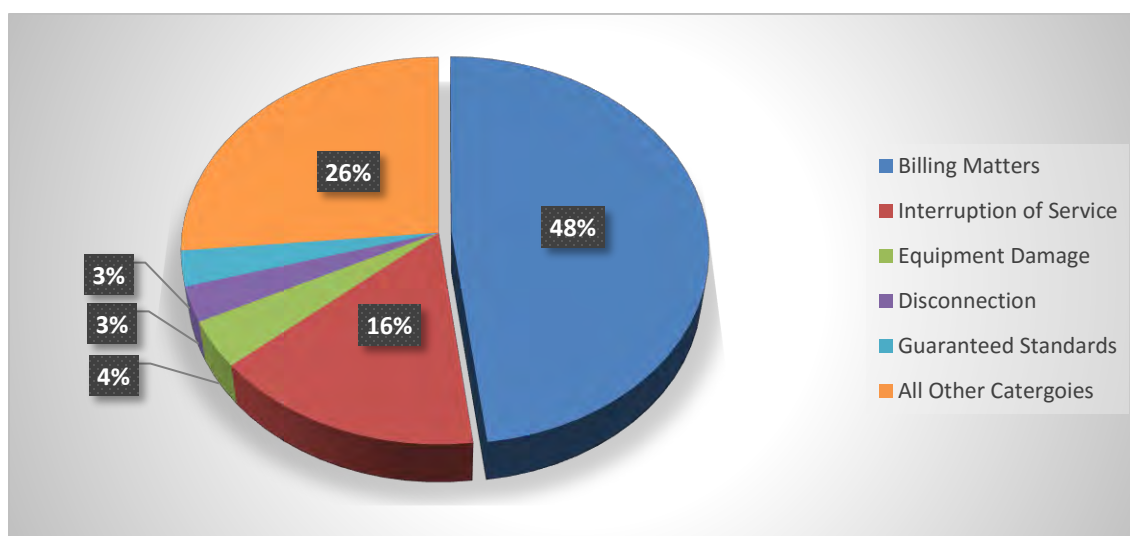
<i>Quarters</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	50%	22%
<i>April – June</i>	30%	62%
<i>July - September</i>	60%	100%
<i>October - December</i>	83%	64%

Throughout 2016, as is seen in Table 3, the rate of responses from both service providers fluctuated. However, the NWC showed the highest level of improvement during 2016 when compared with the previous year.

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, equipment damage, disconnection and the Guaranteed Standards. Details on all contacts distributed per category is in Table 5.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

Similar to the previous three quarters of 2016, billing related matters continued to be the predominant reason for customer contact during the October – December quarter and represented 48% 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 during the period. JPS and NWC accounted for 198 (19%) and 173 (17%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 57 (5%) while C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 40 (4%) and 32 (3%) respectively.

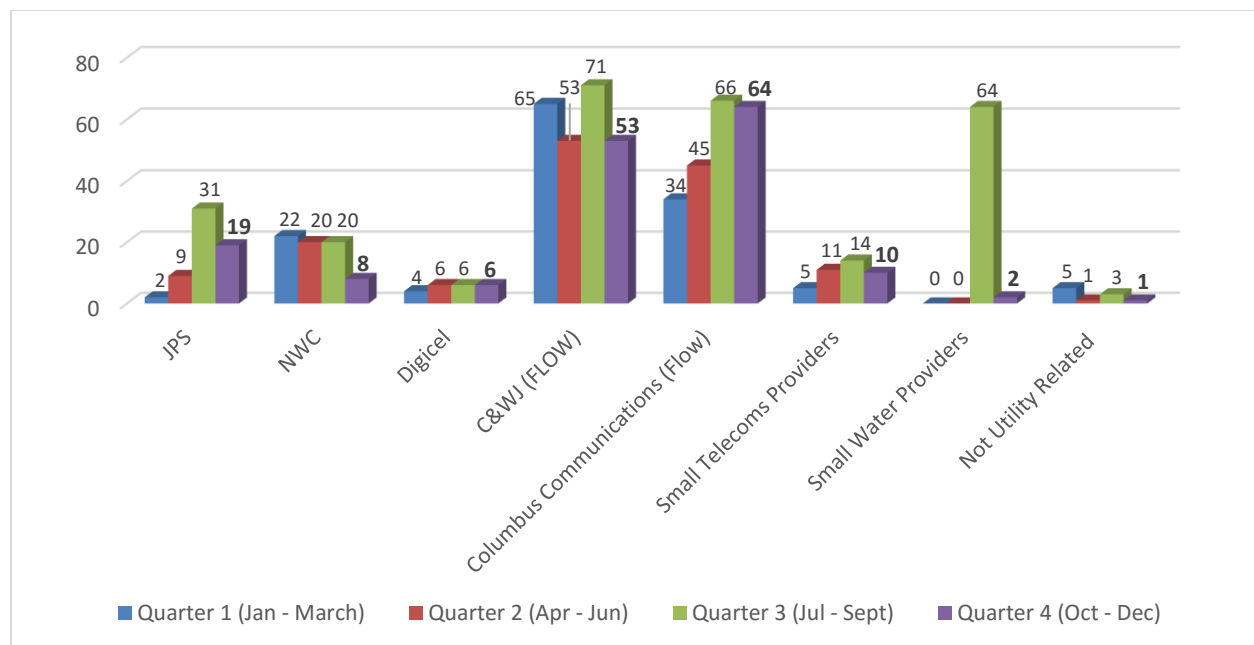
For 2016, billing matters represented 47% of total contacts received, which is a two percentage point decrease in similar contacts for 2015. Details of the total contacts received throughout 2016 is shown in Table 6.

(ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption contacts, at 16%, saw an eight percentage point decline when compared with the preceding quarter. This decrease in the number of service interruption contacts can be attributed to the noted reduction in related contacts from DEML customers. Only two (2) contacts were received from customers of DEML compared to the 64 received in the previous quarter.

As is seen in Figure 4, C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (FLOW) with 64 (or 6%) and 53 (or 5%) contacts respectively, continue to account for the highest number of total contacts in relation to service interruption issues. JPS accounted for 2% while NWC, Digicel, and Dekal Wireless each had a share of 1%.

Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts



Throughout 2016, service interruption issues, at 19%, represented the second highest reason for customer contacts to the CAU. This follows the trend of the previous year and indicates a one percentage point increase in similar contacts over 2015.

(iii) Disconnection

At 3 % of total contacts, disconnections declined by one percentage point when compared with the preceding quarter. JPS and NWC each accounted for 1% while all other service providers shared the remaining 1% of disconnection related issues.

(v) Equipment damage

Equipment damage issues remained at 4% of total contacts in keeping with the previous quarter. However, the actual number of contacts decrease to 36 from the 43 received in the previous reporting period. These contacts also represented eleven percent (11%) of contacts specific to the 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 affected customer is entitled to compensation which is applied as a credit to the account.

(ii) How are customers compensated?

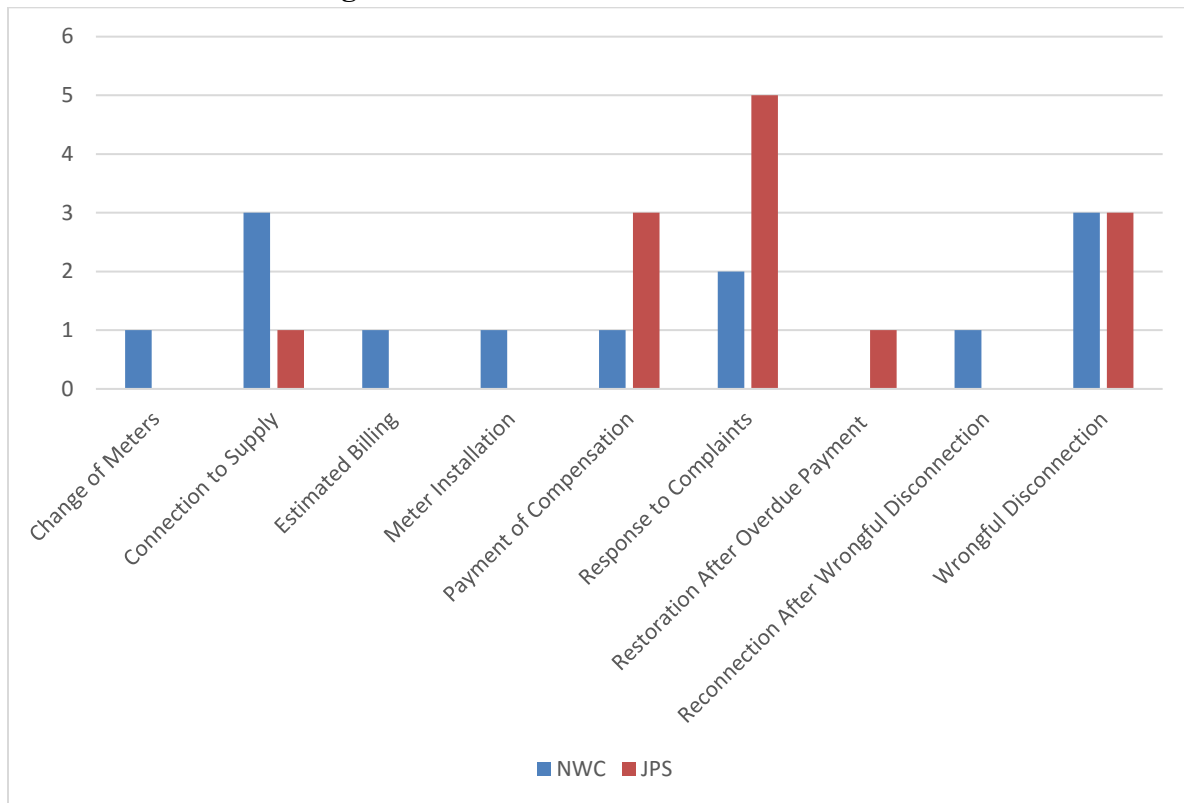
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract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

In relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards, the CAU received twenty-six (26) contacts from customers of the JPS and the NWC. This represented three percent (3%) of total contacts received and a one percentage point decrease over the preceding quarter. JPS and NWC had an equal share of contacts related to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards.

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

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts

(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS:

The Guaranteed Standards compliance report from the JPS indicates that a total of 37,741 breaches were committed during the review period. This represents an increase of over 160% in the number of breaches committed when compared to the July - September quarter.

The 37,741 breaches attracted a potential pay-out of approximately \$73.1 million, all of which was paid by way of automatic compensation. Similar to the preceding quarter, the standard with the highest incidents of breaches was *EGS 7 - Estimated Bills*, which restrict the JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates (where the meter is accessible) without accruing a penalty.

For 2016, the JPS committed a total of 77,350 breaches of the Guaranteed Standards which attracted a potential payout of approximately \$187.8 million. Actual payments amounted to approximately \$117.3 million, which represents 62% of total potential payments made for the year.

Additionally, except for the April – June quarter, *EGS 7 – Estimated Bills* accounted for the highest number of breaches and represented 80% of total breaches committed throughout 2016. The associated compensation for breaches of *EGS 7* represented 72% of payments for the year.

NWC:

The Guaranteed Standards compliance report indicates that 1,132 breaches were committed. This represents an increase of over 160% in the number of breaches committed when compared to the July - September quarter. These breaches attracted a potential pay-out of approximately \$3.5 million, of which approximately \$1.5 million (43%) was paid out by way of automatic compensation.

The standard with the highest incidents of breaches was WGS 4 – Complaint Investigations. This standard stipulates that the NWC must complete its investigations or update the customer within 30 workings days, to avoid incurring a penalty.

During 2016 the NWC committed a total of 2,745 breaches of the Guaranteed Standards which attracted potential compensation of approximately \$8.5 million. Actual payments amounted to approximately \$4.4 million, representing 52% of total potential amounts.

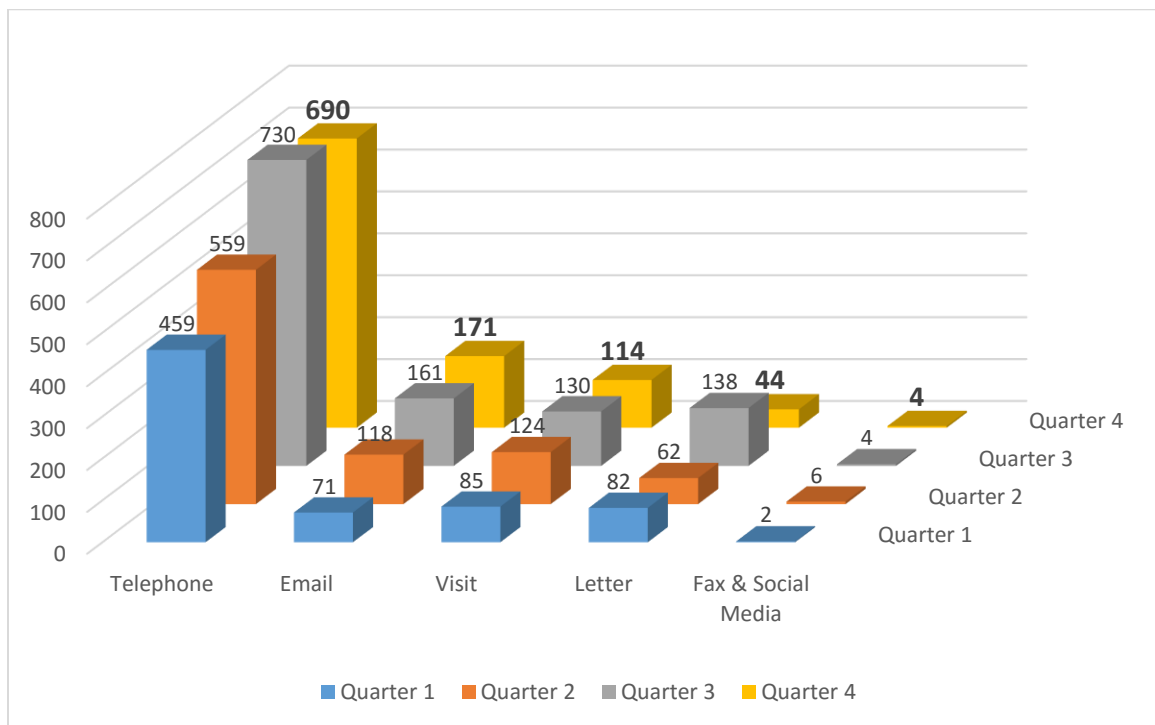
For the NWC, WGS 4b - Complaint Investigations (at 16%); WGS 8 – Repair and Replacement of Meters (at 28%) and WGS 10a - Meter Readings (20%) accounted for the highest incidents of breaches throughout 2016. Combined, these three standards represented 64% of total breaches committed and 62% of total potential compensation.

In spite of the number of breaches committed however, the JPS and NWC attained overall compliance ratings of approximately 91% and 94% on their performance against the Guaranteed Standards, respectively. These compliance ratings indicates that both providers are generally providing the level of service prescribed.

Chapter 4: Customer Contact Distribution

As is shown in Figure 6, the telephone, at 67% of the total contacts received, continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU. Emails and visits followed at sixteen percent (16%) and eleven percent (11%) respectively of total contacts. Letters accounted for the remaining 4% of contacts.

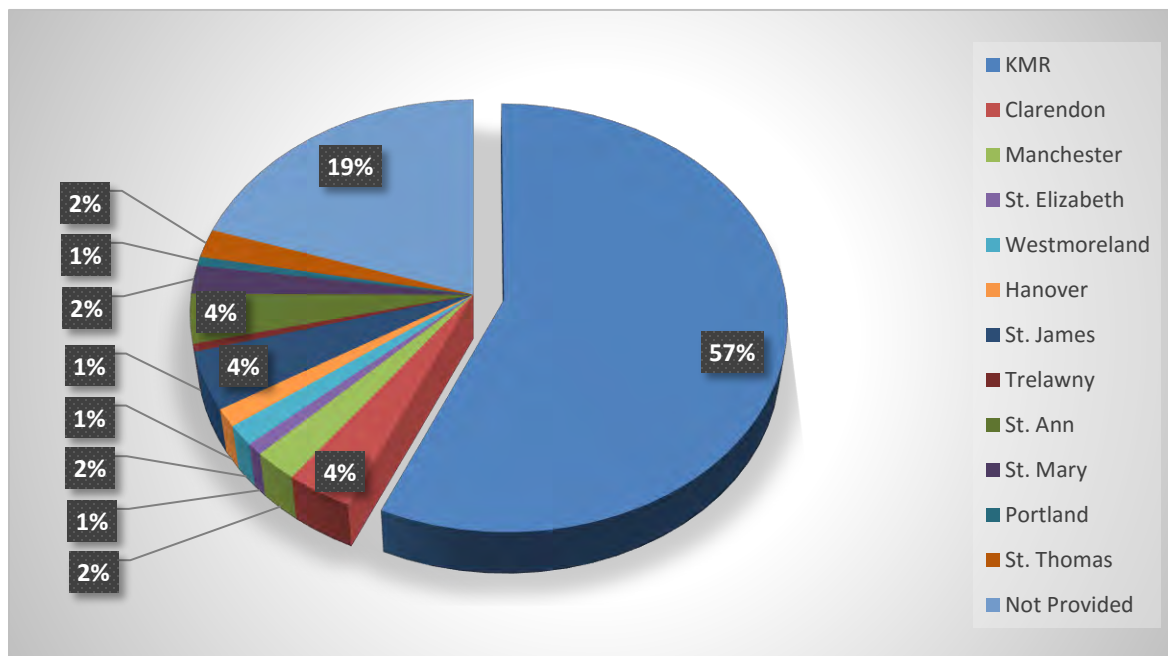
Figure 6: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

The Kingston Metropolitan Region at 57%, which is a one percentage point decline when compared to the preceding July – September quarter, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. James, St. Ann and Clarendon each had a share of 4%. Manchester, St. Mary, St. Thomas and Westmoreland followed with 2% each while the remaining parishes each had a share of 1%. Nineteen (19%) 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



In keeping with the usual trend, the Kingston Metropolitan Region (which incorporates Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Catherine) at 58%, accounted for the highest number of contacts received. St. James followed, at 6%, while Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and St. Ann each accounted for 3% of total contacts. Seventeen percent (17%) of contacts did not provide information on their location/parish or same was not recorded, while all remaining parishes had a share of 2% or less.

Chapter 5: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals ²

The CAU closed thirty-five (35) appeals; of those closed, sixty-three percent (63%) were in favour of the service providers, twenty percent (20%) were mutually resolved while eleven percent (11%) were resolved in favour of the customer. The remaining 6% represent appeals which were outside of our jurisdiction or those that were withdrawn by the customer.

Of the 35 closed appeals, 26 were carried forward from previous periods while 13 were resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals³

Eighteen (18) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, 10 (or 56%) are awaiting responses from the service providers. The remaining 8 (or 44%) are for action to be taken by the OUR and are undergoing analysis to decide on the next appropriate action.

Matters relating to billing represent 61% of total outstanding appeals of which JPS and NWC accounts for 17% and 44% respectively. Equipment and property damage appeals, which relates specifically to JPS, also account for 28% of outstanding matters while all other categories for which appeals are outstanding have a share of 6% or less.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Twenty-three (23) new appeals were accepted for investigation however, only 20 provider responses were due by the end of the period. Sixteen (16) of the 20 responses due were received with 14 (70%) being within the established timeline. Requests for additional information were made for five of the responses received with one provider response remaining outstanding. Consequently, all relevant information was received for only 15 appeals for the review period.

² Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 7

³ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 8

Of these 15 appeals, 14 were closed within the 65 business day's timeline. This indicates a resolution rate of 93% for those new appeals for which all relevant information was received. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key appeals process activity is provided in Table 9.

Chapter 5: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

During the review period, an amount of \$2,162,693.75 was secured for utility customers as a result of our investigation into their appeals. JPS and NWC accounted for 76% and 24% of the credits secured, respectively.

For the calendar year 2016, the total amounts secured for utility consumers was \$6,596,839.55. JPS and NWC accounted for 66% and 33% of total credits respectively with the remaining 1% being secured from C&WJ (FLOW).

(ii) DEML Service Interruption Issues

The number of DEML contacts regarding service interruption issues has decreased significantly (to 2) since the highest number of recorded contacts (64) received from the small water provider in the preceding quarter. In spite of the notable reduction related to service interruption contacts, and in an effort to mitigate against a recurrence of this issue, the CAU convened a meeting with DEML on the 2016 November 17. At that meeting, DEML representatives outlined the challenges that were being experienced and also provided details of the mitigation measures – work which is to be completed by the end of the first quarter in 2017.

(iii) Digicel – DigiPlay Service

The CAU has taken note of the increase in the number of Digicel contacts received. During the first quarter of 2016, Digicel accounted for 25 contacts while 109 were received during the reporting quarter.

For the review period, 52% of contacts from Digicel customers related to issues with the DigiPlay service. The DigiPlay issues complained about included: billing matters, service interruptions, and poor customer service practice. In an effort to better understand the challenges being experienced as well as to discuss possible solutions, these issues will be discussed in the inaugural quarterly meeting with telecommunications providers, starting with Digicel, in 2017 January.

List of Tables

Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities) 2016 October – December

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Small Telecoms	Small Water Provider	OUR/Other (Not Utility)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Digiplay	Internet	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	9	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
(ii)	New Complaints	22	9	2	12	2	5	6	6	2	5	1	5	4	81
(iii)	New Enquires	14	14	0	7	2	1	1	1	0	3	1	2	2	48
(iv)	New Opinions	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(v)	New Recommendation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(vi)	New Referrals	282	215	22	83	8	49	70	50	17	25	16	3	28	868
	Total Contacts	327	254	24	103	12	55	77	57	19	33	18	10	34	1023
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
(iv)	Outside of OUR Jurisdiction	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(v)	Withdrawn by customer/ Time Elapsed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total Closures	14	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
(ii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
	Total Outstanding Appeals	8	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18

Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (Flow)	C&WJ (FLOW)	Dekal Wireless	Small Water Providers (CanCara, DEML & NIC)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	
Billing Matters	198	173	57	32	40	2	1	2	505
Broken Main	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Customer Service	3	1	4	4	6	0	0	0	18
Defective Street Lights	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Disconnection	5	7	7	4	2	0	1	0	26
Equipment Damage	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
Guaranteed Standards	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
Guaranteed Standards Query	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Health & Safety	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Illegal Connections	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Interruption of Service	19	8	6	53	64	10	2	1	163
Irregular Supply	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Metering	5	13	0	0	0	0	1	0	19
Number Portability	0	0	3	2	4	0	0	0	9
Other	15	18	20	35	16	1	3	11	119
Payment Arrangement	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Phone Cards	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	5
Poor Service Quality	6	1	4	0	2	1	0	0	14
Property Damage	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Reconnection	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
Redress not Received	3	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	14
Security Deposit	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Service Connection	1	2	4	6	1	4	0	0	18
Unavailability of Service	0	1	2	6	0	0	0	0	9
Unable to get through to provider	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	327	254	113	148	139	18	10	14	1023

Table 6: Distribution of Contacts January – December 2016

Complaint Category	Review Periods (2016)				
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Curent Quarter (Oct. - Dec.)	Total (Jan - Dec 2016)
Billing Matters	346	396	505	505	1752
Broken Main	2	3	2	2	9
Customer Service	12	7	20	18	57
Defective Street Lights	4	2	2	4	12
Disconnection	28	44	45	26	143
Equipment Damage	16	36	43	36	131
Guaranteed Standards	26	49	45	26	146
Guaranteed Standards Query	0	12	6	5	23
Health & Safety	4	5	8	5	22
Illegal Connections	6	6	5	7	24
Interruption of Service	137	145	275	163	720
Irregular Supply	6	8	16	7	37
Metering	7	8	10	19	44
Number Portability	4	4	8	9	25
Other	57	95	104	119	375
Payment Arrangement	2	2	5	1	10
Phone Cards	3	5	6	5	19
Poor Service Quality	12	6	13	14	45
Property Damage	1	5	5	2	13
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	5	2	1	0	8
Reconnection	3	13	11	7	34
Redress not Received	3	1	8	14	26
Removal of Pole	1	2	0	0	3
Security Deposit	0	0	3	1	4
Service Connection	9	11	14	18	52
Unable to get through to Service Provider	5	2	3	1	11
Unavailability of Service	0	0	0	9	9
Total	699	869	1163	1023	3754

Table 7: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	Small Water Providers	
Billing Matter	7	19	0	26
Disconnection	0	0	0	0
Equipment/Property Damage	7	1	0	7
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	14	21	0	35

Table 8: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Complaint Category	Service Providers			Total
	JPS	NWC	Columbus Communications (FLOW)	
Billing Matters	3	8	0	11
Disconnection	0	0	1	1
Equipment Damage	4	0	0	4
Leak at Meter	0	1	0	1
Metering	0	0	0	0
Property Damage	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	8	9	1	18

Table 9: 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	61%	Of the 23 appeals received, 14 were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	78%	Of the 23 Case Letters sent, 18 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	93%	Fifteen (15) provider responses were received for which fourteen (14) final responses were dispatched and the appeals closed 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

<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