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# Office of Utilities Regulation

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Consumer Affairs Unit

## Quarterly Performance Report

2022 October - December

Publication Date: 2023 April 06



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**OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION**

36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

**Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report**

**Document Number: 2023/GEN/001/QPR.001**

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## **The Role and Objectives of the OUR**

The Office of Utilities Regulation Act of 1995 established the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) as a body corporate. Under the Act, the OUR is charged with 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 to promote a sustainable environment; and act independently and impartially.

## **The Consumer and Public Affairs Department**

The OUR discharges its mandate to protect utility consumers through the Consumer and Public Affairs (CPA) Department. The Consumer Affairs Unit, the Public Affairs Unit (PAU) and the OUR Information Centre (OURIC) 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 improve consumer 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 organising 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. Through the CPA department, the OUR also funds the Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities (CACU) activities, 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 Unit's performance 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 are gathered from our Customer Information Database and reflect the contacts received from utility consumers island-wide. These contacts are received via various channels, namely: letters, telephone, walk-ins, 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 normalise the number 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 recognised 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.

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## Executive Summary

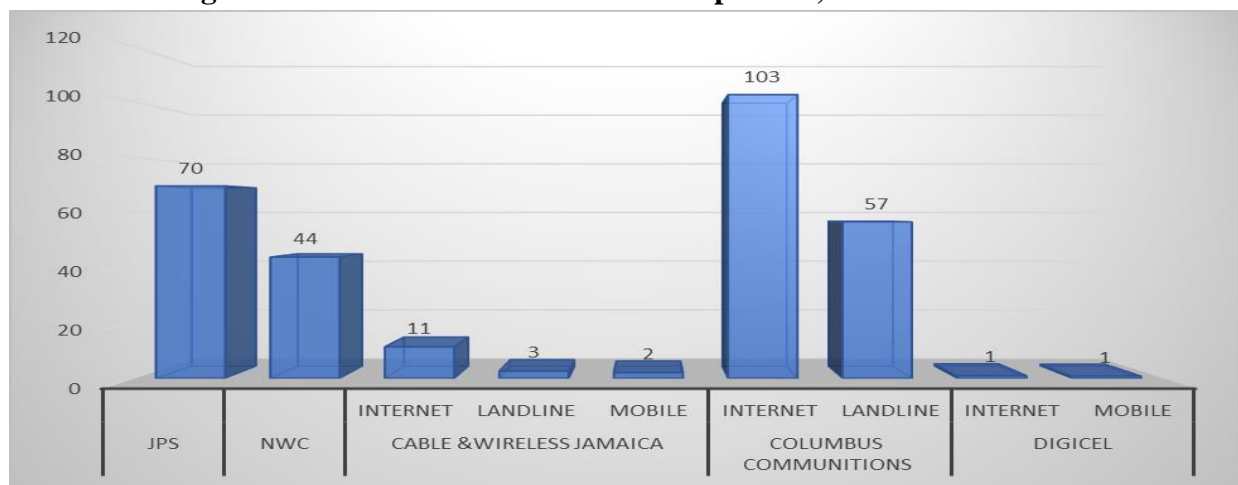
For the 2022 October - December period, the CAU received 885 contacts which represented an 11% decrease when compared to the preceding period. The data show that the most significant reductions were in the complaint categories of: *Interruption of Service* (-24%) *Disconnection* (-15%), *Guaranteed Standard* (-13%), *Irregular Supply* (-5%), and *Billing Matters* (-3%) when compared with the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service provider<sup>1</sup>:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 480 (54%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 234 (26%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 95 (11%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 32 (4%)
- Digicel – 28 (3%)
- Private Water and Sewerage Service Provider (Drax AHII Utilities Ltd.) and Other (Not Utility Provider Related) –16 (2%).

While JPS at 480 accounted for the most contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest number – at 103 per 100,000 – in proportion to its internet customer base.

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



<sup>1</sup> Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 8 on page 28.

A total of 4,725 contacts were received in 2022, representing an 18% decrease over the preceding year. As is shown in Table 1, Private/Small Telecommunications Providers (-80%), C&WJ - Flow (-68%), Private/Small Water & Sewerage Service Providers (-64%) and Other/Not OUR Related (-47%), accounted for the highest percentage decreases in the total contacts received in 2022 over 2021.

Table 1: Service Providers Contact Summary 2022 vs 2021

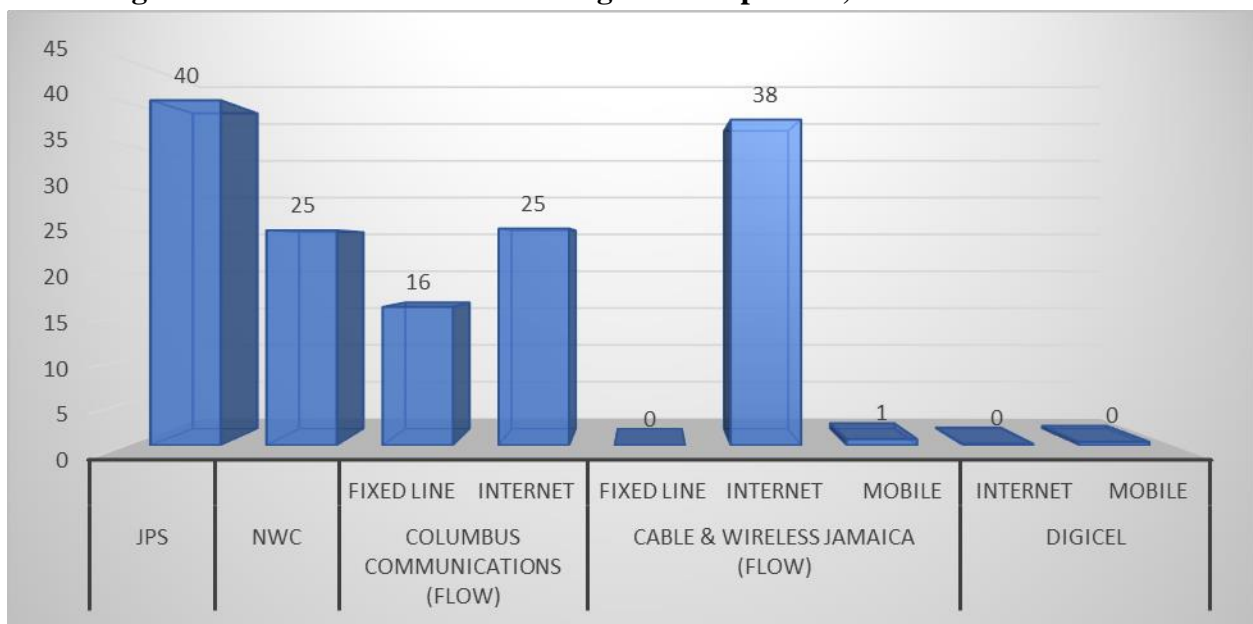
Service Providers	Review Periods				Total (Jan - Dec 2022)	Total 2021	% Change
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec			
JPS	788	660	512	480	<b>2,440</b>	2,469	<b>-1%</b>
NWC	382	332	268	234	<b>1,216</b>	1,342	<b>-9%</b>
C&WJ (FLOW)	85	47	31	32	<b>195</b>	607	<b>-68%</b>
Columbus Communications (Flow)	237	165	126	95	<b>623</b>	934	<b>-33%</b>
Digicel	38	33	29	28	<b>128</b>	175	<b>-27%</b>
Private/Small Telecommunications Service Providers	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>	5	<b>-80%</b>
Private/Small Water & Sewerage Service Providers	2	4	1	1	<b>8</b>	22	<b>-64%</b>
Other/ Not OUR Related	47	27	25	15	<b>114</b>	217	<b>-47%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,579</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>4,725</b>	<b>5,771</b>	



During the review period, billing matters, at 52%, remained the main reason utility consumers contacted the CAU, representing a five-percentage point increase compared to the preceding period. JPS and NWC, with 278 (31%) and 134 (15%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing-related matters.

As shown in Figure 2, JPS at 40 per 100,000 of its customer base, accounted for the highest number of billing-related contacts. C&WJ (Flow) and Columbus Communications (Flow) internet service and NWC followed with 38, 25 and 25 contacts per 100,000 of their customer bases, respectively. For 2022, billing matters accounted for 50% of total contacts. Details on the 2022 contact categories are provided in Table 10, Appendix I.

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



At 13% of total contacts, service interruption issues remained the second highest reason for customer contact to the CAU for the review period and throughout 2022.

## Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

### (i) Acknowledgements

During the review period, the CAU accepted ten (10) new appeals for investigation, with seven (7) and three (3) relating to JPS and NWC, respectively. Requests for information (case letters) were sent for all new appeals accepted.

Based on the established Service Level Agreements (SLAs), JPS and NWC agreed to acknowledge the OUR's case letters within five (5) business days. As shown in Table 2, both JPS and the NWC were fully compliant in submitting their acknowledgements within the agreed timeline throughout 2022.

**Table 2: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)**

<i>Quarters (2022)</i>	<b>JPS</b>	<b>NWC</b>
<i>January - March</i>	100%	100%
<i>April - June</i>	100%	100%
<i>July - September</i>	100%	100%
<b><i>October - December</i></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### (ii) Response to Case Letters

Service providers are required to respond to case letters within 30 business days. As is seen in Table 3, JPS maintained a perfect score in submitting their responses within the agreed timeline throughout 2022. However, the NWC missed attaining a perfect record for submitting its responses as none (0%) of the three (3) responses were received within the agreed timeline during the review period.

**Table 3: Response to case letters within standard (30 business days)**

<i>Quarters (2022)</i>	<b>JPS</b>	<b>NWC</b>
<i>January – March</i>	100%	100%
<i>April - June</i>	100%	100%
<i>July - September</i>	100%	100%

*October - December*

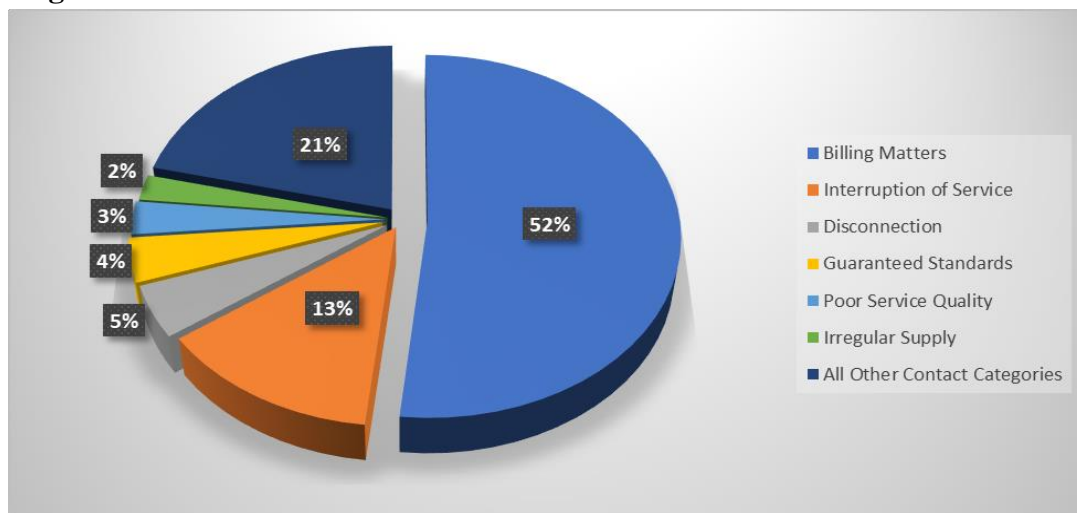
<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>
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For 2022, both JPS and NWC showed improved performance in their average response rate compared to 2021. JPS's perfect 2022 score represented a six percentage point increase over its 2021 performance. The NWC's average compliance rating for 2022 was 75%, representing a four percentage point increase over 2021.

## Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

The main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to Billing, Interruption of Service, Disconnection, Guaranteed Standards, Poor Service Quality, and Irregular Supply (Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category are provided in Table 9.

**Figure 3: Main Concerns**



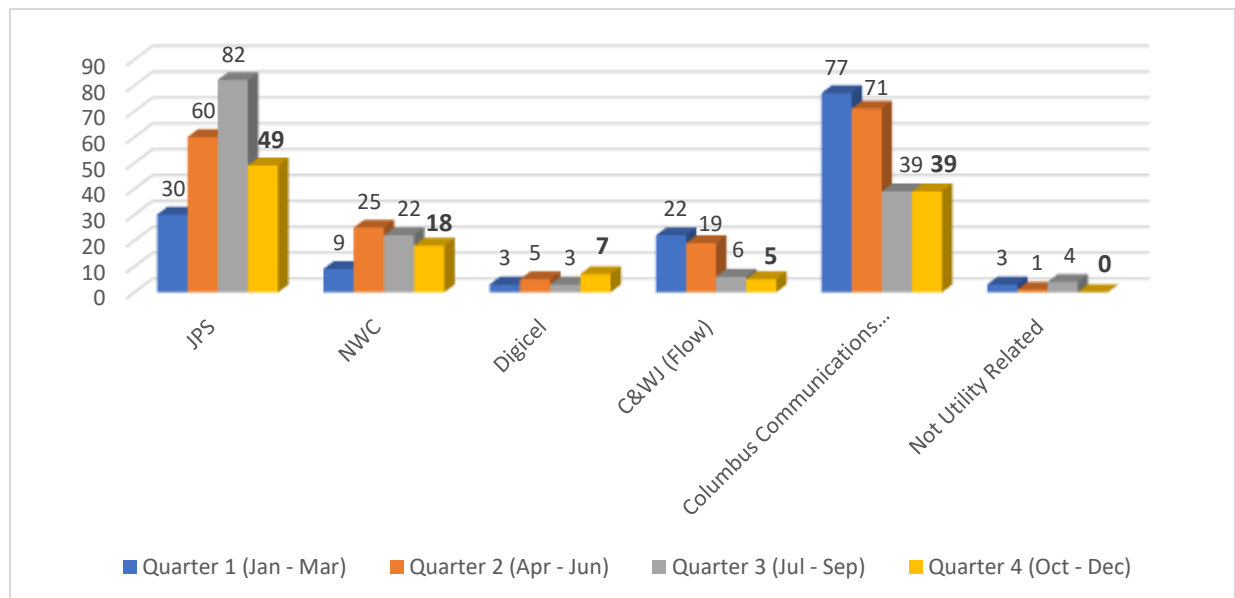
### (i) Billing

Billing matters remained the main reason for customer contact, accounting for 52% of total contacts. These matters included high consumption, disputed charges, adjustments to customers' accounts, and estimated billing.

JPS and NWC continue to account for the most billing contacts with 278 (31%) and 134 (15%), respectively. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 24 (3%) while C&WJ (Flow) and Digicel accounted for the remaining 21 (3%).

### (ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption accounted for 13% of contacts, representing a three-percentage point decrease over the preceding quarter. As seen in Figure 4, JPS with 49 (6%), Columbus Communications (Flow) with 39 (4%) and NWC with 18 (2%) respectively, accounted for the highest number of related contacts. C&WJ (Flow) with 5 and Digicel with 7 accounted for the remaining 1% of contacts.

**Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts****(iii) Disconnection**

Similar to the previous period, contacts relating to disconnection remained at 5%. JPS and NWC accounted for the highest instances of disconnection contacts at 16 (2%) and 17 (2%) respectively. Columbus Communications (Flow) and C&WJ (Flow) shared the remaining 1%.

**(iv) Poor Service Quality**

Like the preceding period, contacts relating to poor service quality remained at 3%. JPS and Columbus Communications (Flow) each accounted for 2% and 1% respectively.

**(v) Irregular Supply**

Irregular supply contacts increased by one percentage point, to 2%, when compared with the preceding period. JPS and NWC each accounted for 1% of these contacts.

## Chapter 3: Guaranteed Standards Performance

### (i) What are the Guaranteed Standards?

The Guaranteed Standards (GS) 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?

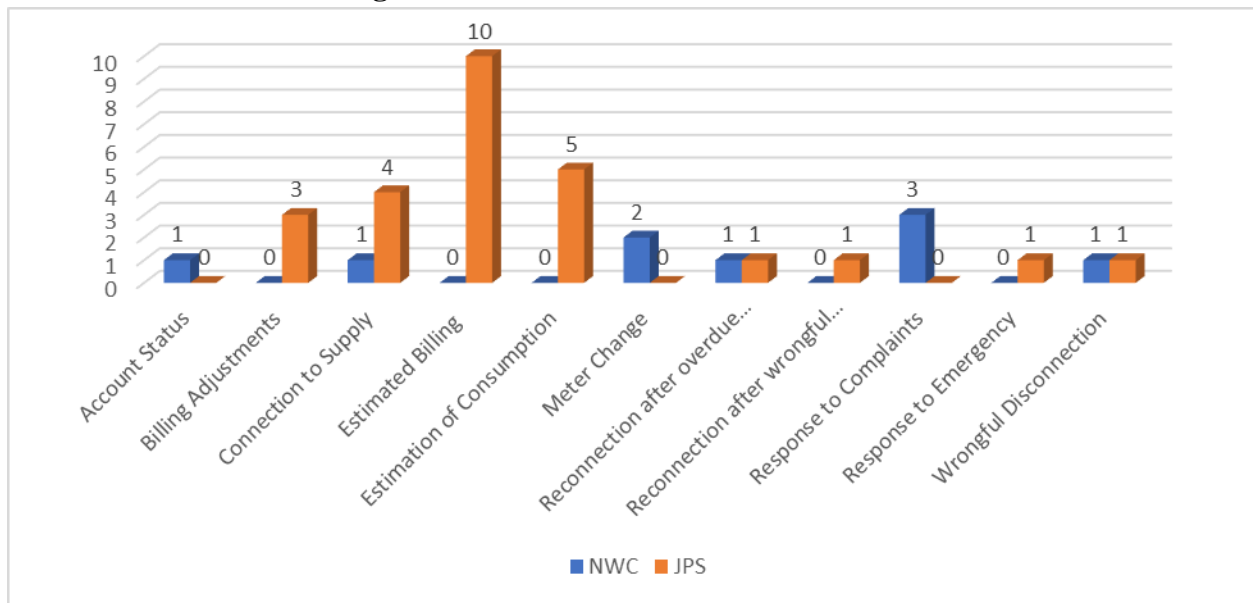
**NWC:** Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will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

The OUR received thirty-five (35) contacts from JPS and NWC customers in relation to alleged breaches of the GS, representing four percent (4%) of the total contacts received. JPS and NWC accounted for twenty-six (26) and nine (9) contacts respectively.

As is seen in Figure 5, *Estimated Billing* and *Estimation of Consumption* accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the GS for JPS. For the NWC, *Response to Complaints* accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the GS.

**Figure 5: Guaranteed Standards Contacts**

The 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

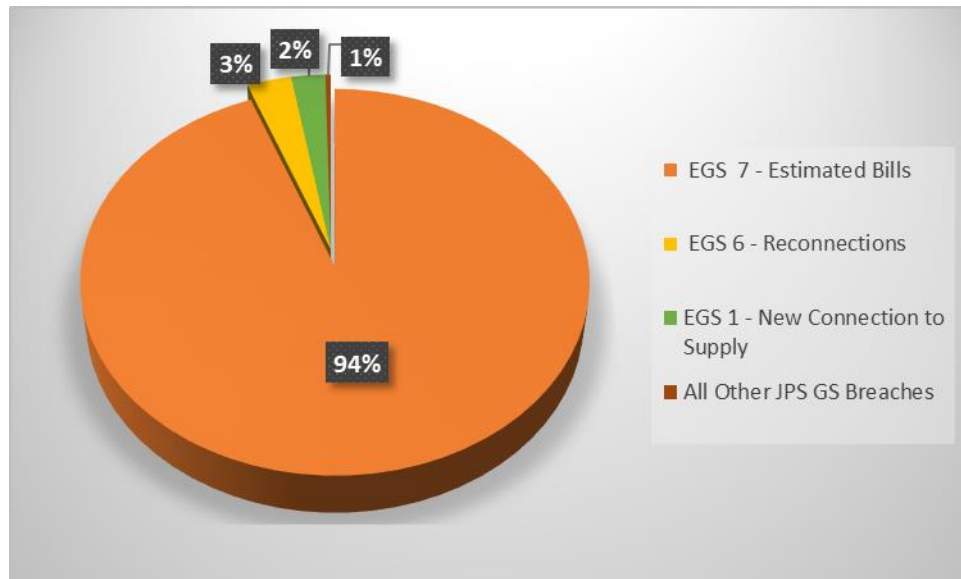
**JPS**

JPS's compliance report on its GS performance indicated that 24,915 breaches were committed, representing a 135% increase when compared with the preceding period. EGS 1 – Connection to Supply and EGS 7 – Estimated Bills were the two standards that were mainly responsible for the increased breaches. The 24,915 breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$52.6 million, all of which were applied automatically to the affected customers' accounts.

Similar to the previous period, Guaranteed Standards regarding *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 (see Figure 6). These standards accounted for 100% of breaches and 99% of compensatory payments respectively.

**Figure 6: JPS Reported GS Breaches**



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 were paid out automatically to the affected customers' accounts.

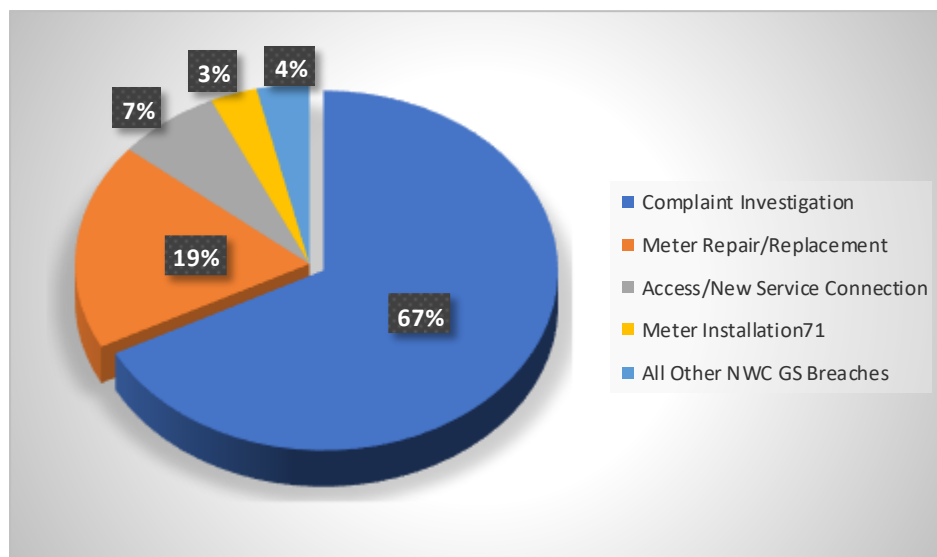
### **NWC**

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report for the review period indicates that 2,198 breaches were committed during the review period; representing a 6% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$9.7 million while 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 were not submitted for validation.



As shown in Figure 7, the standards with the highest incidents of breaches for the NWC were: Complaint Investigations (which require that the NWC completes investigations and responds or provides an update within 30 working days of receipt of a complaint), Meter Repair/Replacement (which stipulates that defective meters are to be verified, repaired/replaced within 20 working days); Access/New Service Connection (which requires NWC to connect a new supply within 10 working days); and Meter Installation (which requires the NWC to install meters on customer's request within 30 working days). These four (4) standards represented 96% of total breaches and 95% of potential payments, respectively.

**Figure 7: NWC Reported GS Breaches**



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

## Private/Small Water and/or Sewerage Service Providers' Guaranteed Standards Report

In keeping with the provisions of their Licences and OUR Determination Notices, eight (8) licenced Private/Small Water and/or Sewerage Service Providers (PWSSP) are required to submit quarterly reports on their Quality of Service (QoS) standards performance, which include the Guaranteed and relevant Overall Standards. In addition, the OUR has, since 2021 June, held two (2) workshops with these service providers to reinforce and remind them about their QoS reporting requirements and other obligations. The OUR has also sent periodic reminders to these service providers about QoS report submissions.

As is shown in Table 4, the PWSSP were mostly compliant as six (6) of the eight (8), representing 75%, submitted their QoS reports for the 2022 October - December period, with 50% being received within the stipulated timeline.

The OUR, in 2022 November, wrote to Landmark Developers Ltd. (LDL) in light of the non-receipt of its quarterly QoS reports. Landmark has responded and the OUR will continue to engage with the service provider to have the matter resolved.

Table 4: Private/Small Water and Sewerage Service Providers' QoS Reporting Requirements and Submissions

Licensees to Submit Quarterly QoS Reports	2022 October - December	
	Due Date	Submission Date
Can-Cara Development Ltd. (CDL)	2023.02.13	2023.02.09
Dynamic Environmental Services Ltd. (DEML)		2023.03.08
Dairy Spring Ltd. (DSL)		2023.02.13
Runaway Bay Water Company Ltd (RBWC)		2023.02.02
Landmark Developers Ltd (LDL)		NOT RECEIVED
St. Jago Hills Development Company Ltd. (SJHDC)		NOT RECEIVED
Richmond Environmental Services Ltd. (RESL)		2023.02.10
Tryall Golf and Beach Club (TGBC)		2023.02.17

Analysis of the quarterly GS reports received from the PWSSP indicates that 55 GS breaches were committed during the review period; representing a 67% decrease compared to the

preceding period. For these breaches, potential compensation amounted to approximately \$213,161.00, with no actual payments being made. Details of the GS breaches and compensation for the review period for these service providers are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: GS Breaches and Compensation for Private/Small Water and/or Sewerage Service Providers

<b>Service Providers</b>	<b>Total Breaches</b>	<b>Potential Compensation (\$)</b>	<b>Actual Payments (\$)</b>
Can-Cara Development Ltd.	0	0	0
Dairy Spring Ltd.	0	0	0
DEML	49	182,920.92	0
RESL	0	0	0
RBWC	0	0	0
TGBC	6	30,240.00	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>213,160.92</b>	<b>0</b>

\*The OUR has not yet determined the compensation mechanism for RESL.

The analysis also showed that 100% of the breaches and potential compensation were associated with GS 6/GS 7– *Meter Reading* (which requires all these service providers to bill accounts monthly based on meter readings, where there is access to the meters). Except for TGBC, the compensation for a breach of this GS is to be applied automatically to the affected customers’ accounts. DEML and Tryall Golf and Beach Club (TGBC) accounted for 49 (89%) and 6 (11%) of GS 6/GS 7 breaches, respectively. DEML indicated that no compensation was paid for the 49 GS 6 breaches as the meters were inaccessible. TGBC’s required claim forms were not submitted for validation and compensation payments.

Throughout 2022, the reports from the PWSSP indicate that a total of 581 breaches of the GS were committed, which represented an 84% reduction when compared with the breaches for 2021. Potential compensation for these breaches was approximately \$2 million. However, no payments were made as the breaches related to GS 6/GS 7 – Meter reading for which the meter was inaccessible, or the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

## 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, the focus is placed on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on general customer satisfaction levels for NWC and JPS, which includes their performance on First Call Resolution Rate (FCR).

### NWC:

The NWC Call Centre report for the review period indicates a mixture of improvement and decline in performance compared to the preceding period. As seen in Table 6, the *Average Speed of Answer and Call Handle Time* increased by seven (7) and three (3) seconds, respectively. *Average Talk Time* decreased by 10 seconds while the *Percentage Service Level* increased by two percentage points to 93% over the preceding period. Notably, the NWC's FCR performance increased by twenty-four percentage points, to 89%, over the prior period, thereby exceeding the agreed target of 70%.

Table 6: NWC's Call Centre Performance  
Performance 2022

<i>KPIs</i>	<b>KPI Definition</b>	Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct - Dec
<i>Average Speed of Answer</i>	Average time for answering calls	0:00:39	0:00:25	0:00:12	0:00:19
<i>Average Talk Time</i>	Average time spent talking to customers	0:05:56	0:05:42	0:05:12	0:05:02
<i>Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)</i>	Combination of Average Talk Time, Average After Call Work and Hold Time	0:10:38	0:06:47	0:06:27	0:06:30
<i>Percentage of Abandoned Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	5%	2%	1%	1%

<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds	83%	90%	91%	93%
<i>First Call Resolution Rate</i>	Customer's complaint/issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre <sup>2</sup>	N/A	58%	65%	89%

**JPS:**

The review of JPS's Call Centre report for the reporting period indicates a general increase in performance when compared with the preceding period. As seen in Table 7, improvements were realised in all the KPIs measured and reported on during the review period when compared with the preceding period.

Table 7: JPS Call Centre Performance  
*Performance 2022*

<i>KPIs</i>	<i>KPI Definition</i>	<i>Jan - Mar</i>	<i>Apr - Jun</i>	<i>Jul - Sept</i>	<i>Oct - Dec</i>
<i>Average Speed of Answer</i>	Average time for answering calls <sup>3</sup>	0:02:10	0:04:47	0:02:30	<b>0:01:39</b>
<i>Average Talk Time</i>	Average time spent talking to customers	0:05:50	0:05:16	0:05:13	<b>0:05:00</b>
<i>Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)</i>	Combination of Average Talk Time, Average After Call Work and Hold Time <sup>4</sup>	0:06:16	0:06:20	0:06:20	<b>0:06:00</b>
<i>Percentage of Abandoned Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced <sup>5</sup>	10%	27%	18%	<b>14%</b>

<sup>2</sup> Established FCR target for NWC & JPS is 70%

<sup>3</sup> Within 20 seconds, as per the international standard

<sup>4</sup> Goal of no more than 5 minutes set by JPS

<sup>5</sup> Less than or equal to 8%

<i>Service Level Answer</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds <sup>6</sup>	62%	38%	38%	<b>54%</b>
<i>First Call Resolution Rate</i>	Customer's complaint/issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre	N/A	73.5%	73.4%	<b>74.5%</b>

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<sup>6</sup> Goal of 82% set by JPS

## 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 must provide customers 48 hours (2 days) notice of planned outages. For the review period, JPS reported an 80% compliance rating for this standard, indicating that the company fell twenty percentage points short of attaining the established target of 100%.

### **NWC:**

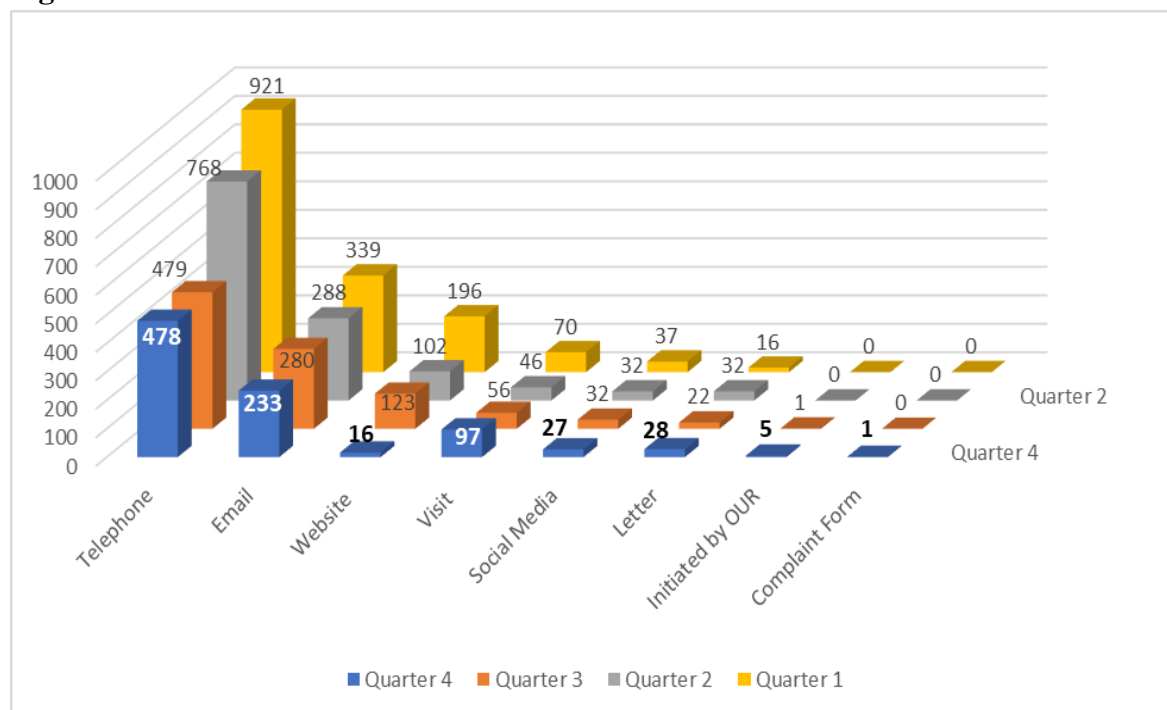
The NWC performance targets provide for a 98% attainment rate for 12 hours' advance notification of planned service interruptions of a duration of no more than 4 hours. However, where a planned interruption is expected to be for more than four hours, the NWC must give advanced notice of at least 24 hours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

The OUR did not receive any notification of planned outages of less than four hours. However, based on NWC's notifications to the public for outages greater than four hours, the NWC attained a compliance rating of 52% to provide at least 24 hours advance notice, which was 38% short of the established 90% compliance target. Of the 23 related notifications received, 12 complied with the stated target.

## Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

The telephone, at 478 (54%), continued to be the most frequently used method for customers contacting the OUR. Emails and visits followed with 233 (26%) and 97 (11%), respectively. Letter and social media each accounted for 28 (3%) and 27 (3%), respectively. Contacts received via the website, Complaint Forms and those OUR initiated accounted for the remaining 3%. Figure 8 provides further details.

**Figure 8: Methods of Contact**

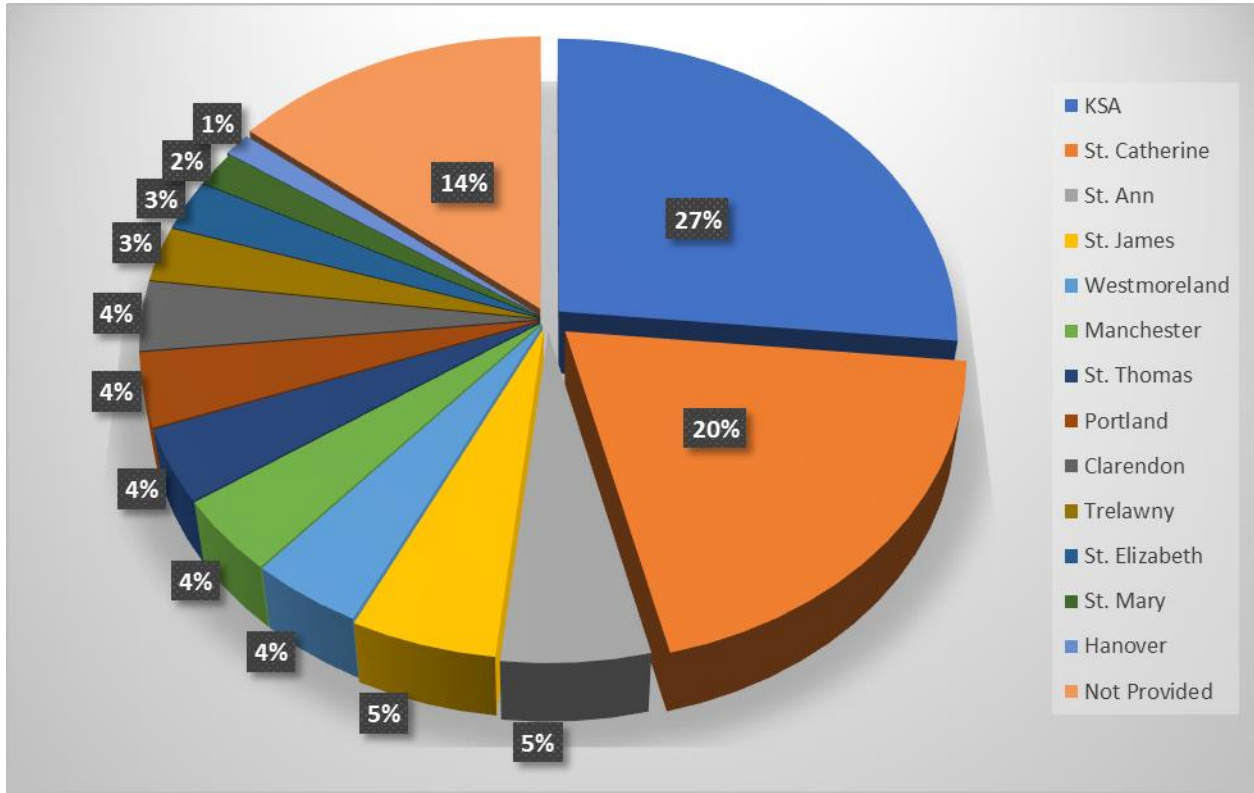


### Geographical Distribution of Contacts

At 27%, Kingston and St. Andrew continued to account for the highest number of contacts. St. Catherine, St. Ann and St. James followed with 20%, 5% and 5%, respectively. Westmoreland, Manchester, St. Thomas, Portland and Clarendon each accounted for 4%. All other parishes each had a share of 3% or less. Fourteen percent (14%) 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 <sup>7</sup>

Ten (10) appeals were closed during the review period, with two (2) being resolved in the customers favour and a compromise being reached for another. One (1) was withdrawn by the customer, while the remaining six (6) were resolved in favour of the service provider. All ten (10) closed appeals were resolved within the established sixty-five (65) working days.

### (ii) Outstanding Appeals <sup>8</sup>

At the end of the review period, five (5) appeals remained outstanding in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, three (3) were awaiting OUR's action, while both JPS and NWC are to submit one response each for the remaining two (2) outstanding appeals.

JPS accounts for four (4) outstanding appeals, which relate to two (2) cases of equipment damage, one (1) property damage and one (1) billing-related matter. The NWC accounts for the remaining outstanding appeal, which is a billing matter.

### Appeals Process Resolution Rate

Of the ten (10) new appeals that were accepted for investigation, all relevant information was received for six (6) within the established timeline, while the timeline for the remaining four (4) had not expired.

Final decisions were made and communicated to all six (100%) customers (by way of Final Letters), for which all relevant information was received within the established 65 working days. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key Appeals Process activities are provided in Table 13, Appendix I.

Twenty-three new appeals were accepted for investigation in 2022, of which 15 – representing 65% - were resolved within the established 65 working days.

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<sup>7</sup> Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 11 on page 30

<sup>8</sup> Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 12 on page 30

## Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

### (i) Credits/Compensation

Through the OUR's intervention, \$9,597.56 was secured for utility consumers. Of this amount, Columbus Communications (Flow) and JPS accounted for \$5,097.56 (53%) and \$4,500 (47%), respectively.

The total amounts secured for utility consumers for 2022 was \$515,966.13, of which the NWC and Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 76% and 17%, respectively. C&WJ (Flow) and JPS accounted for 4% and 3% of the remaining credits, respectively.

### (ii) Quality of Service Symposium

As part of its initiatives to encourage utility service providers to improve their customer service delivery, the OUR hosted them at its annual Quality of Service Symposium (QoS Symposium) on November 2022 November 3.

For the 2022 QoS symposium, the focus was placed on the 2022 Mystery Shopping Survey Findings. Specifically, the major service providers were asked to make presentations on the measures taken or to be taken to address the gaps in their customer service delivery that were highlighted by the survey findings. Not to be left out, representatives from three (3) Private/Small Water and Sewerage Service Provides, and one Private Telecommunications Provider also made presentations on their customer service improvement initiatives employed or to be established.

The OUR will continue to monitor the customer service delivery of all the regulated entities through, among other things, reporting requirements and annual mystery shopping surveys.

Appendices:

## Appendix I: List of Tables: 2022 October - December

Table 8: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel		Private Water Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Provider Related)	Total
				Internet	Landline	Mobile	Internet	Landline	Internet	Mobile			
<b>A</b>	<b>Contacts for the Quarter</b>												
(i)	New Appeals	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
(ii)	New Complaints	285	117	5	5	8	61	9	7	12	0	2	511
(iii)	New Enquires	14	12	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	3	33
(iv)	New Opinions	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(v)	New Referrals	174	100	4	1	8	18	5	3	5	1	10	329
	<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>885</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Closure/Resolution of Appeals:</b>												
(i)	Compromise	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(ii)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(iii)	Resolved in favour of utility	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
(iii)	Withdrawn by customer	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total Closures</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Total Appeals from Previous Periods:</b>												
	<b>Outstanding Appeals with OUR</b>												
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
(ii)	Awaiting Service Provider's Response	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	<b>Total Outstanding Appeals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 9: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers								Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small/Private Water/Sewerage Providers (Drax Hall Utilities Ltd.)	OUR/Other (Not Utility Related)		
Billing Matters	278	134	12	9	24	1	0	458	
Broken Main	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Customer Service	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Defective Street Lights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Disconnection	16	17	0	2	6	0	0	41	
Equipment Damage	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	
Guaranteed Standards	26	9	0	0	0	0	0	35	
Guaranteed Standards Query	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Health & Safety	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	
Illegal Connections	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Interruption of Service	49	18	7	5	39	0	0	118	
Irregular Supply	12	8	0	0	0	0	0	20	
Leak at Meter	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Metering	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Number Portability	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Other	22	20	4	7	4	0	15	72	
Payment Arrangement	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	
Prepaid Phone Credit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Phone Credit Depletion	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4	
Poor Service Quality	14	4	1	2	5	0	0	26	
Prepaid Metering Service	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Property Damage	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Reconnection	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Rebate	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	6	
Refund	1	2	0	0	6	0	0	9	
Security Deposit	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Service Connection	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	
Terms and Condition of Service	2	4	1	2	4	0	0	13	
Unable to get through to Provider	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Unavailability of Facility	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>885</b>	

Table 10: Annual Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Review Periods (2020)				
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Current Quarter (Oct. - Dec.)	Total (Jan - Dec 2022)
Billing Matters	808	632	472	458	2,370
Broken Main	7	2	5	2	16
Customer Service	9	3	2	1	15
Defective Street Lights	4	2	1	0	7
Disconnection	94	85	48	41	268
Equipment Damage	23	18	12	15	68
Guaranteed Standards	25	36	31	35	127
Guaranteed Standards Query	8	5	2	1	16
Health & Safety	15	11	21	14	61
Illegal Connections	11	6	5	3	25
Interruption of Service	144	181	156	118	599
Irregular Supply	13	36	21	20	90
Leak at Meter	8	1	4	7	20
Metering	3	1	2	4	10
Number Portability	5	8	6	1	20
Other	140	85	89	72	386
Payment Arrangement	1	2	1	3	7
Prepaid Phone Cards	0	1	0	0	1
Phone Credit Depletion	6	5	5	4	20
Poor Service Quality	47	27	26	26	126
Prepaid Metering Service	7	8	1	2	18
Property Damage	2	2	4	2	10
Reconnection	22	7	6	6	41
Rebate	30	18	7	6	61
Refund	22	23	17	9	71
Security Deposit	37	16	5	8	66
Service Connection	22	21	19	9	71
Terms & Conditions of Service	53	22	19	13	107
Unable to get through to Service Provider	12	3	5	4	24
Unavailability of Service	1	1	1	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,579</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>4,725</b>

Table 11: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	5	3	8
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 12: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	1	2
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
Property Damage	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 13: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (New Appeals)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Service Standards</b>	<b>% Compliance</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within two business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	80%	Eight (8) out of the ten (10) new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within five business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	90%	Nine (9) out of ten (10) Case Letters were dispatched within the stipulated five business days.
Correspondence Copied to Customer	The 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	100%	Final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline for all six new appeals received for which all relevant information was received.

## Appendix II: 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

### Appendix III: 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 IV: 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 V: 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 VI: 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 <sup>9</sup>
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 <sup>10</sup>
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 (Five) working days
Supervisor’s Review of Final Letter	2 (Two) working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
<b>Total</b>	<b>65 working days</b>

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Subsequent to the review of the providers’ response to OUR’s Case Letter, Follow-up Case Letter or Directive issued, the appeal may be escalated to the Supervisor, Manager or Director and would then be treated as a Special Appeal.

### 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:
  - **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 VII: Process Timelines for NWC Appeals

<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Timelines</u></b>
Acknowledging correspondence & Assigning Appeal	2 working days
Case Letter Preparation	5 working days

Receive NWC's Response/Update	30 working days
Review of Provider Response & prepare Follow-Up (F/U) Case letter or issue Directive (where necessary)	10 working days
Receive response to F/U Case Letter	5 working days
Review Response to F/U Case Letter	5 working days <sup>11</sup>
Final Letter Preparation (Draft)	5 working days
Supervisor's Review of Final Letter	2 working days
Dispatch Final Letter	1 working day
<b>Total</b>	<b>65 working days</b>

### 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

<sup>11</sup> Subsequent to the review of the providers' response to OUR's Case Letter, Follow-up Case Letter or Directive issued, the appeal may be escalated to the Supervisor, Manager or Director and would then be treated as a Special Appeal.

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 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 VIII: 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