

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Fewer Utility Customer Complaints to the OUR in 2022
But Spike in JPS and NWC Guaranteed Standards Breaches

(2023 April 24; Kingston, Jamaica): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) received 18% fewer utility customer complaints in 2022 than it did in 2021. However, there were increased breaches of the Guaranteed Standards by the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) and the National Water Commission (NWC).

Customer Complaints to OUR

During 2022, the OUR received 4,725 customer complaints, compared to 5,771 received in 2021, a decrease of 18%. Of the major utility providers, Cable & Wireless Jamaica Limited (C&WJ), trading under the FLOW brand, saw the largest reduction in complaints to the OUR, a decline of 68%, as indicated in the table below.

Service Providers	2022	2021	% Change
JPS	2,440	2,469	-1%
NWC	1,216	1,342	-9%
C&WJ (FLOW)	195	607	-68%
Columbus Communications (Flow)	623	934	-33%
Digicel	128	175	-27%
Private/Small Telecoms Service Providers	1	5	-80%
Private/Small Water & Sewerage Service Providers	8	22	-64%
Other/ Not OUR Related	114	217	-47%
Total	4,725	5,771	

Complaints about billing matters accounted for 50% of total contacts to the OUR last year.

The data are contained in the OUR’s just-released Quarterly Performance Report for the period 2022 October – December. During this quarter, the OUR’s Consumer Affairs Unit received 885 contacts which represented an 11% decrease when compared to the preceding quarter.

Guaranteed Standards Breaches

JPS’s compliance report on its Guaranteed Standards (GS) performance during the 2022 October – December quarter indicates that it committed 24,915 breaches, representing a 135% increase when compared with the preceding quarter. The main spike in breaches related to Connection to Supply and Estimated Bills. JPS’s breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$52.6 million, all of which were applied automatically to the affected customers’ accounts.

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Throughout 2022, JPS's GS reports indicate that a total of 68,698 breaches were committed which represents a 7% increase in breaches over 2021. Compensation associated with these breaches amounted to approximately \$151.2 million, which was paid out automatically to the affected customers' accounts.

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report for the review period indicates that 2,198 breaches were committed during the 2022 October – December quarter. This is a 6% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$9.7 million. However, actual payments amounted to approximately \$1.3 million, or 14% of total potential payments, and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 86% of potential payments not made, represented those breaches for which the required claim forms from affected customers were not submitted for validation.

The standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC included Complaint Investigations (which require that the NWC completes investigations and responds or provides an update within 30 working days of receipt of a complaint) and Meter Repair/Replacement (which stipulates that defective meters are to be verified, repaired/replaced within 20 working days).

The NWC GS reports indicate that throughout 2022, 8,505 breaches were committed, representing a 116% increase over the number of breaches committed in 2021. Potential compensation for these breaches was approximately \$34.7 million, of which approximately \$5.3 million (15%) was paid. The remaining 85% of GS compensation was not paid as the required claim forms were not submitted by affected customers.

Guaranteed Standards for NWC, JPS and small utility water providers, as well as the relevant claim forms, can be found on the OUR's and the utility providers' websites, or at the customer service offices.

The OUR's [Quarterly Performance Report for 2022-October – December](http://www.our.org/jm) can be found on its website: www.our.org/jm.

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