
Office of Utilities Regulation

Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Customer Contact Centre Standards for the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the National Water Commission

Determination Notice



Date: 2020 October 1

DOCUMENT TITLE AND APPROVAL PAGE

1. DOCUMENT NUMBER: 2022/WAS/005/DET.005

2. DOCUMENT TITLE: Determination Notice – Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Customer Contact Centre Standards for the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the National Water Commission

3. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document sets out the Office’s decisions regarding the Customer Contact Centre standards that are to be measured and reported to the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) by the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) and the National Water Commission (NWC).

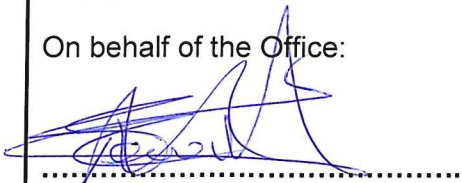
4. ANTECEDENT PUBLICATIONS

Publication Number	Publication Title	Publication Date
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5. Approval

This document is approved by the Office of Utilities Regulation and the decisions therein become effective on ...

On behalf of the Office:



.....
Ansord E. Hewitt
Director-General

DATE: 2020 October 1

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17. **“OUR/Office”** means the Office of Utilities Regulation.
18. **“OUR Act”** means the Office of Utilities Regulation Act.
19. **“SA”** means Speed of Answer.
20. **“Service Providers”** means the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the National Water Commission.
21. **“SL”** means Percentage Service Level.

Acronyms and Definitions

In this Determination Notice, unless the context otherwise requires, the following will have the meaning specified below:

1. **“2013-2018 NWC Rate Determination Notice”** means the National Water Commission Review of Rates – Determination Notice Document No. 2013/WAS/004/DET.003 dated 2013 October 1
2. **“AHT”** means Average Handle Time.
3. **“ATT”** means Average Talk Time.
4. **“CAR”** means Call Abandonment Rate.
5. **“CCR”** means Call Completion Rate.
6. **“CHT”** means Call Handling Time.
7. **“Commission”** and **“NWC”** means National Water Commission
8. **“Consultation Document”** means the Office of Utilities Regulation’s consultation document titled “Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Customer Contact Centre Standards for the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the National Water Commission” (Document No. 2019/WAS/002/CON.0001) dated 2019 February 11.
9. **“CTR”** means Call Transfer Time.
10. **“Customer Contact Centre”** means a Service Provider’s centralized point of contact where customers can, among other things, apply for services and lodge customer complaints.
11. **“EOS”** means Electricity Overall Standards
12. **“FCR”** means First Call Resolution Rate.
13. **“JPS”** means Jamaica Public Service Company Limited
14. **“JPS Licence”** means the Electricity Licence, 2016 dated 2016 January 27.
15. **“KPI”** means Key Performance Indicator.
16. **“LCH”** means Longest Call Hold.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The OUR has recognized the critical role played by Customer Contact Centres (Call Centres) in the service delivered by utility providers, as they are the main channels through which customers interact with these entities. Accordingly, the OUR is of the view that it is important for utility providers to assess their Call Centre performance, with specific focus on determining the level of satisfaction derived by customers from their Call Centre experience.
- 1.2 In keeping with best practices, and in an effort to encourage the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) and the National Water Commission (NWC/Commission) to provide and maintain an acceptable level of service through their Customer Contact Centres, the OUR issued a consultation document to review call centre standards entitled “Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Customer Contact Centre Standards for the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the National Water Commission” (Document No. 2019/WAS/002/CON.0001) dated 2019 February 11 (Consultation Document). The objective of the review was to ensure that emphasis is being placed on improving customer experience and satisfaction, through the standards that are being measured.
- 1.3 The public and stakeholders, including the Business Processing Industry Association, were invited to provide comments on the Consultation Document. However, feedback was only received from JPS and NWC (Service Providers). The feedback received was taken into consideration in arriving at the decisions outlined in this Determination Notice.

SUMMARY OF OFFICE DETERMINATIONS

- 1.4 Having reviewed the comments received from the Service Providers, the Determinations of the Office are set out below.
- 1.5 The Office has taken note of:

- i. JPS's willingness to commence measurement and reporting on Average Talk Time (ATT);
- ii. The NWC's willingness to measure and report on Call Handling Time (CHT); contingent on being allowed the time needed to make the necessary arrangements with its Call Centre service provider; and
- iii. The NWC's willingness to reduce its performance target for Speed of Answer (SA) to twenty (20) seconds; contingent on being allowed the time needed to make the necessary arrangements with its Call Centre service provider.

DETERMINATION 1: Uniformity of Standards and Performance Targets

- 1.1 The Office has determined that JPS shall, within four (4) months of the effective date of this Determination Notice, include performance on Average Talk Time (ATT) in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR.
- 1.2 The Office has determined that JPS and NWC shall continue to include Speed of Answer (SA), Call Abandonment Rate (CAR) and Percentage Service Level (SL) in their quarterly Call Centre report submission.
- 1.3 The Office further determines that, within four (4) months of the date of this Determination Notice, JPS and NWC shall commence measuring and reporting on ATT and CHT respectively, and the NWC shall reduce its SA performance target to twenty (20) seconds.

- 1.6 With regard to the inclusion of First Call Resolution Rate (FCR) in the Call Centre standards to be measured, the Office took note of the main challenges expressed by the Service Providers, which relates to:
- i. Establishing clear definitions for 'resolution' and 'first call resolution' within the context of an electricity and a water utility service provider;
 - ii. The establishment of a prescriptive list of complaints/queries that can be resolved at the Call Centre agent level; and

- iii. The Service Providers' comments relating to the time needed to operationalize the implementation of the measurement of First Call Resolution Rate (FCR).

Determination 2: Inclusion of First Call Resolution Rate (FCR)

- 2.1 The Office has determined that FCR shall be defined as “a customer’s complaint or issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre.”
- 2.2 The Office has determined that JPS and NWC shall, within sixty (60) business days of the effective date of this Determination Notice, submit its list of complaints/queries that can be resolved by the Call Centre agent to the OUR for review.
- 2.3 The Office has determined that it will collaborate with JPS and NWC to decide on the final list of complaints/queries that can be resolved at the first call within sixty (60) business days of receipt of the list mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above.
- 2.4 The Office has determined that FCR will be implemented on a trial phase for three (3) months, immediately following the agreement and approval of the final list of complaint/queries that can be measured under FCR.
- 2.5 The Office has determined that the review of the trial phase will be conducted by JPS and NWC and the report submitted to the OUR within thirty (30) business days of the end of the trial period. The OUR shall also participate in the assessment of the trial phase through the engagement of a focus group.
- 2.6 The Office has determined that it will collaborate with JPS and NWC to address any challenges identified in the FCR trial period within three (3) months of receipt of the Service Providers’ reports and the findings of the focus group activity conducted by the OUR on the trial.
- 2.7 The Office has determined that the measurement and reporting on FCR shall be fully implemented by NWC and JPS within twelve (12) months of the effective date of this Determination Notice.

1.7 The Office has also deemed it necessary to amend the requirements of the Service Providers quarterly report submission. Accordingly, commencing with the first reporting period following the date of this Determination Notice, the Office is requiring that the Service Providers submit:

- (i) A copy of the Call Centre reports submitted by their operators; and
- (ii) The Service Providers' analysis of the Call Centre reports.

Determination 3: Call Centre Reporting Requirement

The Office has determined that the Service Providers shall on a quarterly basis, submit a copy of the Call Centre reports from its operators in addition to the Service Providers analysis of said reports. The amended reporting requirement shall commence the first reporting period following the date of this Determination Notice.

PART 2: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Customer Contact Centres ('Call Centres'), are oftentimes the first point of contact between the customer and a business, and is at the heart of the customer experience for many businesses. A study conducted by the Centre for Customer Driven Quality at Purdue University noted that: *"since a call centre handles more than 70% of all customer-company interactions, it is not too much to say that customer satisfaction with a call centre's services determines the success or failure of a company"*¹.
- 2.2 Customer satisfaction measures how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectations. It is therefore critical for businesses to place emphasis on measuring customer satisfaction so that appropriate continuous improvement measures can be identified and implemented.
- 2.3 The OUR has recognized the need for quality service, which includes the delivery of improved customer service to utility customers. The OUR has also recognized the need to ensure that the Service Providers are able to deliver the quality customer service experience that customers expect through all channels.
- 2.4 The OUR is aware that the Service Providers provide call centre services to their customers, however, their Call Centre operations are presently outsourced. In compliance with the OUR's information requests, the Service Providers submit quarterly reports on the performance of the operations of their call centres. Based on a review of these reports, the OUR identified that both JPS and NWC do not currently measure all the established standards or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that assess customer satisfaction.

¹ Cheong, K., Kim J., & So S. (2008). A Study of Call Centre Management: Relationship between Key Performance Indicators and Customer Satisfaction. European Journal of Social Sciences, Volume (6), 268-269. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kamaruzzaman_Sopian2/publication/282416215_Energy_indicators_for_sustainable_development_in_Malaysia/links/5733efff08ae298602dcf273/Energy-indicators-for-sustainable-development-in-Malaysia.pdf#page=130

- 2.5 Accordingly, in keeping with the provisions of the Office of Utilities Regulation Act (“OUR Act”); the National Water Commission Review of Rates – Determination Notice for the period 2013 - 2018 (2013 -2018 NWC Rate Determination Notice); and the Electricity Licence, 2016 (JPS Licence), the OUR issued the Consultation Document to the public and stakeholders, including the Service Providers and Business Processing Industry Association, inviting comments regarding the enhancement of customer satisfaction, with specific emphasis on Call Centre standards.
- 2.6 The consultation undertaken by the OUR sought to:
- i. Decide on the customer-centric Call Centre KPIs to be measured;
 - ii. Establish a level of uniformity with the customer-centric standards that are measured by the call centres of JPS and NWC; and
 - iii. Determine a target for the percentage of complaints that are to be resolved at the first point of contact.
- 2.7 Taking into account the Consultation Document and the corresponding responses received, this Determination Notice sets out the Office’s Determinations on enhancing customer satisfaction through JPS and NWC Call Centre standards.

PART 3: LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 Pursuant to section 4 of the OUR Act, the Office, as part of its overall functions, regulates prescribed utility services. The First Schedule of the OUR Act provides that the term prescribed utility services includes the generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity, supply or distribution of water, and the provision of sewerage services.
- 3.2 Section 4(1) of the OUR Act provides, in part, as follows:
- “4(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the functions of the Office shall be to –*
- (a) regulate the provision of prescribed utility services by licensees or specified organizations;”*
- 3.3 The OUR therefore regulates the water and sewerage, and the electricity services provided respectively by the NWC and JPS.
- 3.4 Section 4(2)(a) of the OUR Act provides,
- “The Office may, where it considers necessary, give directions to any licensee or specified organization with a view to ensuring that –*
- (a) the needs of the consumers of the services provided by the licensee or specified organization are met;”*
- 3.5 Additionally, section 4(3)(b), of the OUR Act provides,
- “4(3) In the performance of its functions under this Act the Office shall undertake such measures as it considers necessary or desirable to: –*
- (b) protect the interests of consumers in relation to the supply of a prescribed utility service;*

3.6 Specific to the electricity sector, the Electricity Act, 2015 also empowers the OUR to give directions to any licensee with a view to ensuring that the needs of consumers are met. Section 5 of the Electricity Act, 2015 states:

“5. The Office may, where it considers necessary, give directions to any licensee with a view to ensuring that –

(a) the needs of the consumers of the services provided by the Single Buyer are met;

(b) the Single Buyer operates efficiently and in a manner designed to –

(i) protect the health and well-being of users of the service and such elements of the public as would normally be expected to be affected by its operations...”

3.7 The “Single Buyer” as the term is defined in the Electricity Act, 2015, is currently JPS. Condition 17 of the JPS Licence provides that the JPS “shall use all reasonable endeavours to achieve the Guaranteed Standards and Overall Standards”. Currently JPS has two overall standards – EOS 10 and EOS 11 – that address the responsiveness and effectiveness of call centre representatives. EOS 10 requires that ninety percent of calls should be answered within twenty seconds, while the target for the EOS 11 – the percentage of complaints resolved at the first point of contact – is to be established. The OUR is empowered under the JPS Licence to review and modify overall standards in consultation with JPS.

PART 4: SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSES

Overview

- 4.1 The Consultation Document was issued to the public on 2019 February 11 and was also sent via email to selected consumer-centric interest groups and agencies. Responses were to be submitted to the OUR by 2019 March 19 however, requests from the Service Providers were made for extension of time, which extensions were granted. Despite the extension given, comments were only received from JPS and NWC.
- 4.2 Based on the review of the comments received from the Service Providers, the decision was taken to extend the consultation and invite the members of the Business Processing Industry Association to comment on the document. However, no comments were received from the Association.
- 4.3 In the Consultation Document, the OUR acknowledged the standards/KPIs already being measured by the JPS and NWC Call Centres. The OUR noted that the Service Providers were already measuring and reporting on most of the standards that focus on assessment of customer satisfaction, which are: Speed of Answer, Call Abandonment Rate and Percentage Service Level. However, it was noted that there was a variance in the standards being measured by the Call Centres for each Service Provider. Additionally, the Call Centres of neither Service Provider was assessing its performance on one key measure of customer satisfaction, namely, *First Call Resolution*.
- 4.4 Accordingly, the OUR consulted on the specific standards which JPS and NWC will continue to measure and provide reports to the OUR, and proposed that the Service Providers include the First Call Resolution KPI in their Call Centre performance measurements.

JPS's GENERAL COMMENTS

- 4.5 Generally, JPS was of the view that the establishment of service standards and performance targets would assist its efforts to further improve the company's service delivery and overall customer experience. JPS also highlighted the efforts expended and improvements made regarding its service delivery to customers. The company advised that a decision was taken to outsource its Call Centre operations in 2015, which has resulted in an overall service quality rating of over 90% (in 2019) - up from 62% (in 2015) - for its Call Centre performance.

NWC's GENERAL COMMENTS

- 4.6 In its general remarks, the NWC expressed its support for the enhancement of customer satisfaction through the establishment of Call Centre Standards. However, the NWC proposed that the definition of a Call Centre should include "*...an office or location...*" and added that the Call Centre is to be described as a "*centralized point of contact by a Service Provider where customers can, among other things, apply for services, as well as lodge and resolve complaints.*" This suggestion was made on the basis that the Call Centres of the Service Providers offer more than just the general Call Centre services. The NWC also suggested that there should be consultation with the local operators of Call Centre services regarding the KPIs currently being measured, since the Service Providers utilize their services.

OUR's RESPONSE TO SERVICE PROVIDERS' GENERAL COMMENTS

- 4.7 The OUR welcomed the positive response from both Service Providers regarding the enhancement of customer satisfaction through their Call Centre and by extension the KPIs that are measured.

4.8 The OUR has noted the NWC's proposal to amend the definition for a Call Centre, which is used synonymously with Customer Contact Centre. In its proposal, the NWC suggested that the definition of a Call Centre indicate that it is at a centralized location; thereby excluding its Customer Care Offices across the island. The OUR agrees that the NWC's suggestion has merit and has decided to accept same. Accordingly, the Call Centre for the JPS and NWC will be defined as follows:

“Customer Contact Centre means a Service Provider’s centralized point of contact where customers can, among other things, apply for services and lodge customer complaints.”

4.9 Further, as was previously stated, the OUR extended the consultation to the local Call Centre operators however, no response was received.

4.10 Specific to the Consultation Document, the Service Providers' comments and the OUR's responses to the queries raised are as follows:

Question 1(a): The Service Providers were asked to state their views on the proposal to establish uniformity with the selected Call Centre standards and performance targets used.

JPS's COMMENTS

4.12 JPS supported the proposal to establish uniformity of the Call Centre Standards and Performance Targets. JPS however cautioned that the unique nature of the operations of the respective utilities should be taken into consideration when setting the standards and targets.

NWC's COMMENTS

4.13 The NWC, in principle, supported the proposal to establish uniform Call Centre standards and performance targets. The NWC further pointed out that there are some similarities in the expectations of customers of Service Providers that can be used to drive improvements in the quality of customer service that is delivered.

OUR's RESPONSE

4.14 The OUR has taken note of the comments from the Service Providers in regard to establishing uniformity with the Call Centre standards. The OUR in making the determinations with regard to the key performance indicators and standards to be measured and reported on as set out in this Determination Notice, has taken into consideration each licensee's unique circumstances. Further, the OUR is committed to the continued engagement of the Service Providers in the process to establish the standards and performance targets to be measured and reported on.

Question 1(b): JPS was asked whether it would experience challenges regarding reporting on the Average Talk Time.

JPS's COMMENTS

4.15 JPS indicated that it does not anticipate challenges reporting on Average Talk Time (ATT). The company however requested that clarification be provided on the regulatory value of reporting on ATT, given the vastly different reasons about which customers call a utility Call Centre, as opposed to, for example, a company selling a product.

OUR's RESPONSE

- 4.16 Currently, JPS measures Average Handle Time (AHT), which is a combination of Average Talk Time (ATT), Average After Call and Hold Time. JPS's internal standard for AHT is 5 minutes and the reports received since 2018 indicate that the company consistently performs within its established target.
- 4.17 Of the three components that make up AHT, ATT is the only one that involves interaction between the customer and the Call Centre agent. Accordingly, ATT represents the customer's exposure and first point of contact with the company through the Call Centre representative, which will therefore provide a better indication of the customer's satisfaction level relative to the experience with the agent. While the length and number

of times placed on hold may influence the customer's overall experience, there is no interaction with the agent while the customer is on hold, which the AHT standard is seeking to measure. The hold period and the Average After Call component of AHT may or may not involve any further interaction with the customer.

- 4.18 The OUR is therefore interested in knowing the average time of customers' interaction with JPS's Call Centre agents as it would give a clearer indication of the average time spent talking/interacting with the customer. Additionally, the OUR is of the view that JPS's monitoring of the AHT can provide further insights into the customers' experience in relation to their interaction with the Call Centre as well as to indicate whether there may be opportunities for further training of agents in particular areas.

Question 1(c): The NWC was asked whether it would experience challenges in reporting on Call/Average Handle Time?

NWC's COMMENTS

- 4.19 The NWC advised that the measurement of any standard would need to be included in the contractual arrangement with its Call Centre operator. The NWC added that it will explore the reporting of this standard with its Call Centre operator with a view to include same.

Question 1(d): The NWC was also asked whether it would experience challenges in reducing its performance target for Speed of Answer to 20 seconds?

NWC's COMMENTS

- 4.20 The NWC stated that its ability to reduce its Speed of Answer to 20 seconds, down from the current 30 seconds, will be contingent on being allowed the time required to put the necessary arrangements in place with its Call Centre operator, to facilitate the reduction.

OUR's RESPONSE to 1(c) & 1(d)

4.21 Given that the NWC currently outsources its Call Centre operations, the OUR is cognizant that any needed changes may have implications for the contractual arrangements with the NWC's Call Centre operator. The OUR will therefore collaborate with the NWC and allow time for the necessary amendments to be made to the contractual arrangements regarding the changes to the Call Centre standards and performance targets to be measured.

Question 2(a): The Service Providers were asked to state their views in relation to the recommendation to measure First Call Resolution (FCR).

JPS's COMMENTS

4.22 JPS recognized that First Call Resolution (FCR) is a common industry standard, and the company is prepared to begin measuring and reporting on this standard. However, JPS believes the definition of "resolution" must be industry specific, with consideration given to the nature of the business and the issues that are within the power of the Call Centre agent to resolve.

4.23 JPS further recommended that the OUR and Service Providers agree on exactly what FCR means for the respective industries, the necessary requirements and timeline for implementation, prior to setting a performance target for this standard.

NWC's Comments

4.24 The NWC supported the measuring of FCR. The Commission however pointed out that adjustments to the standards/KPIs that are measured will need to be made with its Call Centre operator. Additionally, the NWC stated that when compared to other utilities and industries, FCR is not as easily tracked for water utilities, as some of the complaints received may require a period exceeding 20 working days' as well as the use of channels outside that of the Call Centre to effect resolutions. Further, the NWC pointed out that it is important that there is clarity regarding the meaning of resolution.

Question 2(b): The Service Providers were asked about the challenges/constraints, if any, they envision may be encountered in measuring FCR?

JPS's COMMENTS

- 4.25 JPS indicated that the primary challenge that is envisioned is the absence of a clear definition of what is considered a “resolution”, in light of the nature of the queries and complaints received by the respective Call Centres. Once a consensus on the definition and the categories of calls that can be reasonably expected to be “resolved” on the first call is reached, JPS and its Call Centre partner will work to implement a mechanism for the measurement of such.

NWC's COMMENTS

- 4.26 In response, the NWC reiterated that one challenge it would encounter regarding the measurement and reporting of FCR is the need for its inclusion in the contractual arrangement with its Call Centre operator.

Further, similar to the JPS, the NWC highlighted the challenge of, and the need for a clear definition for “resolution”, given the varying nature of complaints that it receives and those that can be resolved, at the first call, through its Call Centre.

Question 2(c): What measures do you propose the Service Providers employ to mitigate the challenges/constraints identified in (2(b))?

JPS's COMMENTS

- 4.27 JPS proposed that FCR should apply only to the customer queries and complaints that are within the power of the Call Centre agent to effectively resolve, that is, there should be no need for the call to be transferred or escalated, or for repeated calls about the same issue. This would require agreement on a very prescriptive categorization of call types, and comprehensive stakeholder education to ensure customers and team members are aware

of the definition and measurement mechanism. Additionally, it may require the call centre provider to set up separate queues in the Call Centre, in order to track and measure the specific complaints/queries that are being measured. JPS also recommended that there be a transition/trial period in which the agreed structure is implemented and the measures fine-tuned prior to the standard taking effect.

NWC's COMMENTS

4.28 In response, the NWC advised that it would engage with its Call Centre operator on any challenges that may impact the measurement and reporting of FCR.

OUR's Response to Questions 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c)

4.29 In light of the similarities identified in the responses from the Service Providers, the OUR has decided to combine its response to Questions 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c). Firstly, the OUR welcomes the willingness of the Service Providers to include FCR as one of the Call Centre standards to be measured and on which reports will be submitted. We have noted that the Service Providers are willing to commence making the necessary preparations to introduce the measurement of FCR in the Call Centre standards that are used to assess performance, following agreement on the measures to be taken to address the challenges identified.

4.30 The OUR has noted that the main challenge expressed by the Service Providers, relate to establishing clear definitions for what 'resolution' and 'first call resolution' mean, within the context of an electricity and water utility service provider.

4.31 In defining 'resolution', the OUR uses the Oxford Dictionary's definition, which refers to "the action of solving a problem..." Accordingly, as was stated in the Consultation Document, FCR refers to a customer's complaint or issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre.

- 4.32 The OUR recognizes that because of issues that may fall outside the scope of the Call Centre agent to resolve, not all complaints/issues can be said to be resolved at the customer's first point of contact with the Service Providers' Call Centres. Accordingly, the OUR will collaborate with the Service Providers to decide on the categories of complaints/issues that are within the Call Centre agent's capability to resolve.
- 4.33 Note is also taken of JPS's indication of the need to set up discreet queues at the Call Centre, and its suggestion for a transition/trial period, for the implementation of the structure to measure and report on FCR. Similarly, the NWC advised that it would need time to make the necessary arrangements with its Call Centre operator for the inclusion of FCR for measurement. The OUR will allow the required time and is willing to have the Service Providers introduce the measurement of FCR in a trial phase in an effort to identify and resolve any unforeseen challenges.

Question 2(d): Do you agree that the Service Providers should use the proposed *Post-Contact Customer Survey* methodology and measurement for assessing FCR? Please explain.

JPS's Comments

- 4.34 JPS stated that it recognizes that this methodology is widely used in the customer service space. However, the company is of the view that the absence of a clear definition of resolution could pose a challenge to utilize the proposed methodology.
- 4.35 JPS has stated further that in order to use the Post-Contact Customer Survey methodology, it would be necessary to:
- i. Agree on exactly what FCR means and what queries/complaints will be considered for monitoring;
 - ii. Develop a carefully crafted survey/questionnaire that allows for FCR inquiry to be answered correctly; and

iii. Put measures in place for post call contact to be done via Outbound Call campaigns to maintain control of data recorded.

4.36 JPS has proposed that the Quality Assurance option be considered as the methodology to measure FCR. JPS also stated that a detailed plan will need to be developed for how quality assurance will be audited and it may be necessary to have a third party audit the quality assurance scores that are recorded by analysts, to determine if FCR was achieved in line with definition to be used.

NWC's COMMENTS

4.37 While mentioning some of the benefits of the Post-Contact Customer Survey methodology for measuring performance on FCR, the NWC also cited that the absence of a clear definition for “resolution” could pose a significant challenge in its use.

4.38 The NWC also queried whether it should be the Service Providers or an independent agency, identified by the OUR, who should have responsibility for conducting the Post-Contact Customer Survey. In its view, having an independent agency conduct the Post-Contact Customer Survey may increase the objectivity of the process.

OUR's Response

4.39 The OUR has taken note of JPS's response, inclusive of requirements, regarding the use of the Post-Contact Customer Survey methodology for assessing FCR. The OUR has also noted JPS's proposal to use the Quality Assurance methodology instead.

4.40 As was outlined in the Consultation Document, of the three most commonly used methodologies for measuring FCR, the Post-Contact Customer survey is deemed the best approach since it focuses on getting feedback from the customer. The feedback from the customer is thereafter used in the assessment of customer satisfaction levels.

4.41 In relation to the Quality Assurance methodology, the OUR has considered that one of its advantages is the ability of the Quality Assurance Analyst to review calls and make a

decision on whether the issue was resolved on the first call. This methodology also allows the Quality Assurance Analyst to verify the accuracy of the information that was provided to the customer. However, it does not involve getting any feedback from the customer and focuses mainly on the assessment made by the Quality Assurance Analyst on whether or not the issue was resolved at the first call.

- 4.42 Given that the focus of the consultation is to enhance customer satisfaction through the Call Centres, the OUR is of the view that the Post-Contact Survey Methodology is best suited to meet this objective. Further, from the responses to comments provided to Questions 2(a), (b) and (c), the OUR intends to collaborate with the Service Providers to identify the categories of complaints/issues that can be resolved at the Call Centre agent level. Additionally, the OUR recognizes the need to allow the Service Providers time to operationalize the implementation of FCR and will therefore make provisions for same.
- 4.43 The OUR has also noted JPS' and NWC's suggestions for the use of an independent agency, to audit the quality assurance scores, or conduct the Post Contact Customer survey, depending on the measurement methodology used. The OUR has considered the suggestion and is of the view that any activity that is needed to validate the FCR performance measurement should form part of the responsibilities of the respective Call Centre operators used by the Service Providers . Further, we anticipate that the Service Providers will conduct their own due diligence in reviewing the Call Centre reports received from the operators to ensure that they are accurate and credible. The OUR will therefore require the submission of the Call Centre reports and the Service Providers' analysis of those reports. The OUR will however, reserve the right to conduct audits of the measurements and reporting.

Question 2(e): Do you agree with the proposed performance target of 80% for the Service Providers in relation to FCR? Please explain.

JPS's Comments

4.44 JPS has stated that the target for FCR cannot and should not be set until after consultation on the various challenges highlighted. Further, the company stated that a target has to have some relation to the current level of performance of the utilities and therefore cannot be done in isolation. It is for that reason that JPS recommends a transition period of implementation for calibration, after which a target can be set based on the experience of the service providers, plus an aspirational adder. JPS further stated that the performance target of eighty percent (80%) is excessive, based on the current disparate collection of call types reflecting queries/complaints over which the agent has no power to bring a resolution that would be acceptable to the customer at the first point of contact.

NWC's COMMENTS

4.45 In the NWC's view, the eighty percent (80%) performance target is reasonable, only where the complaints/issues received by the Call Centre are able to be resolved at the first call.

OUR's Response

4.46 As indicated by JPS, its overall Call Centre performance has shown marked improvements and is now attaining a performance level of over ninety percent (90%). This improved performance level is evidenced by the JPS's Call Centre report, which is submitted to the OUR quarterly. However, the OUR has noted JPS's comments regarding the establishment of a performance target of eighty percent (80%) for FCR, in that the target is deemed to be excessive. JPS's views are predicated on concerns relating to the capability and/or authority of Call Centre agents to resolve the varying categories of complaints/issues, which is reasonable.

- 4.47 The OUR reiterates its intention to collaborate with the Service Providers with a view to identifying the categories of complaints/issues that can be resolved by Call Centre agents at the first point of contact. By so doing, the OUR is of the view the challenges that would preclude the Service Providers from measuring, assessing and reporting on their FCR performance will be significantly reduced, if not eliminated.
- 4.48 The FCR target of eighty percent (80%) is an international standard. However, the OUR is cognizant of the challenges that may be associated with the introduction of the new standard and that time will be needed for the Service Providers to operationalize the implementation of the FCR measurement. Accordingly, the OUR in collaboration with the Service Providers, is willing to consider an initial reduction of the performance target, which will be discussed throughout the implementation process, and a determination on the applicable performance target made at the end of the trial phase.
- 4.49 Additionally, the OUR will be applying the target determined for FCR as the performance target for JPS' Overall Standard EOS 11 – Effectiveness of Call Centre Representatives. This is being done in keeping with the objectives of the consultation, and the OUR's decision to defer the establishment of a performance target for EOS 11, which would have normally been done as part of the JPS tariff review process, to the determinations arising from this process. Accordingly, the description and target for EOS 11 will be respectively modified and established as is finally determined by the OUR after collaboration with JPS and its assessment of the FCR trial phase.
- 4.50 Note that the review of the measurement and performance targets for FCR and the other aforementioned standards will be included in future rate reviews for JPS and NWC, as may be applicable.

PART 5: OFFICE DETERMINATIONS

- 5.1 The Office has reviewed and considered the comments received from the Service Providers regarding its consultation to enhance customer satisfaction through Call Centre standards. In light of the foregoing review and considerations, the decisions of the Office are outlined below.
- 5.2 The Office has noted the interest and support of the Service Providers to establish uniformity with the Call Centre standards and performance targets. The Office has also noted:
- i. JPS's willingness to commence measuring and reporting on Average Talk Time (ATT);
 - ii. The NWC's willingness to measure and report on Call Handling Time (CHT); contingent on being allowed the time needed to make the necessary arrangements with its Call Centre service provider; and
 - iii. The NWC's willingness to reduce its performance target for Speed of Answer (SA) to twenty (20) seconds; contingent on being allowed the time needed to make the necessary arrangements with its Call Centre service provider.

DETERMINATION 1: Uniformity of Standards and Performance Targets

- 1.1 The Office has determined that JPS shall, within four (4) months of the effective date of this Determination Notice, include performance measurements on ATT in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR.
- 1.2 The Office has determined that JPS and NWC shall continue to include Speed of Answer (SA), Call Abandonment Rate (CAR) and Percentage Service Level (SL) in its quarterly Call Centre report submission.
- 1.3 The Office further determines that, within four (4) months of the date of this Determination Notice, JPS and NWC will commence reporting on ATT and CHT respectively and the NWC shall reduce its SA performance target to twenty (20) seconds.

- 5.3 With regard to the inclusion of First Call Resolution Rate (FCR) in the Call Centre standards to be measured, the Office took note of the main challenge expressed by the Service Providers, which relates to establishing clear definitions for what ‘resolution’ and ‘first call resolution’ mean, within the context of an electric and water utility service provider. The Office has advised of the definition being used, which was borrowed from the Oxford dictionary.
- 5.4 Further, the Office recognizes that not all complaints/issues can be resolved at the customer’s first point of contact with the Service Providers’ Call Centres. Accordingly, the OUR will collaborate with the Service Providers to decide on the categories of complaints/issues that are within the Call Centre agent’s capability to resolve.
- 5.5 Additionally, being mindful of the time and additional resources that will likely be required to operationalize the inclusion of FCR for performance measurement, the Office will allow time, inclusive of a trial period, to implement the measurement and reporting of FCR.

Determination 2: Inclusion of First Call Resolution Rate (FCR)

- 2.1 The Office has determined that FCR shall be defined as “a customer’s complaint or issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre.”
- 2.2 The Office has determined that JPS and NWC shall, within sixty (60) business days of the effective date of this Determination notice, submit its list of complaints/queries that can be resolved by the Call Centre agent to the OUR for review.
- 2.3 The Office has determined that it will collaborate with JPS and NWC to decide on the final list of complaints/queries that can be resolved at the first call within sixty (60) business days of receipt of the list mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above.
- 2.4 The Office has determined that FCR will be implemented on a trial phase for three (3) months, immediately following the agreement and approval of the final list of complaint/queries that can be measured under FCR.
- 2.5 The Office has determined that the review of the trial phase will be conducted by JPS and NWC and the report submitted to the OUR within thirty (30) business days of the end of the trial period. The OUR shall also participate in the assessment of the trial phase through the engagement of a focus group.
- 2.6 The Office has determined that it will collaborate with JPS and NWC to address any challenges identified in the FCR trial period within three (3) months of receipt of the Service Providers’ reports and the findings of the focus group activity conducted by the OUR on the trial.
- 2.7 The Office has determined that the measurement and reporting on FCR shall be fully implemented by NWC and JPS within twelve (12) months of the effective date of this Determination Notice.

- 5.6 The Office has further determined that to assist with its performance monitoring of the Service Providers’ Call Centres, it will amend the requirements of the quarterly report submission. Commencing with the first reporting period following the date of this Determination Notice, the Office is requiring that the Service Providers submit:

- (i) A copy of the Call Centre reports submitted by their operators; and
- (ii) The Service Providers' analysis of the Call Centre reports.

Determination 3: Call Centre Reporting Requirement

The Office has determined that the Service Providers shall on a quarterly basis, submit a copy of the Call Centre reports from its operators in addition to the Service Providers analysis of said reports. The amended reporting requirement shall commence the first reporting period following the date of this Determination Notice.

5.7 For ease of reference, the OUR's determinations regarding the required Call Centre measurements, applicable performance standards and reporting requirements for the JPS and NWC are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Call Centre standards to be measured and reported by JPS and NWC

OUR Determinations		
Standard	JPS shall:	NWC shall:
Average Talk Time (ATT)	Within 4 months of the date of this Determination Notice, measure and report on its performance on ATT in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR	Continue to measure and report on its performance on ATT in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR
Speed of Answer (SA)	Continue to measure and report on its performance on SA in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR and shall continue to have a performance standard for SA of 20 seconds.	Continue to measure and report on its performance on SA in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR, and within four (4) months of the date of this Determination Notice its performance standard for SA shall be set at 20 seconds.
Call Handling Time (CHT)	Continue its measurement and reporting on its performance on	Within 4 months of the date of this Determination Notice, begin to measure and report on its

	CHT in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR	performance on CHT in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR
Percentage Service Level (SL)	Continue to measure and report on its performance on SL in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR	Continue to measure and report on its performance on SL in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR and within four months of the date of this Determination Notice the revised performance standard of 20 seconds for SA shall be used in the calculation and measurement of SL.
Call Abandonment Rate (CAR)	Continue to measure and report on its performance on CAR in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR	Continue to measure and report on its performance on CAR in its quarterly Call Centre report submissions to the OUR
First Call Resolution Rate (FCR)	<p>Within twelve (12) months of the date of this Determination Notice, measure and report on its performance of FCR, as defined by the OUR, after collaboration with JPS and its assessment of a trial period.</p> <p>The performance target for FCR and EOS 11 shall be established by the OUR in consultation with JPS and after its assessment of the said trial period, and shall become effective within twelve (12) months of the date of this Determination Notice.</p>	<p>Within twelve (12) months of the date of this Determination Notice, measure and report on its performance of FCR, as defined by the OUR, after collaboration with NWC, and its assessment of a trial period.</p> <p>The performance target for FCR shall be established by the OUR in consultation with NWC and after its assessment of the said trial period, and shall become effective within twelve (12) months of the date of this Determination Notice.</p>
Call Centre Reporting Requirement (Amended)	JPS shall on a quarterly basis, submit a copy of the Call Centre reports from its operator in addition to its analysis of said reports. The amended reporting requirement shall commence the first reporting period following	NWC shall on a quarterly basis, submit a copy of the Call Centre reports from its operator in addition to its analysis of said reports. The amended reporting requirement shall commence the first reporting period following the date of this Determination Notice.

	the date of this Determination Notice.	
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