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# Office of Utilities Regulation

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Consumer Affairs Unit

## Quarterly Performance Report

2016 April - June

Publication Date: August 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 providers' 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

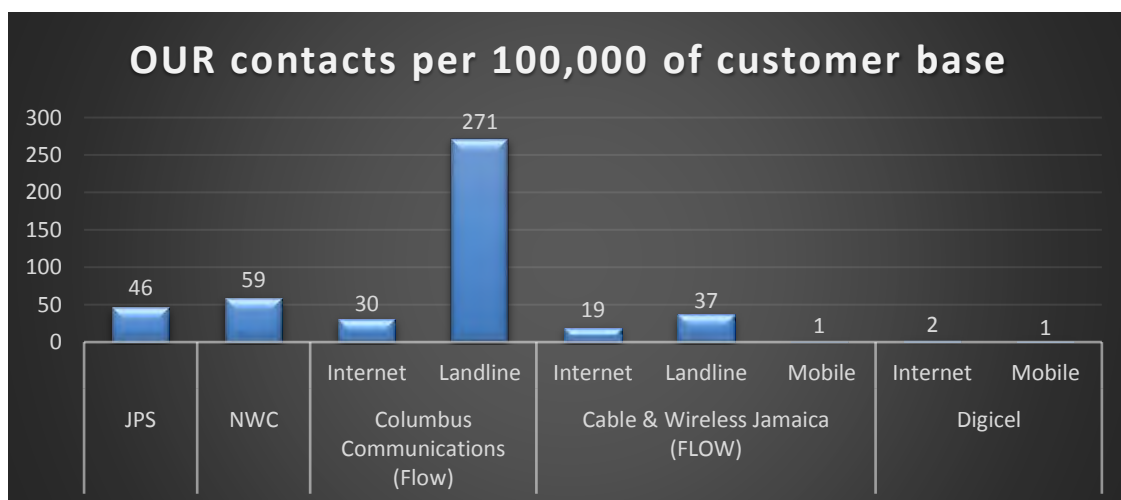
A total of 869 new contacts was received by the CAU during the 2016 April to June quarter. This represents a 24% increase compared with the preceding quarter and follows the trend of the similar period in 2015. The data indicates a general increase in contacts, from the previous period, for all major areas of concern with the highest (of 125%) relating to alleged equipment damage matters for JPS.

The distribution of contacts per service providers were<sup>1</sup>:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 283 (33%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 281 (32%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (FLOW) – 110 (13%)
- Columbus Communications (FLOW) – 91 (10%)
- Digicel – 41 (5%)
- Small water providers CanCara Development Ltd., Dynamic Environmental Management Ltd. (DEML) and the Runaway Bay Water Company; small telecommunications provider Dekal Wireless and OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 44 (7%).

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 271 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**

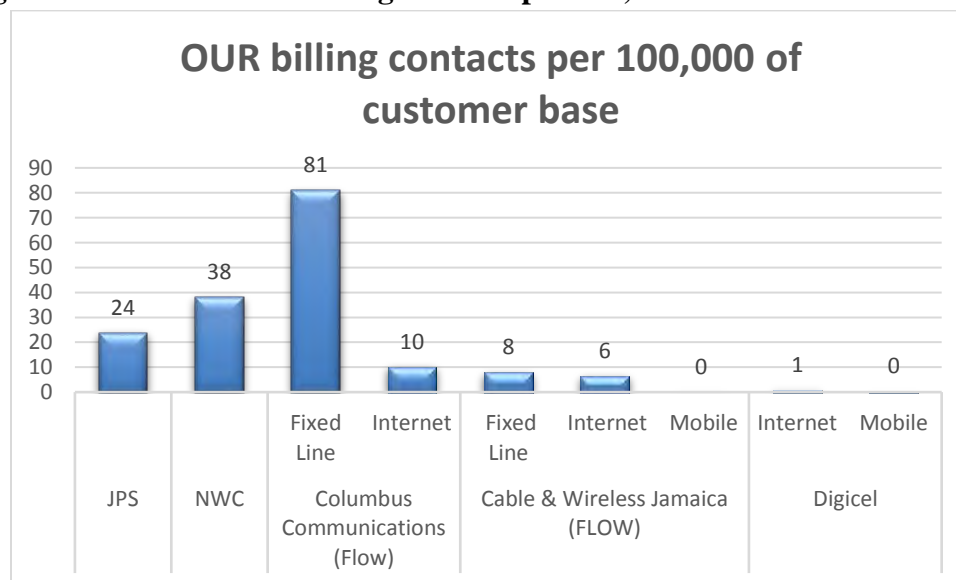


<sup>1</sup> Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 3 on page 19

Although realizing a four percentage point decline, billing matters at 45% of total contacts remained the predominant reason for customer contact to the CAU. As a percentage of total contacts, the NWC at 21% accounted for the highest number of billing related matters with the JPS following at 17%. Service interruption contacts again accounted for the second highest reason for customer contacts, which at 17% represented a three percentage point reduction over the preceding period.

As shown in Figure 2, Columbus Communications (Flow) with 81 contacts for its fixed line service, NWC with 38 and JPS with 24, 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

During the review period, twenty-nine (29) new appeals were accepted for investigation with JPS and NWC accounting for fifteen (15) and fourteen (14) respectively. Ten requests for information, in the form of case letters, were sent to JPS and 13 to the NWC.

As is shown in Table 1, while JPS acknowledged seven of the ten case letters sent, only five (representing 50%) were received within the established five business day's timeline. The NWC acknowledged seven of the thirteen case letters sent, however only three (representing 23%) were received 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%

### (ii) Response to Case Letters

JPS provided responses to four (representing 40%) of the ten case letters that were sent. However, only three (or 30%) of the responses were received within the established timeline and one was incomplete.

There was a marked improvement on the part of the NWC in its response submission over the preceding quarter (see Table 2). This improvement resulted in the NWC being the more responsive service provider. Of the 13 case letters sent, ten (or 77%) responses were received with 8 (62%) being within the established timeline.

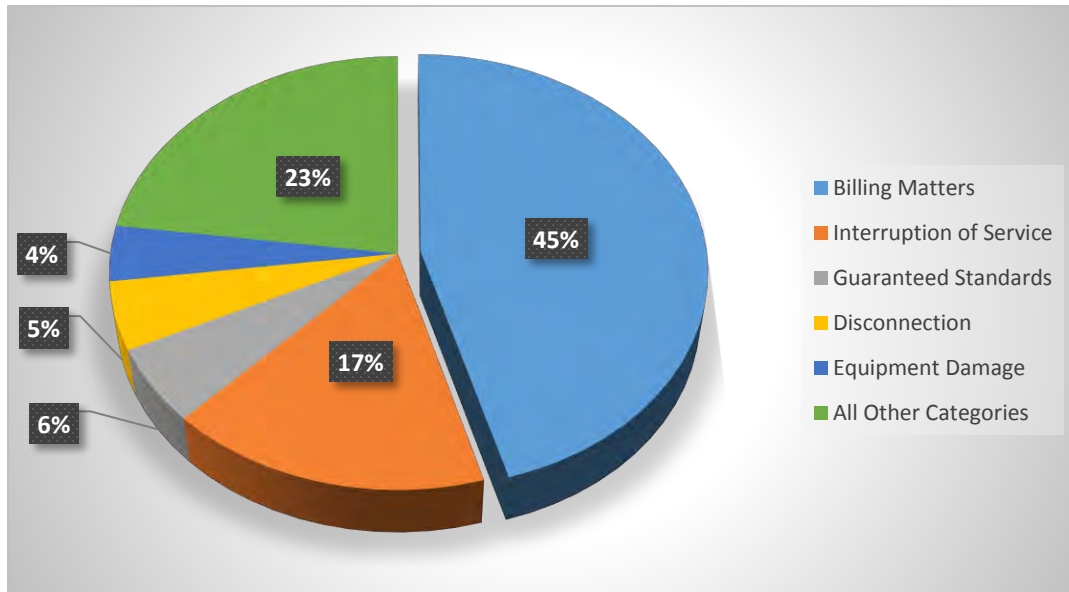
**Table 2: Responses within standard (30 business days)**

<i>Quarters</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	50%	22%
<i>April – June</i>	30%	62%

## 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, service interruption, disconnection, Guaranteed Standards and equipment damage.

**Figure 3: Main Concerns**



### (i) Billing

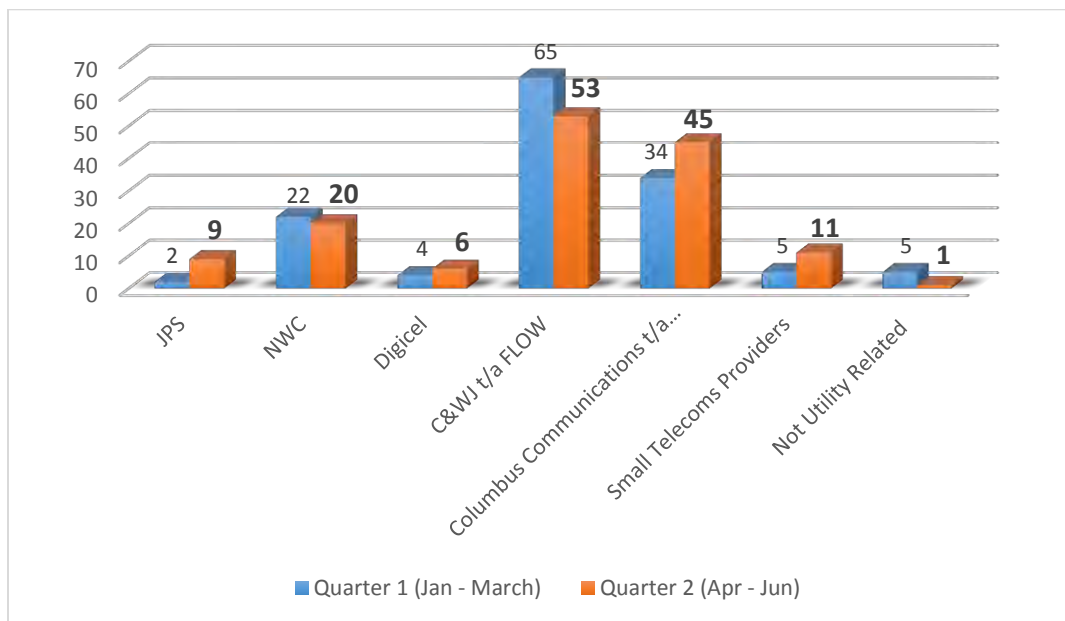
Similar to the previous reporting periods, billing related matters continued to be the main reason for customer contact during the second quarter of 2016. However, at forty-five percent (45%) of total contacts for this quarter, there was four percentage (4%) point decrease in similar contacts made over the preceding period. The billing issues complained about included adjustments that were applied to customers' accounts, billing punctuality, high consumption, disputed charges and estimated billing.

There were 396 billing related contacts of which JPS and NWC accounted for 147 (or 37%) and 181 (46%) respectively. Digicel accounted for 15 (or 4%) while C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 23 (or 6%) and 28 or (7%) respectively. Billing contacts for small water providers and contacts that were not utility related accounted for less than one percent.

### (ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption contacts, at 17%, saw a three percentage point reduction compared with the preceding quarter. As seen in Figure 4, C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number of total contacts at 53 (6%) and 45 (5%) respectively. NWC accounted for 2% while Digicel, Dekal Wireless, JPS and issues not utility service related shared the remaining 3% of service interruption contacts.

**Figure 4: Quarterly service interruption contacts**



### (iii) Disconnection

There was a one percentage point increase in disconnections, which represented five percent (5%) of total contacts received. JPS accounted for 2% while NWC, C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (FLOW) each accounted for 1% of disconnection related issues.

### (v) Equipment damage

Thirty-six (36) new contacts were received in relation to equipment damage issues, accounting for four percent (4%) of total contacts received. The 36 contacts represent a 125% increase over the preceding quarter where 16 related contacts were received. These contacts also represented thirteen percent (13%) 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?

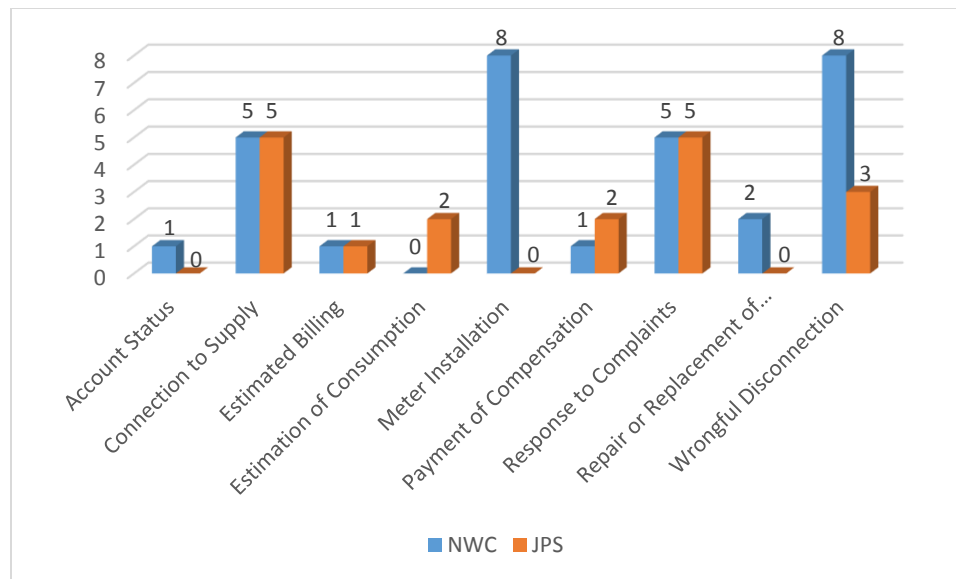
**NWC:** Compensation for breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will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

The CAU received forty-nine (49) 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 and a one percentage point increase over the preceding quarter. JPS accounted for 18 (or 2%) while the NWC accounted for the remaining 31 (or 3%) of related contacts.

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

**Figure 5: Guaranteed standards contacts**

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

The Guaranteed Standards compliance report from the JPS indicates that a total of 3,789 breaches were committed during the review period. This represents an 82% reduction in the number of breaches committed during the January – March quarter.

The 3,789 breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$46.1 million. Actual pay-outs amounted to approximately \$8,213,491.00 representing 18% of total payments with 97% of these payments being by way of automatic compensation.

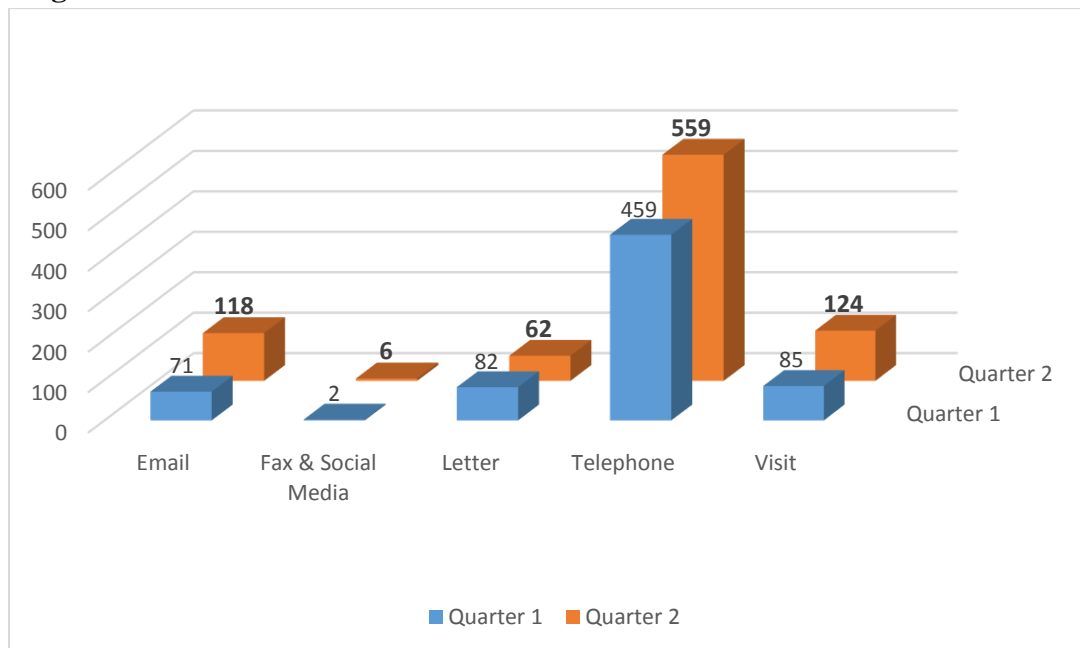
Notably, the standard with the highest incidents of breaches was *Estimation of Consumption*, which prescribes the methodology to be used by JPS in calculating estimated consumption.

The compliance report from the NWC was not received.

## Chapter 4: Customer Contact Distribution

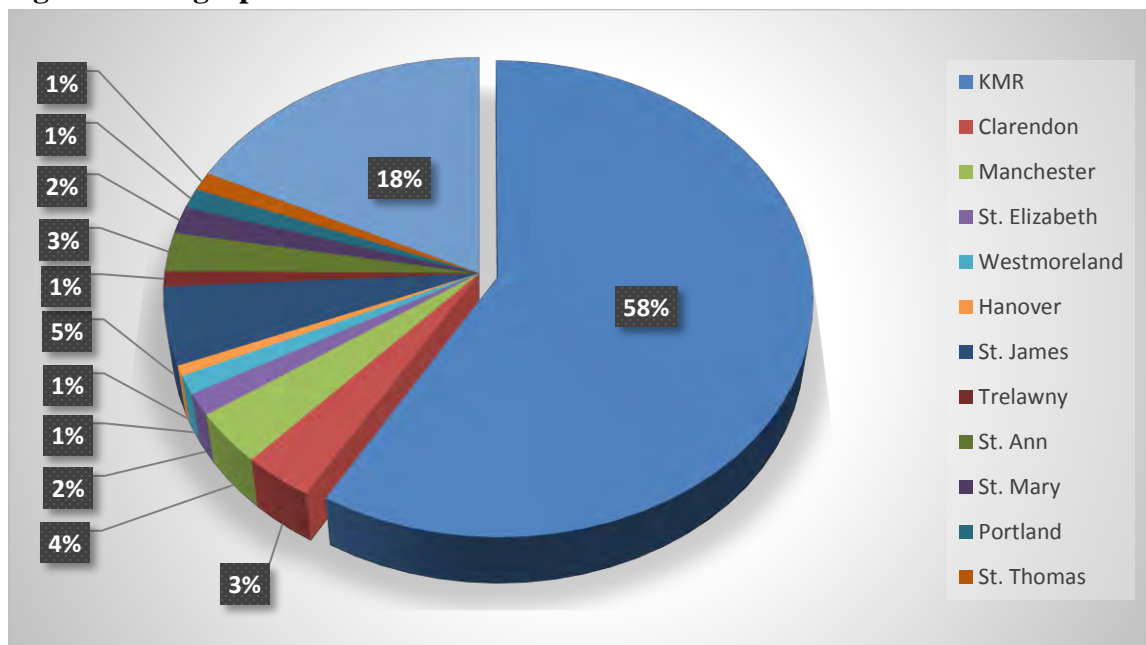
As is shown in Figure 6, the telephone continued to be the most frequently used method for customer contact with the CAU, representing sixty-four percent (64%) of the total contacts received. Emails and visits followed at fourteen percent (14%) each of total contacts. Letters had a share of seven percent (7%) while one percent (1%) of contacts was received via fax and social media.

**Figure 6: Methods of contact**



### Geographical distribution of contacts

At 68%, which is a seven percentage point increase over the first quarter of 2016, the Kingston Metropolitan Region continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. James, at 5% accounted for the second highest number of contacts. Manchester and St. Ann followed with 4% and 3% respectively while the remaining parishes each had a share of two percent (2%) or less. Eighteen (18%) 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 <sup>2</sup>

The CAU closed forty-three (43) appeals during the review period. Of those closed, seventy-seven percent (77%) were in favour of the service providers while twelve percent (12%) were in favour of the customer. The remaining 11% represents appeals for which a compromise was reached or those that were withdrawn by the customer.

Thirty-one (31) of the closed appeals were carried forward from previous periods while the remaining 12 closed appeals were received and resolved within the OUR-established standard of sixty (65) working days.

### (ii) Outstanding Appeals<sup>3</sup>

Fifty-two (52) appeals remained outstanding at the end of the review period, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, 31 (or 60%) are awaiting responses from the service providers. The remaining 21 (or 40%) are for OUR action and are either undergoing analysis or awaiting approval of the final letter to be dispatched to the customer.

Thirteen percent (13%) and sixty-five percent (65%) of the outstanding appeals represent billing complaints from JPS' and NWC's customers, respectively. Small water providers DEML and St. Jago Developers each accounted for 2% of outstanding billing appeals. Equipment and Property Damage appeals, which relates specifically to JPS, also account for 10% of outstanding matters. All other categories for which the appeals are outstanding have a share of 2% or less.

## Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Of the 29 new appeals received during the review period, 14 provider responses were received however, only eleven were within the established timeline and three outside of the timeline. One

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<sup>2</sup> Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 5.

<sup>3</sup> Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 6



of the 14 responses was incomplete and requests for additional information was submitted to NWC for two of the appeals.

All relevant information was received for 12 of the 29 new appeals. Of the 12, nine (9) were closed within the 65 business day's timeline while the remaining three are still undergoing analysis. This indicates a resolution rate of 31% for all 29 new appeals and a 75% 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 \$209,715.07 was secured for utility customers as a result of our investigation into their appeals. NWC accounted for 82% while Columbus Communications (FLOW) accounted for the remaining 18%.

### (ii) OUR/NWC Workshop on Appeals Process

A workshop was convened between the Consumer Affairs Unit (OUR) and Management personnel of the NWC on April 19, 2016. Among the issues discussed at the workshop were: OUR's Appeals' process; the NWC's Case Management and billing processes; issues relating to information requests as well as the timeliness and importance of meeting established information request timelines.

As was previously stated, the NWC has improved significantly in relation to its timely submission of information requested to reviewing customers' appeals and this can be attributed to the success of the workshop.

## List of Tables

Table 3: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities) 2016 April - June

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel		Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Provider	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Internet	Mobile				
<b>A</b>	<b>Contacts for the Quarter</b>													
(i)	New Appeals	15	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
(ii)	New Complaints	21	14	2	7	0	0	3	4	4	1	0	0	56
(iii)	New Enquires	33	17	0	3	0	2	6	1	1	0	0	6	69
(iv)	New Opinions	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
(vi)	New Referrals	214	233	13	71	11	22	58	14	17	13	5	38	709
	<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>869</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Closure/Resolution of Appeals:</b>													
(i)	Mutually Resolved/Compromise	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	8	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
(iv)	Withdrawn by customer	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total Closures</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Total Appeals from Previous Periods:</b>													
	<b>Outstanding Appeals with OUR</b>													
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	7	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	19
(ii)	Final Letter Dispatch	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(iii)	Outstanding Appeals with Utility (Awaiting Responses)	5	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
	<b>Total Outstanding Appeals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 4: Distribution of Contacts by Utilities

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	Columbus Communications (Flow)	C&WJ (FLOW)	Dekal Wireless	Water Providers (CanCar, DEML & Runaway)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	
Billing Matters	147	181	15	28	23	1	1	0	396
Broken Main	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Customer Service	1	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	7
Defective Street Lights	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Disconnection	17	10	1	8	7	0	1	0	44
Equipment Damage	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
Guaranteed Standards	18	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	49
Guaranteed Standards Query	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Health & Safety	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
Illegal Connections	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Interruption of Service	9	20	6	45	53	11	0	1	145
Irregular Supply	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Metering	2	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	8
Number Portability	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Other	16	13	7	4	12	0	1	42	95
Payment Arrangement	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Phone Cards	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	5
Poor Service Quality	1	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	6
Property Damage	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
RAMI Service Connection & CDU	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Reconnection	3	5	3	0	2	0	0	0	13
Redress not Received	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Removal of Pole	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Service Connection	4	1	4	0	1	1	0	0	11
Unable to get through to Service Provider	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>869</b>

**Table 5: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities**

Complaint Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	3	35	38
Equipment Damage	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>

**Table 6: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)**

Complaint Category	Service Providers					Total
	JPS	NWC	Columbus Communications (Flow)	DEML	St. Jago Developers	
Billing Matters	7	34	0	1	1	<b>43</b>
Disconnection	0	1	1	0	0	<b>2</b>
Equipment Damage	3	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
Leak at Meter	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Metering	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Property Damage	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u><b>2</b></u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>

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	72%	
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	70%	Of the 23 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	75%	Twelve provider responses were received for which nine (9) final responses was dispatched within the established timeline.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I : Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts

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

## Appendix 2: Statement on Confidentiality of Telecommunications Service Provider Information

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

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

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

## Appendix 3: Appeals Process

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

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

#### Appendix 4: CAU Internal Performance Standards

<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 <sup>4</sup>
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**.

<sup>4</sup> 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

<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Timelines</u></b>
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 <sup>5</sup>
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 working days
Supervisor's Review of Final Letter	2 working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
<b>Total</b>	<b>65 working days</b>

<sup>5</sup> 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