



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2021 April – June

Publication Date: 2021 September 24

Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report

Document Number: 2021/GEN/025/QPR.003

Publication Date: 2021 September 24

Table of Contents

The Role and Objectives of the OUR	4
The Consumer and Public Affairs Department.....	4
The Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU)	4
The Intent and Purpose of the Quarterly Performance Report.....	4
Methods of Calculation.....	5
Executive Summary	6
Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness	8
(i) Acknowledgements.....	8
(ii) Response to Case Letters	8
Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns.....	9
(i) Billing	9
(ii) Interruption of Service	9
(iii) Rebate/Refund.....	10
(iv) Poor Service Quality	10
(v) Disconnection	10
(vi) Terms and Conditions of Service.....	10
(i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?	11
(ii) How are customers compensated?	11
(iii) Quarterly report of breaches	11
(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards	12
Chapter 4: Customer Contact Centre/Call Centre Performance Reports	14
Chapter 5: Notification of Planned Outages Report	15
Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution.....	16
Chapter 6: Appeals Performance	17
(i) Closure of Appeals	17
(ii) Outstanding Appeals.....	17
Appeals Process Resolution Rate.....	17
Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights	18
(i) Credits/Compensation.....	18
(ii) Quality of Service Workshop for Private Water & Sewerage Service Providers	18
List of Tables: 2021 April - June	19
Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities).....	19
Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories.....	19
Table 6: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities.....	19
Table 7: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding).....	20
Table 8: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (New Appeals).....	20
List of Figures	20
Appendices.....	21
Appendix I: Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts	21
Appendix 2: Statement on Confidentiality of Telecommunications Service Provider Information ...	22
Appendix 3: Appeals Process	23
Appendix 4: CAU Internal Performance Standards.....	24
Special Appeals.....	24

Appendix 5: Process Timelines for NWC Appeals..... 26
Appendix 6: List of Acronyms..... 28

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, act independently and impartially.

The Consumer and Public Affairs Department

Through the Consumer and Public Affairs (CPA) Department, 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 Department. 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 by aggrieved consumers.

The Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU)

Among other things, the CAU receives, records and processes utility 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 utility 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 which seeks consumer feedback on a range of consumer issues is conducted every 18 - 24 months. Additionally, a 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 the CPA department also funds the activities of the Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities (CACU) which was established to operate as an independent advocacy group providing critical feedback and support for consumer issues.

The Intent and Purpose of the Quarterly Performance Report

The Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) is prepared by the Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) and provides the public with information and analysis about the contacts received from utility

providers. The information includes: the number of customer contacts received over the review period; JPS and NWC's performance against the Guaranteed Standards; utilities' responsiveness to our appeals process; and the performance of the Unit against the Appeals Process timelines.

The QPR is intended to be a fair, reasonable and transparent report of the above-mentioned activities. The statistics for each reporting period is gathered from our Customer Information Database and is reflective of the contacts received from utility consumers island-wide. These contacts are received via various channels, namely: letters, telephone, walk-in, e-mails, fax and social media.

Methods of Calculation

The methods of calculation used include: summation, quarterly and year-on-year comparisons. The resort latterly to normalize the numbers of contacts by expressing this as per the customer base reflects our allowance for fair comparisons. Consequently, the report cites the number of contacts per 100,000 of the service provider's customer base. Even so, it is recognized that the telecommunications sector with its heterogeneous 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

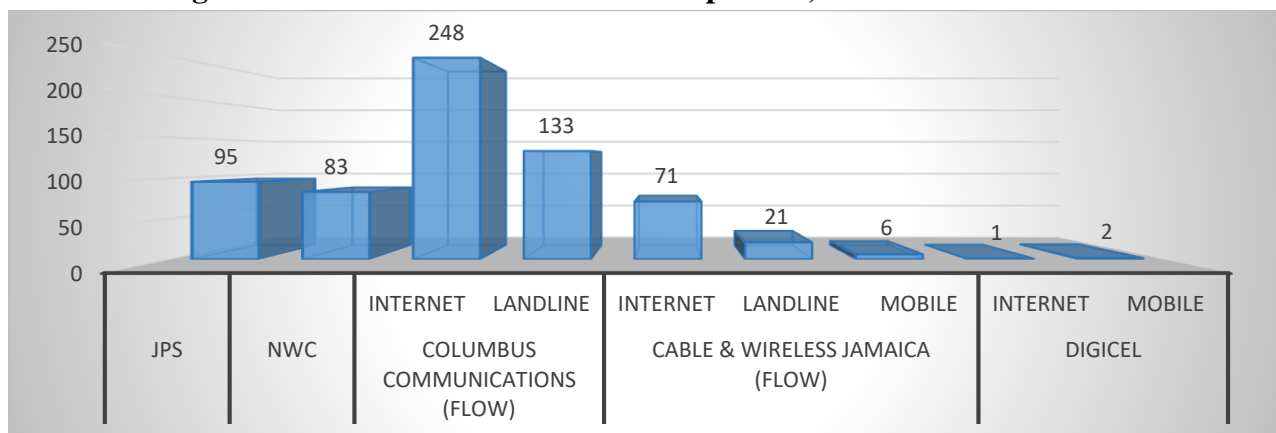
Over the 2021 April – June period, the number of contacts received by the CAU decreased by 2%, to 1,526, when compared with the preceding period. The data shows a mixture of increases and decreases in some categories of customer contact, with the most significant being in the categories of: Guaranteed Standards (58%), Terms and Conditions of Service (48%), Poor Service Quality (39%), *Disconnection* (-31%), Service Interruption (-25%) and *Billing Matters* (-7%).

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service provider¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 632 (41%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 397 (26%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 155 (10%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 229 (15%)
- Digicel – 47 (3%)
- Private water and/or sewerage providers Can-Cara Development Ltd. and St. Jago Hills Development Company Ltd; small telecommunications providers Island Network Ltd. and Xtrinet Ltd. and Other (Not Utility Provider Related) – 66 (5%).

While JPS at 632, accounted for the most contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number – at 248 per 100,000 – in proportion to its internet customer base.

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

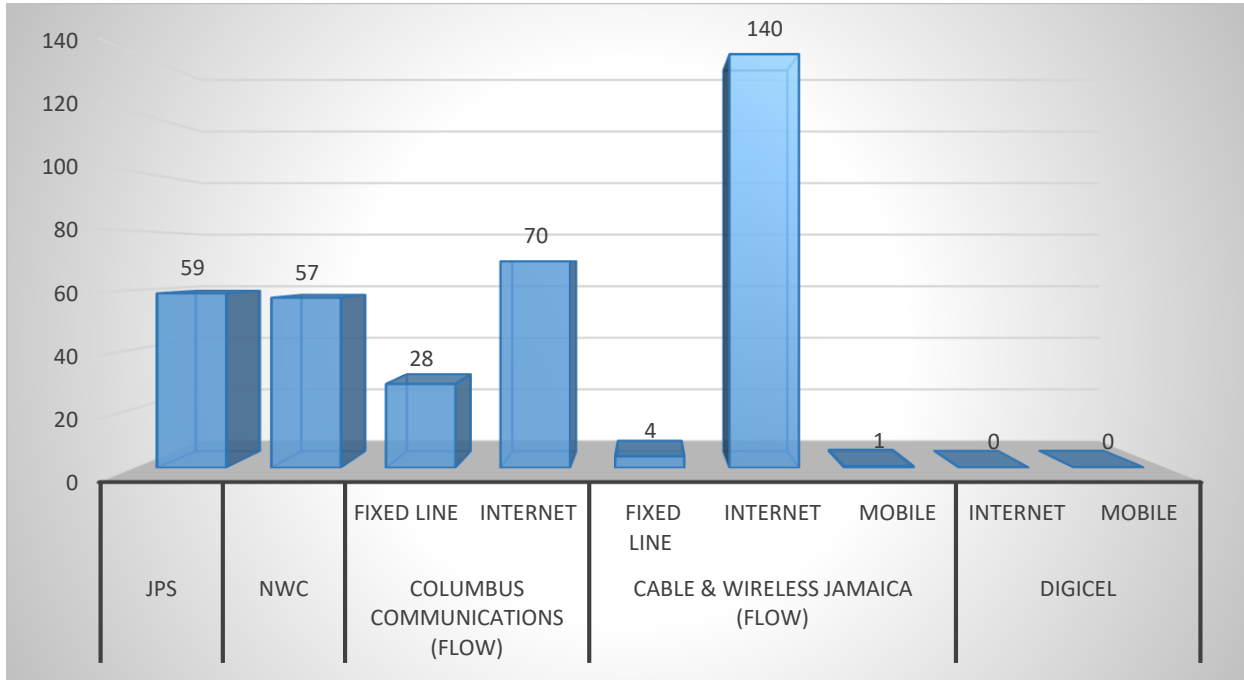


Billing matters, at 50%, continued to be the main reason utility consumers contact the CAU, representing a three-percentage point decrease over the preceding period. JPS and NWC with 390 (26%) and 273 (18%) of contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing related matters.

As is shown in Figure 2, C&WJ (Flow) internet service, at 140, accounted for the highest number of billing related contacts per 100,000 of its customer base. Columbus Communications (Flow) and JPS followed with 70 and 59 contacts per 100,000 of their customer bases respectively.

¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen on Table 4.

Figure 2: Distribution of OUR billing contacts per 100,000 of customer base



In keeping with the usual trend, service interruption issues, at 9% of total contacts, remained the second highest reason for customer contact to the CAU.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

During the April - June period, seven (7) new appeals were accepted for investigation with JPS and NWC accounting for five (5) and two (2) respectively. Requests for information (case letters) were sent for all new appeals accepted.

Based on the established Service Level Agreements (SLAs), both JPS and NWC agreed to acknowledge the OUR's case letters within five (5) business days. As is shown in Table 1, both service providers were compliant with submitting their acknowledgements within the agreed timeline.

Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2021)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	100%	82%
<i>April - June</i>	100%	100%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Service providers are required to provide responses to our case letters within 30 business days. As is seen in Table 2, JPS attained a 75% score as only three (3) of the four (4) responses due, were received within the agreed timeline. The NWC attained a perfect score by submitting the one (1) response that was due within the agreed timeline.

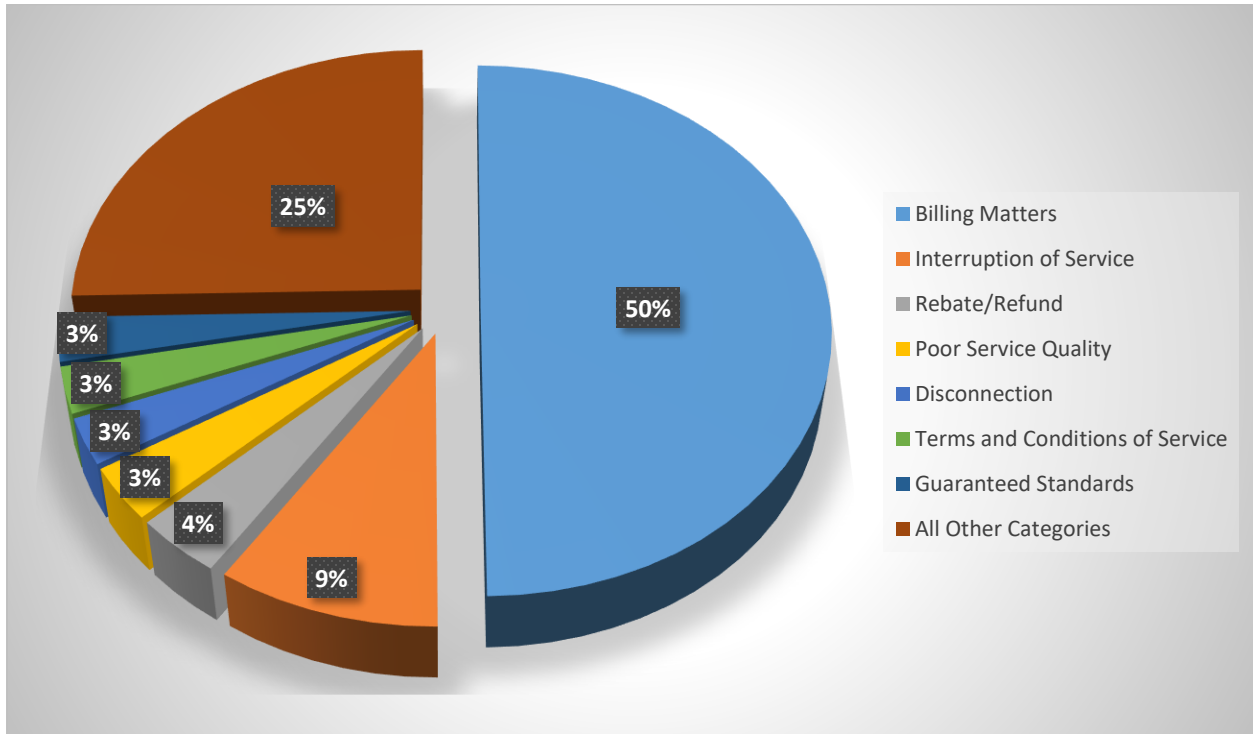
Table 2: Response to case letters within standard (30 business days)

<i>Quarters (2021)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	100%	60%
<i>April - June</i>	75%	100%

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

The main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to: billing, interruption of service, rebate/refund, poor service quality, disconnection, and terms and conditions of service, (Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category are provided in Table 5.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



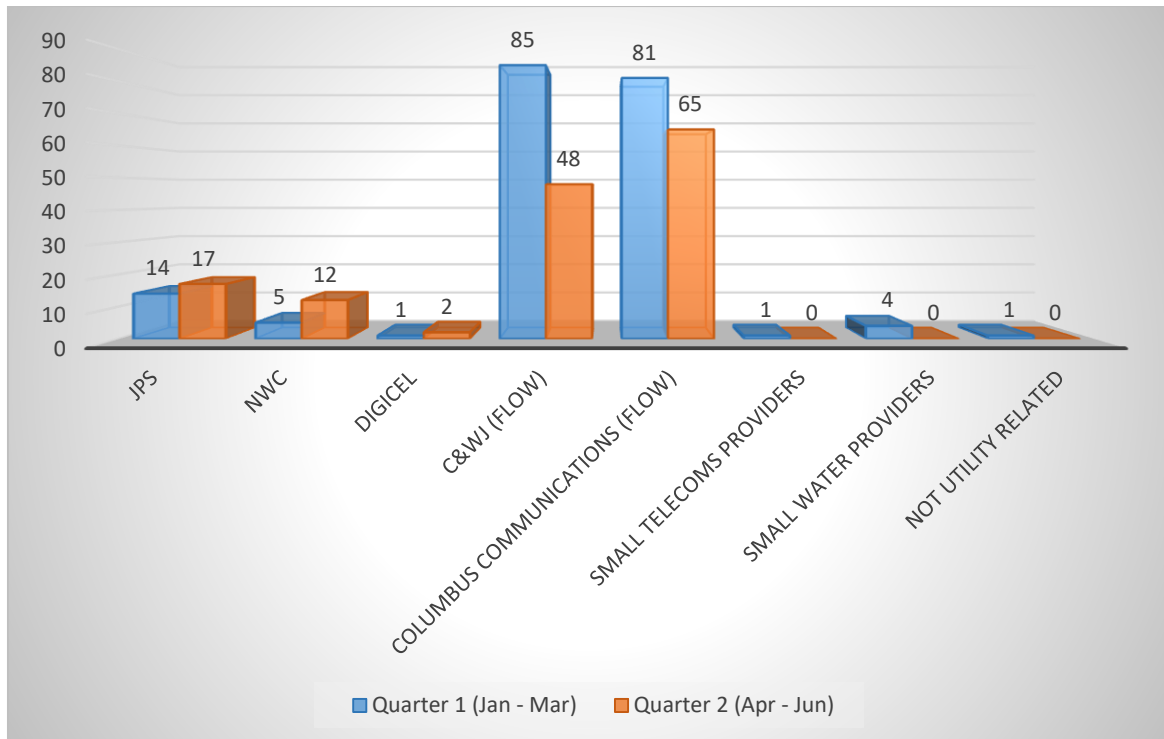
(i) Billing

While realizing a three-percentage point decrease in contacts when compared to the preceding period, billing matters continued to be the main reason for customer contact during the review period, accounting for 50% of total contacts. These matters included high consumption, disputed charges, adjustments to customers' accounts, estimated billing, and billing punctuality.

JPS and NWC continued to account for the most billing contacts with 390 (26%) and 273 (18%) respectively. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 62 (4%) while C&WJ (Flow), Digicel, Private Water Providers and contacts not utility related, accounted for the remaining 36 (2%).

(ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption contacts decreased by three-percentage points, to 9%, when compared with the preceding quarter. As seen in Figure 4, Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ (Flow) with 65 (4%) and 48 (3%) respectively, accounted for the highest number of related contacts. The remaining 2% of service interruption contacts was shared among Digicel, JPS and NWC.

Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts**(iii) Rebate/Refund**

Requests for rebates/refunds saw a one percentage point increase to 4% of total contacts, when compared to the preceding period. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 2% while the remaining 12 was shared among C&WJ (Flow), JPS, NWC, Private Telecommunications Providers and Others/Not Utility Related.

(iv) Poor Service Quality

Contacts related to poor service quality increased by one percentage point to 3%, over the preceding period. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 2% while all other service providers shared the remaining one percent.

(v) Disconnection

Contacts relating to disconnection decreased by one percentage point, to 3%, over the previous period. JPS and NWC each accounted for 1% of disconnection contacts while C&WJ (Flow), Digicel, Private Water/Sewerage Providers and Other/Not Utility Related shared the remaining 1%.

(vi) Terms and Conditions of Service

Contacts about changes made by service providers to the Terms and Conditions of Service (Contract Terms) increased by one percentage point, to 3%, when compared to the preceding period. C&WJ (Flow) and Digicel each had an equal share of 1% while Columbus Communication (Flow), JPS and NWC shared the remaining 1%.

(i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?

The Guaranteed Standards are performance measures that guide the provision of utility services delivered by the NWC, small water providers and the JPS. If the companies fail to honour the agreement, the affected customer is entitled to compensation which is applied as a credit to their utility 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.

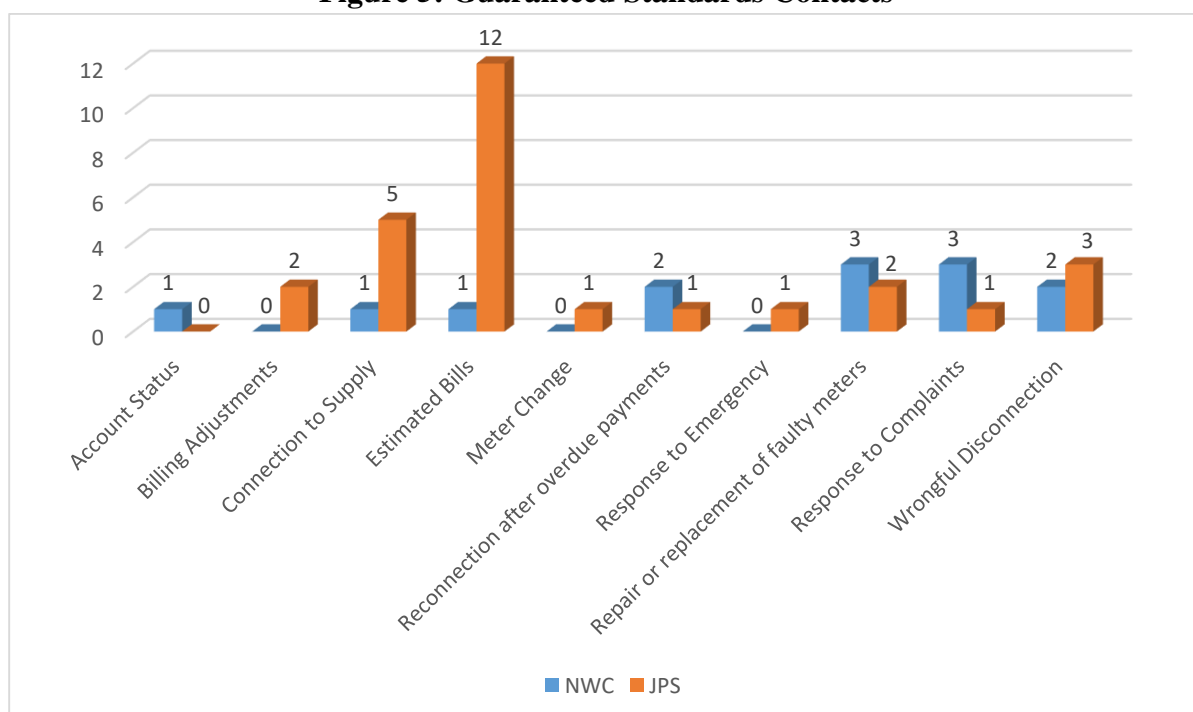
JPS: Residential customers: equivalent to the reconnection fee; Commercial customers: four (4) times the customer charge. Breaches of individual standards will attract compensation of up to eight (8) periods of non-compliance.

(iii) Quarterly report of breaches

Forty-one (41) contacts were received from JPS and NWC customers in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards, representing three percent (3%) of total contacts received. JPS and NWC accounted for twenty-eight (28) and thirteen (13) contacts respectively.

As is seen in Figure 5, *Estimated Bills* and *Connection to Supply* accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards for JPS. For the NWC, *Repair/Replacement of faulty meters* and *Response to Complaints* accounted for the highest incidents in relation to alleged breaches of the Guaranteed Standards.

Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts



The Guaranteed Standards (GS) reports submitted by the JPS and NWC did not reflect the alleged incidents of breaches reported to the OUR. Accordingly, no compensatory payments were made by the service providers in relation to the contacts received by the OUR regarding GS breaches.

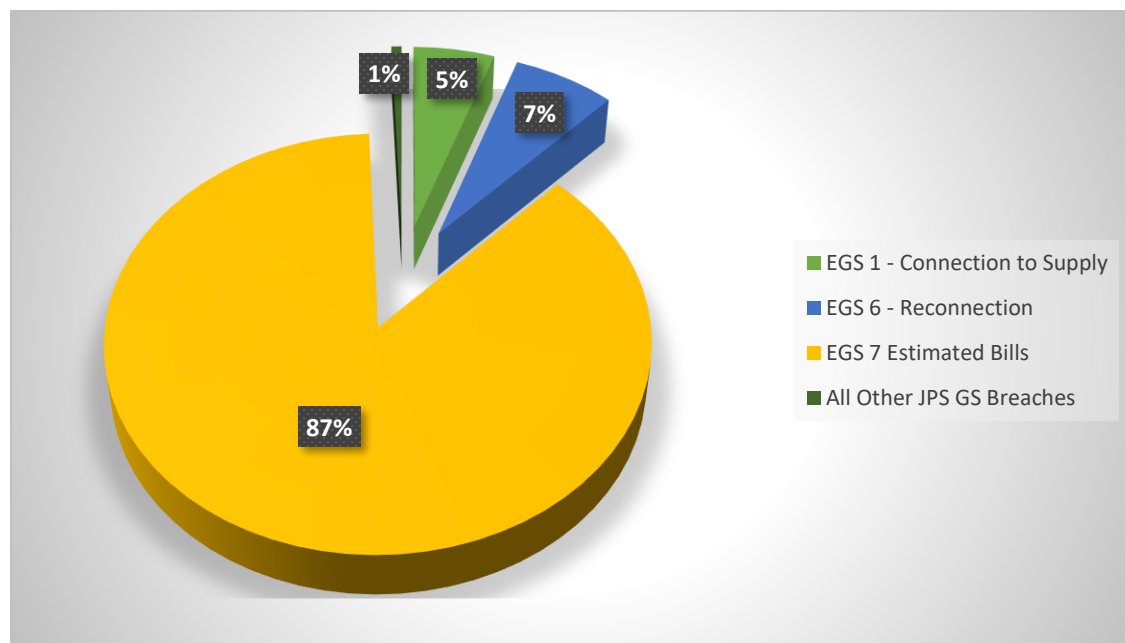
(iv) Utilities' performance on Guaranteed Standards

JPS

JPS's compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards' performance indicated that 13,234 breaches were committed during the April - June quarter; representing a 21% reduction compared with the preceding period. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$29.5 million. However, no compensatory payments were made for the breaches. The OUR is aware that JPS continues to await the response from the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology (MSET) regarding the company's request for MSET to reconsider its decision regarding *force majeure* relief from the Guaranteed Standards, resulting from the island being designated a disaster area due to the impact of Covid-19 since 2020 March.

As is shown in Figure 6, *Estimated Bills* (which restricts JPS from sending more than two consecutive estimates without a penalty), *Reconnection* (which requires that JPS restores supply within 24 hours of payment of overdue amounts) and *Connection to Supply* (which prescribes the time within which JPS is to make a simple connection) accounted for the highest incidents of breaches. These standards accounted for approximately 99% of breaches and compensatory payments, respectively.

Figure 6: JPS Reported GS Breaches



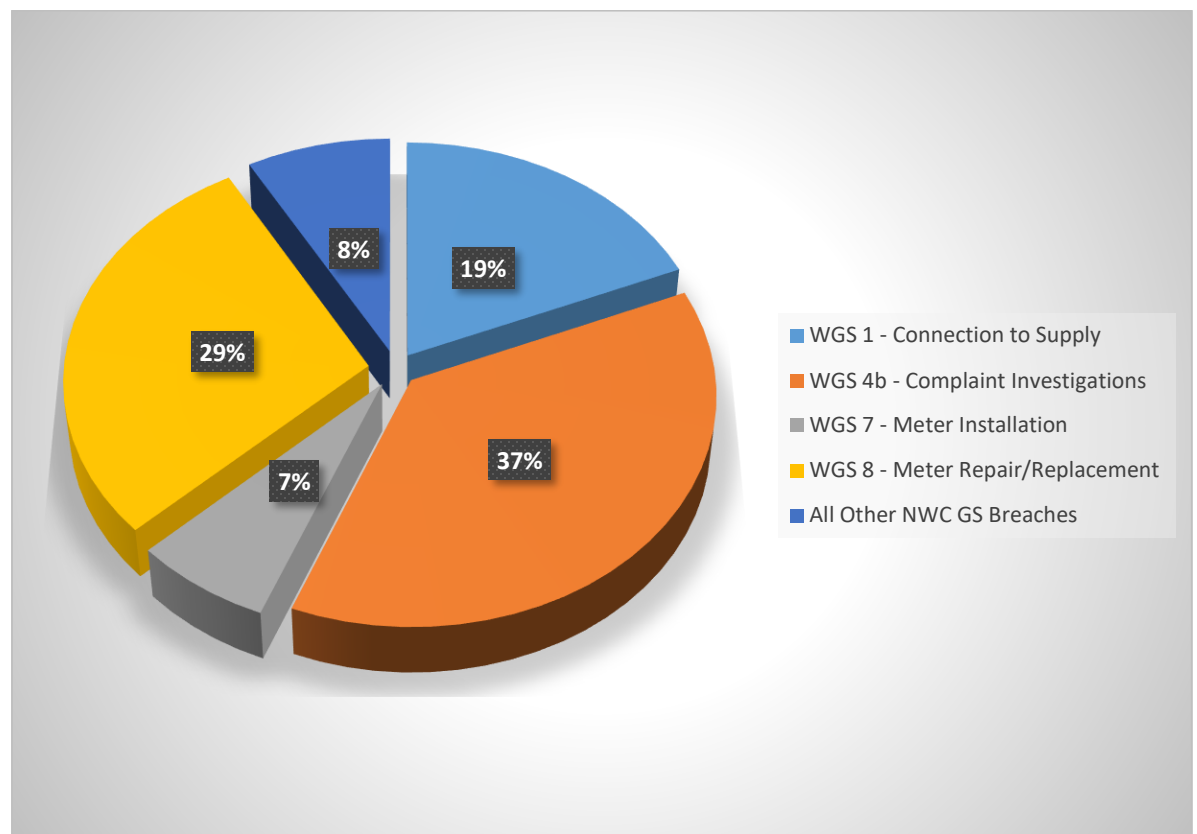
NWC

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report for the review period indicates that 1,212 breaches were committed, representing a 101% increase when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential pay-out of approximately \$4.82 million while actual payments amounted to approximately \$612,724 or 13% of

total potential payments and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 87% of potential payments not made, represented those breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

As shown in Figure 7, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: WGS 4 (b) – Complaint Investigations (which requires that NWC completes investigations and responds or provides an update within 30 working days of receipt of a complaint); WGS 8 - Meter Repair/Replacement (which stipulated that defective meters are to be verified, repaired/replaced within 20 working days); WGS 1 – Access/Service Connection (which requires NWC to connect a new supply within 10 working days) and WGS 7 – Meter Installation (which stipulates that meters should be installed within 30 working days upon request). These four (4) standards represented 92% of total breaches and 91% of total potential payments.

Figure 7: NWC Reported GS Breaches



Chapter 4: Customer Contact Centre/Call Centre Performance Reports

In recognition of the important role of Customer Contact Centres (Call Centres) in customer service delivery, the OUR has deemed it necessary to include a report on the performance of the JPS and NWC Call Centres. Here, focus is placed on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that indicate general customer satisfaction levels for NWC and JPS in this area.

NWC:

The NWC has resumed its Call Centre Performance Report submission with the report for the April – June period. This follows two previous periods of non-submissions due to technical challenges experienced by the NWC, which resulted from its decision to relocate its Call Centre operations in-house.

As is shown in Table 3, the report submitted for the review period shows that: the average time taken to complete calls was six minutes and fifty-one seconds, the maximum time callers waited in queue to speak with an agent was eighteen minutes and 10 seconds, 25% of calls were abandoned and 56% of calls were answered within 20 seconds.

Table 3: NWC’s Call Centre Performance

		Performance 2021	
<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Apr-Jun	
<i>Average Length of Calls</i>	Average Length of Calls	0:06:51	
<i>Maximum Delay</i>	Maximum time that caller waited in queue	0:18:10	
<i>Percentage of Abandoned Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	25%	
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds	56%	

JPS:

JPS has not submitted its 2020/21 April – June Call Centre report to facilitate a summary of its performance.

Chapter 5: Notification of Planned Outages Report

As part of their agreed Quality of Service Standards, the JPS and NWC are required to submit reports relating to their performance in notifying customers within a specified timeline about planned outages. This standard is a part of the Overall Standards for JPS (EOS 1) and the Performance Targets for the NWC.

JPS:

Under EOS 1, JPS is required to provide 48 hours (2 days) notice to customers of planned outages. JPS reported a 77.7% compliance rating for this standard, which represents a 7.7 percentage point decrease over the preceding period and 22.3 percentage points short of attaining the established target of 100%.

NWC:

The NWC performance targets provide for a 98% attainment rate for 12 hours' advance notification of planned service interruptions of a duration of no more than 4 hours. However, where a planned interruption is expected to be for more than four hours, the NWC is required to give advanced notice of at least 24 hours, at a 90% attainment rate.

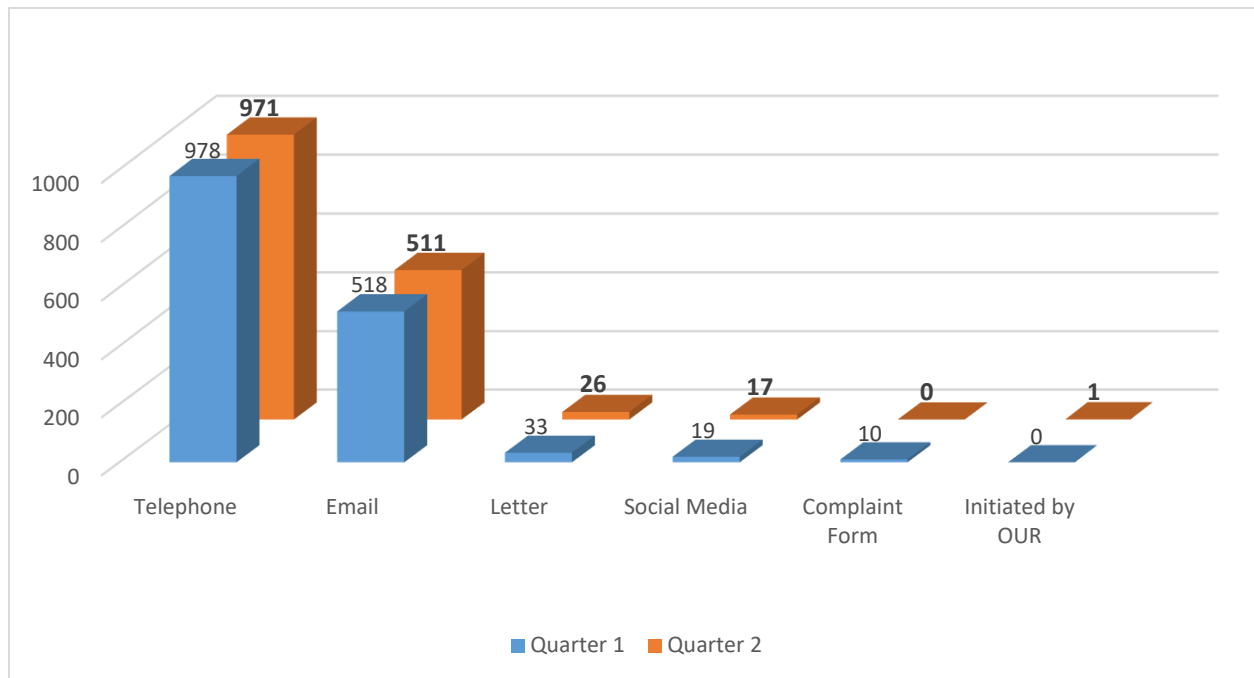
Based on NWC's notifications to the public, the compliance rating attained for the review period was 50% as only one (1) of the two (2) advisories provided at least 12 hours' advanced notification of planned outages of a duration of no more than 4 hours.

For notifications greater than four hours, the NWC attained a compliance rating of 66% to provide at least 24 hours' advance notice, which was 24% short of established 90% compliance target. Of the 32 related notifications received, 21 were in compliance with the stated target.

Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

At 64%, the telephone continued to be the most frequently used method for customers contacting the OUR. Emails followed with 33% while letters, social media and contacts initiated by the OUR accounted for the remaining 3%. Figure 8 provides further details.

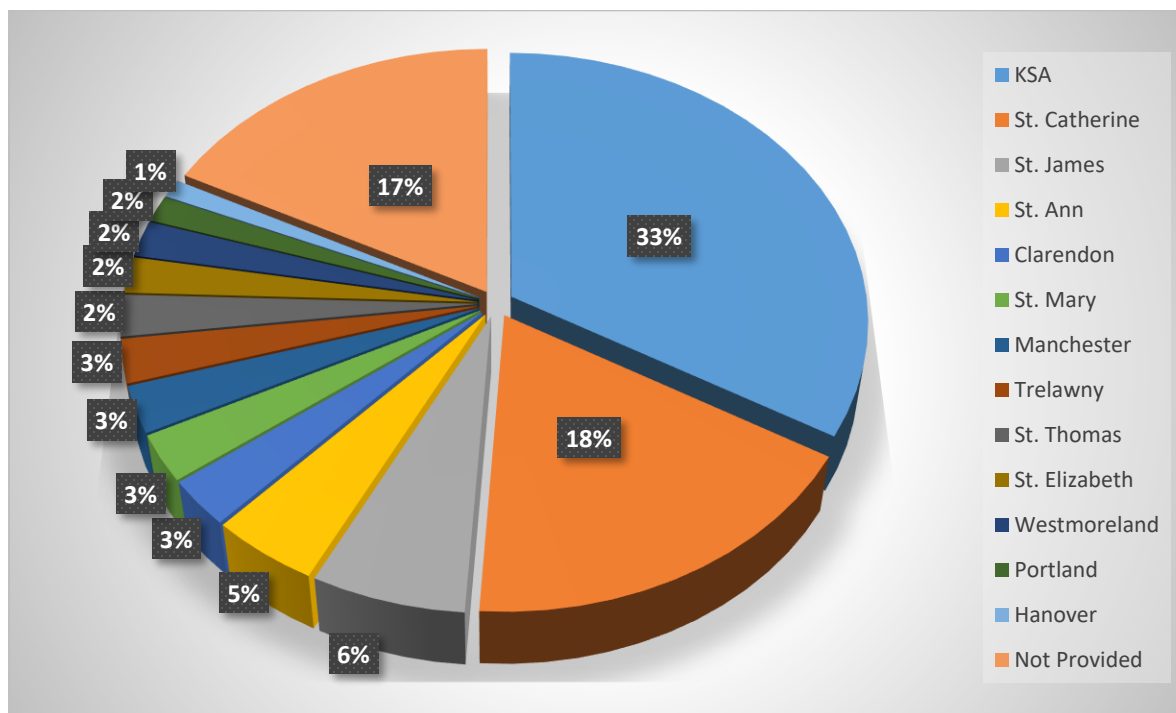
Figure 8: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

Kingston and St. Andrew, at 33%, continued to account for the highest number of total contacts. St. Catherine, St. James and St. Ann followed with 18%, 6% and 5% respectively. Clarendon, St. Mary, Manchester and Trelawny each accounted for 3% while all other parishes each had a share of 2% or less. Seventeen percent (17%) of the contacts received provided no information on their location/parish or the information was not recorded. Details are provided in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Geographic Distribution of Contacts



Chapter 6: Appeals Performance

(i) Closure of Appeals ²

Twenty-one (21) appeals were closed during the review period. Eighteen (or 86%) were resolved in favour of the service provider, two (or 10%) were resolved in the customer's favour while a compromise was reached for one (or 5%). Additionally, fifteen (or 71%) of the closed appeals were resolved within the established sixty-five (65) working days while the remaining 29% exceeded the established timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals³

At the end of the review period, six (6) appeals remained outstanding, in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. All outstanding appeals are awaiting OUR's action.

JPS accounts for five (5) of the outstanding appeals which relate to three (3) cases of equipment damage, one (1) property damage and one (1) billing related matter. The outstanding NWC appeal is in relation to a billing matter.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Of the seven (7) new appeals that were accepted for investigation, all relevant information for four (4) were received within the established timeline; one (1) response was received outside of the established timelines while the timeline for the remaining two (2) responses had not expired.

All relevant information was received for five (5) appeals for which, final decisions were made and communicated to customers (by way of Final Letters) for four (or 80%) within the established 65 working days. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key Appeals Process activity are provided in Table 8 (see Appendix).

² Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen on Table 6

³ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen on Table 7

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

Through the intervention of the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit, \$474,159.82 was secured for utility customers. Of this sum, the NWC paid out the highest share of \$307,635.21 (65%), followed by JPS with \$116,875.98 (25%). Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ (Flow) accounted for the remaining \$34,185.73 (7%) and \$15,462.00 (3%) respectively.

(ii) Quality of Service Workshop for Private Water & Sewerage Service Providers

As part of its regulation of the Quality of Service (QOS) delivered by private water and/or sewerage service providers, the OUR establishes specific requirements/deliverables which include: Guaranteed and Overall Standards, along with the development of Customer Charters and Operations Manuals.

Based on its interactions with the private water and/or sewerage service providers, the OUR has identified gaps in some areas of their QOS requirements/deliverables. In an effort to address these gaps, the OUR hosted a virtual Private Water and Sewerage Service Providers Workshop (Workshop) on 2021 June 30. The Workshop was designed to discuss, inter alia:

- a) The QOS requirements of these service providers, particularly as it relates to Determination Notice deliverables;
- b) Development of QOS reporting templates; and
- c) The achievements and challenges of the service providers.

A total of 23 representatives from the service providers participated in the Workshop. The 23 Service Providers' representatives were from 15 of the 17 licensed water and/or sewerage service providers, which is an 88% representation from the licensees. Following on the Workshop, the OUR will:

- Monitor the service providers' compliance levels with reporting requirements;
- Analyze the QOS reports submitted to assess service providers' performance; and
- Plan a 2nd Private Water & Sewerage Providers Workshop to be held by 2022 January 31

List of Tables: 2021 April - June

Table 4: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Small Telecoms Provider	Small Water Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Internet	Landline	Mobile				
A	Contacts for the Quarter														
(i)	New Appeals	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(ii)	New Complaints	122	44	40	36	29	132	24	8	1	17	1	0	1	455
(iii)	New Enquires	102	70	5	0	4	10	1	0	0	6	0	1	8	207
(iv)	New Opinions	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
(v)	New Referrals	399	279	11	12	18	54	8	2	0	12	1	4	50	850
	Total Contacts	632	397	56	48	51	196	33	10	1	36	2	5	59	1526
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Compromise	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of the Customer	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(iii)	Resolved in Favour of Utility	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
	Total Closures	8	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Total Outstanding Appeals	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

Table 5: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Private Telecoms Providers (IslandNet, Xtrinet)	Private Water/Sewerage Providers (include: Can-Cara, St. Jago Hills)	OUR/Other (not utility related)	
Billing Matters	390	273	7	25	62	0	3	1	761
Broken Main	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Customer Service	0	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	6
Defective Street Lights	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Disconnection	20	14	3	4	0	0	1	1	43
Equipment Damage	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
Guaranteed Standards	28	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
Guaranteed Standards Query	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Health & Safety	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Illegal Connections	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Interruption of Service	17	12	2	48	65	0	0	0	144
Irregular Supply	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Leak at Meter	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Metering	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Number Portability	0	0	3	4	2	0	0	0	9
Other	51	41	14	12	24	0	0	56	198
Payment Arrangement	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Prepaid Phone Credit	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	9
Phone Credit Depletion	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
Poor Service Quality	8	3	4	10	23	1	1	0	50
Property Damage	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Pre-paid Metering Service	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Reconnection	7	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	11
Rebate/Refund	9	3	0	13	30	1	0	1	57
Service Connection	18	3	1	1	4	0	0	0	27
Terms and Condition of Service	4	1	12	18	8	0	0	0	43
Unable to get through to Provider	2	3	1	2	3	0	0	0	11
Unavailability of facility	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	6
Total	632	397	47	155	229	2	5	59	1526

Table 6: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	4	13	17
Equipment Damage	4	0	4
Total	8	13	21

Table 7: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	1	2
Equipment Damage	3	0	3
Property Damage	1	0	1
Total	5	1	6

Table 8: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (New Appeals)

Activity	Service Standards	% Compliance	Comment
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within 2 business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	100%	All seven (7) new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within 5 business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	86%	Six (6) of seven (7) Case Letters, representing 86%, 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	80%	Final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline for four (4) new appeals for which all relevant information was received.

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Distribution of Contacts per 100,000 of Customer Base
- Figure 2: Distribution of Billing Contacts per 100,000 of Customer Base
- Figure 3: Main Customer Concerns
- Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts
- Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts
- Figure 6: JPS Reported GS Breaches
- Figure 7: NWC Reported GS Breaches
- Figure 8: Methods of Contact
- Figure 9: Geographic Distribution of Contacts

Appendices

Appendix I: Definition Of Terms Used In Documenting Customer Contacts

Appeal:	Any contact in which the utility company has completed an investigation into a customer's complaint, the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome and writes to the OUR asking for an independent investigation of the matter.
Complaint:	Any contact from consumers who feel that particular action(s) of a utility service provider might have been in breach of their Terms and Conditions or might have been unfair to them. The OUR provides investigation for complaints as is necessary. Acceptance of complaints does not require submission of a written response from the service provider.
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.
Equipment Damage:	Damage caused to customers' equipment as a result of alleged action or inaction of their service provider.
Interruption of Service:	Where no service is provided, usually for an extended period.
Irregular supply:	Where service is not provided regularly and in keeping with the Terms and Conditions of Service/Contract.
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.
Refund:	Amounts credited to customers' accounts for breaches of the service provider's Terms and Conditions of Service/Contract
Resolution:	Where the OUR communicates its decision on customers' appeals and complaints
Resolution Rate:	The percentage of resolutions that are made within the established timelines

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

Process Timeline for General Appeals

<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	30 working days ⁴
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 (Five) working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 (Five) working days ⁵
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

Special Appeals

There are appeals that, based on the nature of the issue, may require expertise and/or resources that do not reside in the designated units of the OUR and JPS to effectively resolve same. Accordingly, the classification of "Special Appeals" was revised to provide additional time to both parties to complete their investigation of these matters.

Where necessary, an additional fifteen (15) working days is allotted to JPS to respond to Follow-up Case Letters sent by the OUR. These appeals will thereafter be reclassified as Special Appeals. The OUR has also reduced its consultation time to review Special Appeals from twenty (20) to fifteen (15) working days. Accordingly, the total time allotted to complete the review of a Special Appeal for JPS is at 95 working days

Recommended Service Levels

1. JPS is expected to respond to **OUR's Case Letters** regarding customer's appeals within **thirty (30) working days** of receipt. The company is also expected to acknowledge receipt of our Case Letters within five (5) working days of receipt.
2. JPS is expected to respond to the OUR's follow-up case letter within FIVE (5) working days of receipt for General appeals. However, where necessary, JPS shall notify the OUR within FIVE (5) working days of receipt of the Follow-up Case letter that additional time is required to provide the response. Such Appeals shall then be reclassified as a Special Appeal with the JPS being allotted a total of twenty (20) working days to provide the response, from the date of the Follow-up Case Letter.
3. The OUR's Final Letter to the customer is to be dispatched within **eighteen (18) 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.
4. The OUR is expected to complete investigations of JPS appeals within the following timelines:

⁴ Where, based on exceptional circumstances, JPS requires additional time to provide the response to a Case Letter, same is to be communicated to the OUR within five (5) working days of the Case Letter date. The rationale for the additional time must be outlined in the request. The OUR will provide a response to the request within two (2) 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.

- **Sixty-five (65) working days** for GENERAL APPEALS (which do not require external consultation)
 - **Ninety-five (95) working days** for Equipment Damage Appeals (which do not require external consultation)
5. 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 ⁶
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

Special Appeals

There are appeals that, based on the nature of the issue, may require expertise and/or resources that do not reside in the designated units of the OUR and NWC to effectively resolve same. Accordingly, the classification of "Special Appeals" was revised to provide additional time to both parties to complete their investigation of these matters.

Where necessary, an additional five (5) working days is allotted to the NWC to respond to Follow-up Case Letters sent by the OUR. These appeals will thereafter be reclassified as Special Appeals. The OUR has also reduced its time to review Special Appeal from twenty (20) to fifteen (15) working days; thereby retaining the completion timeline for Special Appeals at 85 working days.

Other Appeals Activities:

Monthly reports detailing the appeals for which the responses are outstanding will be generated and sent to the NWC. Where the responses/updates are not received within ten (10) working days of submission of the report, the matter will be escalated to the Vice President – Investment and Performance Monitoring, 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 for General appeals**. However, where necessary, the NWC shall notify

⁶ 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.

the OUR within FIVE (5) working days of receipt of the Follow-up Case letter that additional time is required to provide the response. Such Appeals shall then be reclassified as a Special Appeal with the NWC being allotted a total of ten (10) working days to provide the response, from the date of the Follow-up Case Letter.

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 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 6: List of Acronyms

Can Cara	-	Can Cara 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)
KSA	-	Kingston & St. Andrew
NWC	-	National Water Commission (Water & Sewerage Provider)
OUR	-	Office of Utilities Regulation
OURIC	-	Office of Utilities Regulation Information Centre
The Office	-	Comprises 6 members and is headed by a Chairman with the Director General serving as an <i>ex officio</i> member