
Office of Utilities Regulation

Consumer Affairs Unit

Quarterly Performance Report

2023 April - June

Publication Date: 2022 September 22



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10

Consumer Affairs Unit Quarterly Performance Report

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The Role and Objectives of the OUR

The Office of Utilities Regulation Act of 1995 established the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) as a body corporate. Under the Act, the OUR is charged with 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 normalize the number of contacts by expressing this as per 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:

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Executive Summary

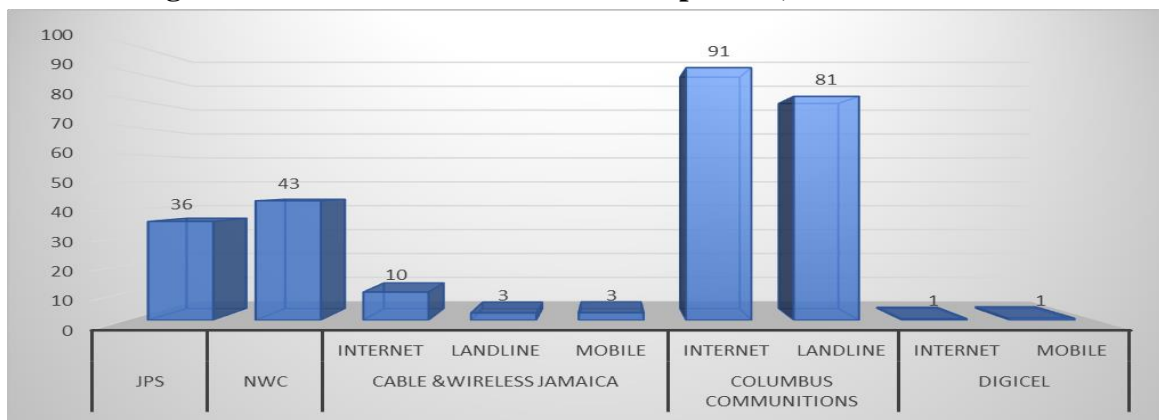
The Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) received 652 contacts during the 2023 April to June period, which represented a 4% decrease when compared to the preceding period. The data show that the most significant reductions were in the complaint categories of: *Billing Matters* (-17%) and *Poor Service Quality* (13%). Despite the overall lower total numbers of contacts: *Irregular Supply and Interruption of Service* saw increases of 213% and 25% respectively, compared with the preceding period.

The following shows the distribution of contacts per service provider¹:

- Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) – 246 (38%)
- National Water Commission (NWC) – 230 (35%)
- Columbus Communications (Flow) – 92 (14%)
- Cable & Wireless Jamaica Ltd. (Flow) – 36 (6%)
- Digicel – 23 (4%)
- Private Water & Sewerage Service Providers, Private Telecommunications Service Providers and Other (Not Utility Provider Related) –25 (3%).

While JPS at 246 accounted for the most contacts, Figure 1 shows that Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for the highest numbers – at 91 and 81 per 100,000 – in proportion to its internet and landline customer bases respectively.

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

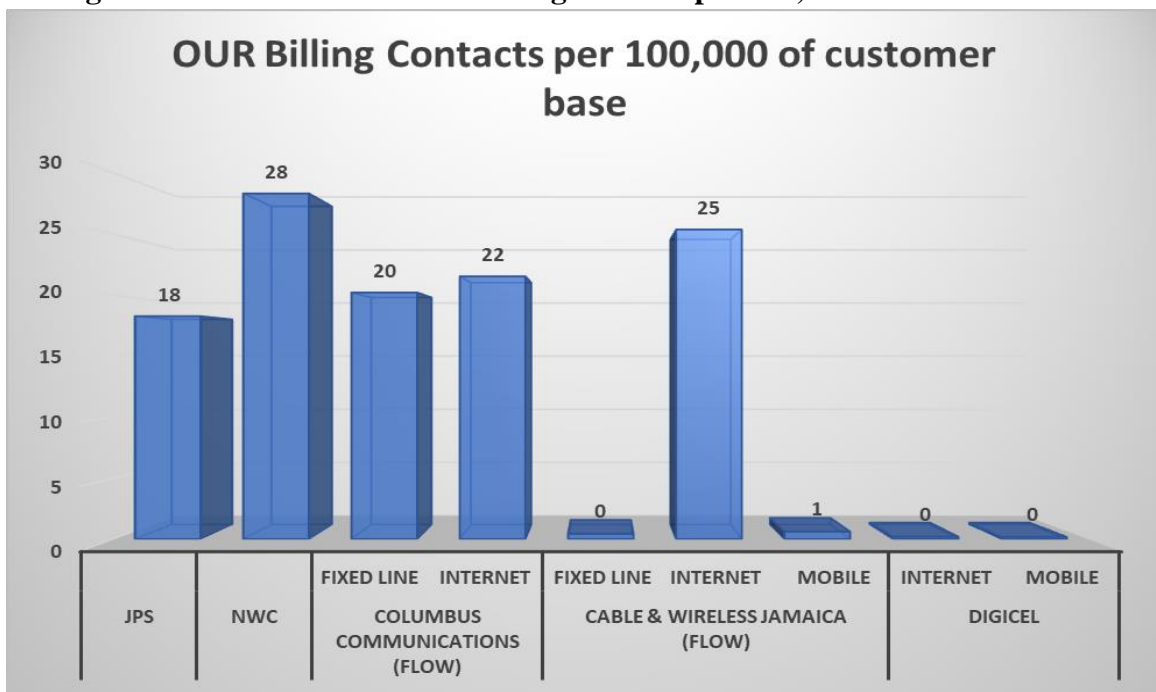


¹ Details on contact distribution per service provider can be seen in Table 7 on page 28.

At 49%, billing matters remained the main reason utility consumers contacted the CAU, representing an eight-percentage point decrease compared to the preceding period. JPS and NWC, with 126 (19%) and 151 (23%) contacts respectively, accounted for the highest number of billing-related matters.

As shown in Figure 2, NWC at 28 per 100,000 of its customer base accounted for the highest number of billing-related contacts. C&WJ (Flow) and Columbus Communications (Flow) followed with 25, 22 and 20 per 100,000 of their internet and fixed line customer bases followed.

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



Service interruption issues, at 15% of total contacts, remained the second highest reason for customer contact to the CAU.

Chapter 1: Utilities' Responsiveness

(i) Acknowledgements

Seven (7) new appeals were accepted for investigation during the review period, with two (2) and five (5) 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 1², JPS attained a perfect score of 100%, while the NWC's attained an 80% compliance rate for the submission of their acknowledgements within the agreed timeline.

Table 1: Acknowledgement within Standard (5 business days)

<i>Quarters (2023)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January - March</i>	83%	89%
<i>April - June</i>	100%	80%

(ii) Response to Case Letters

Service providers are required to respond to case letters within thirty (30) business days. As is shown in Table 2, both JPS and NWC attained compliance ratings of 50% in submitting their responses that were due within the stipulated timeline.

Only one (1) of the two (2) JPS responses due was submitted within the timeline. For the NWC, four (4) of the five (5) responses were due of which four (50%) were received within the stipulated timeline while the other two (2) were received outside of the timeline. The timeline for the remaining NWC response had not expired.

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

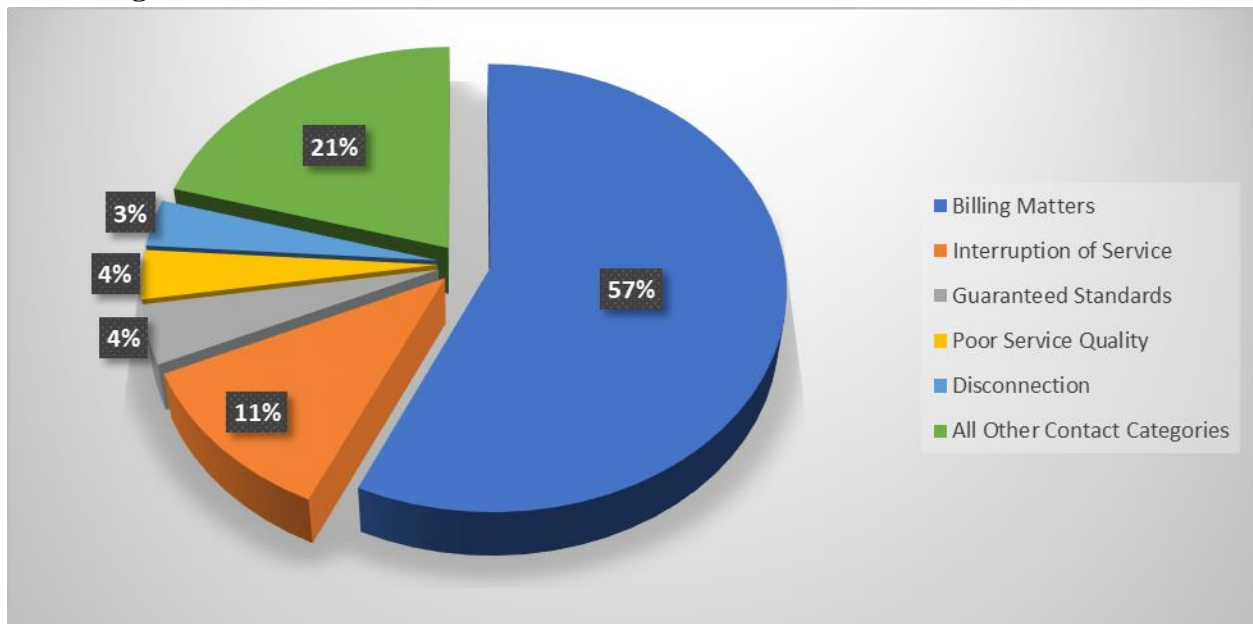
<i>Quarters (2022)</i>	JPS	NWC
<i>January – March</i>	100%	57%
<i>April - June</i>	50%	50%

² Correction: The related verbiage in the January to March QPR should have stated: As shown in Table 1, JPS had an 83% compliance rate, while the NWC compliance rate was 89% in submitting their acknowledgments within the agreed timeline.

Chapter 2: Main Customer Concerns

The main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to Billing, Interruption of Service, Guaranteed Standards, Disconnection, and Poor Service Quality (Figure 3). Further details on all contacts distributed per category are provided in Table 8.

Figure 3: Main Concerns



(i) Billing

Billing matters continued to be the main reason for customer contact, accounting for 49% of total contacts. These matters included high consumption, disputed charges, adjustments to customers' accounts, and estimated billing.

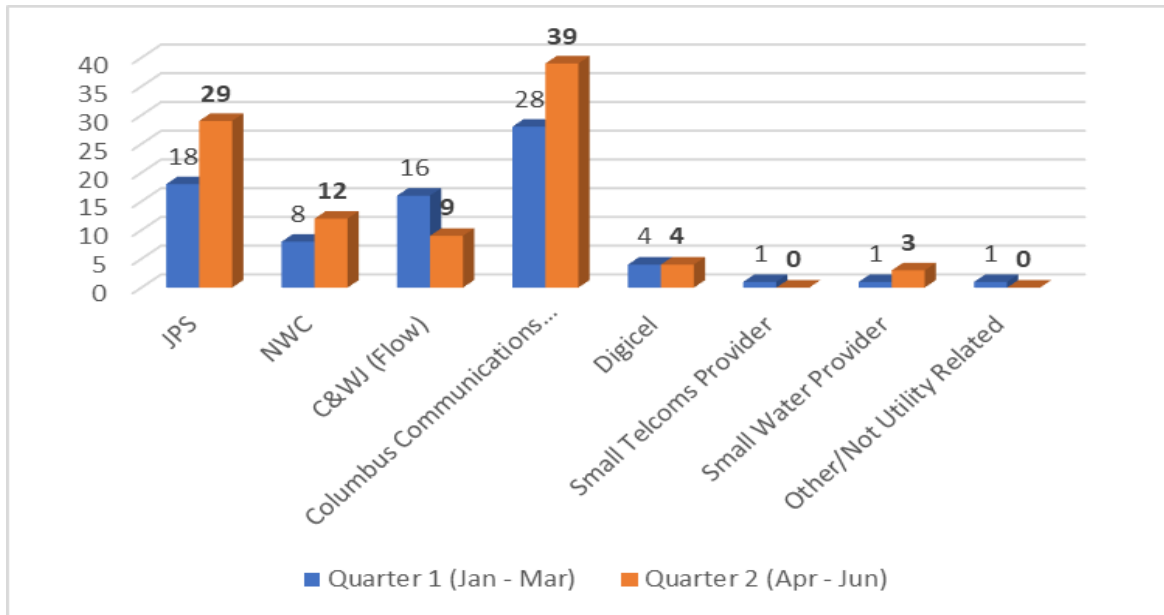
JPS and NWC continued to account for the most billing contacts with 126 (19%) and 151 (23%), respectively. Columbus Communications (Flow) accounted for 22 (3%) while Digicel, C&WJ (Flow), Small Water/Sewerage Service Provides and OUR/Other (Not utility Related) accounted for the remaining 20 (2%).

(ii) Interruption of Service

Service interruption contacts increased by four percentage points, to 15%, and represented a 25% increase in contacts when compared to the preceding quarter. As seen in Figure 4, Columbus

Communications (Flow) with 39 (6%), JPS with 29 (4%) and NWC with 12 (2%) accounted for the highest number of related contacts. C&WJ with 9, Digicel with 4 and small water service providers with 3, accounted for the remaining 3% of contacts.

Figure 4: Quarterly Service Interruption Contacts



(iii) Irregular Supply

Contacts relating to irregular supply accounted for 4% of total contacts and represented the highest increase, of 213%, in a contact category for the review period, moving from 8 contacts in Quarter 1 to 25 contacts for the review period. These contacts related to services provided by JPS (11) and NWC (14).

(iv) Poor Service Quality

Contacts relating to poor service quality remained at 3% with JPS and Columbus Communications (Flow) each accounted for 1% while NWC, Digicel and Hometown Entertainment Ltd. shared the remaining 1%.

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 JPS, NWC, and small water and sewerage service providers. 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?

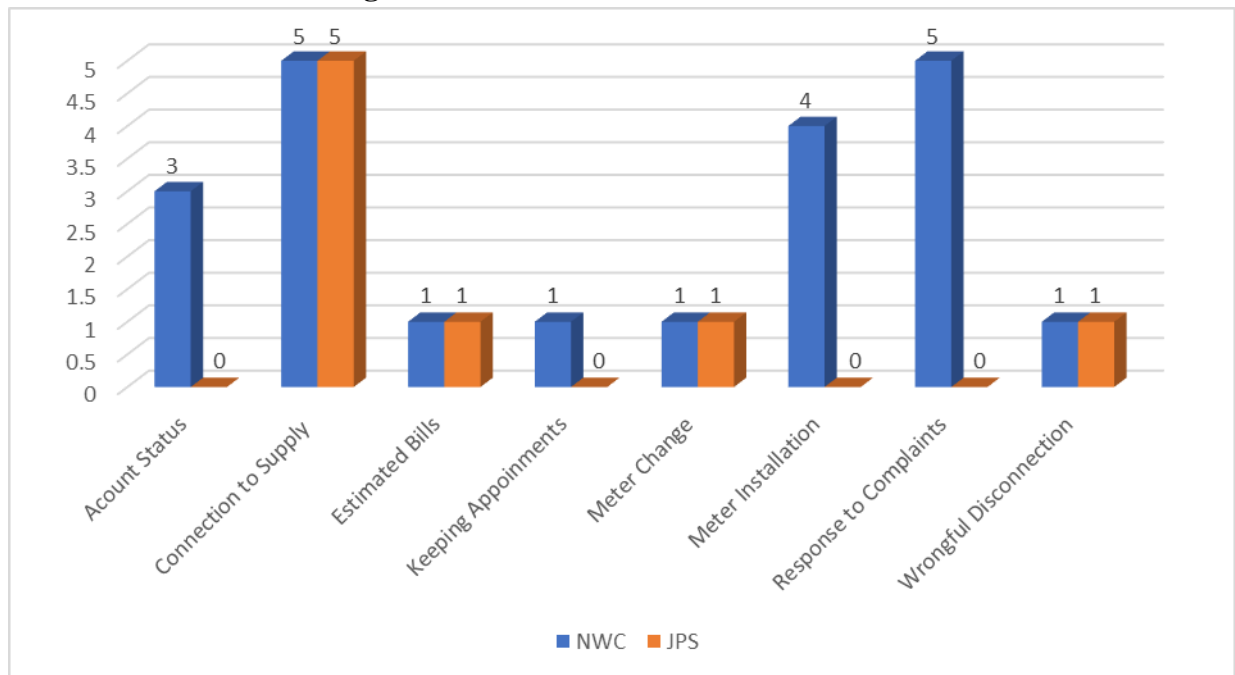
NWC: Compensation for a breach of a standard is four (4) times the applicable service charge OR six (6) times the service charge for those in the special compensation category. Where applicable, customers must submit their claims within 120 days of the breach. Breaches of individual standards will attract 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 twenty-nine (29) 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-one (21) and eight (8) contacts respectively.

As is seen in Figure 5, *Connection to Supply* accounted for the highest number of contacts in relation to alleged breaches of the GS for JPS. For the NWC, *Connection to Supply*, *Response to Complaints* and *Meter Installation* 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 did not reflect the alleged incidents of breaches reported to the OUR. For the NWC, compensation was paid for breaches of WGS 10(a) to the related contact received by the OUR.

(iv) Utilities' Performance on Guaranteed Standards

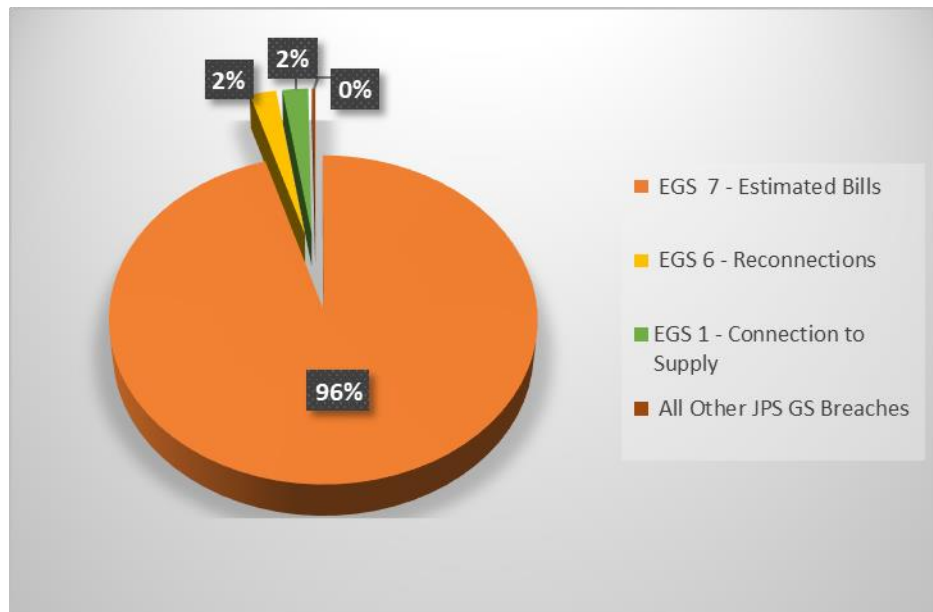
JPS

JPS's compliance report on its GS performance for the review period indicated that 20,894 breaches were committed, representing a 29% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches attracted compensatory payments of approximately \$43.55 million, all of which were applied automatically to the affected customers' accounts.

Guaranteed Standards related to *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) continued to account for the highest incidents of breaches (see Figure 6). These standards accounted for 100% of breaches and compensatory payments respectively.

Figure 6: JPS Reported GS Breaches



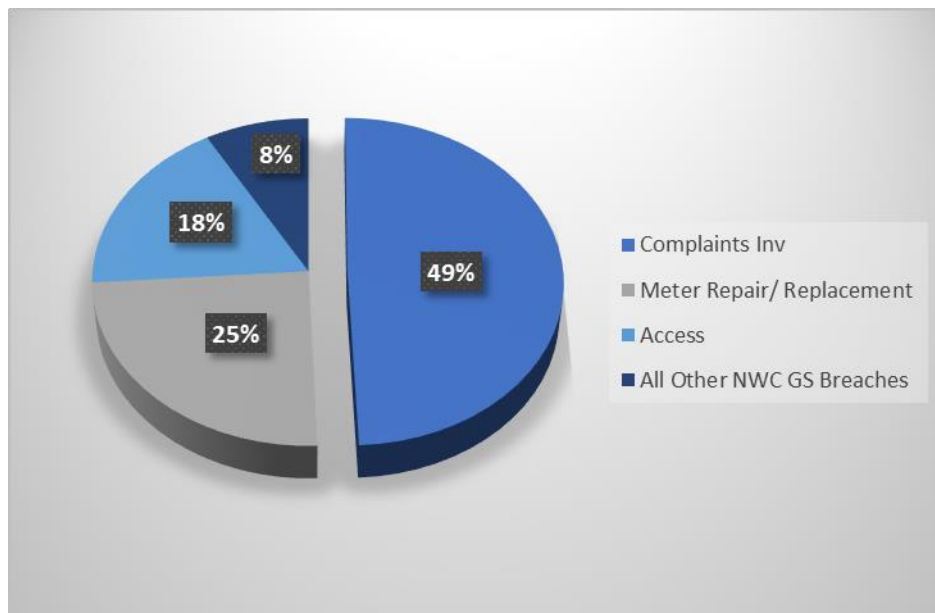
NWC

The NWC's Guaranteed Standards compliance report for the review period indicates that 1,786 breaches were committed during the review period; representing an 11% decrease when compared with the preceding period. These breaches had a potential payout of approximately \$8 million while actual payments amounted to approximately \$1.46 million, or 18% of total potential payments, and were made by way of automatic credits to the affected accounts. The remaining 82% 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 workings days of receipt

of a complaint), Meter Repair/Replacement (which stipulates that defective meters are to be verified, repaired/replaced within 20 working days); and Access/New Service Connection (which requires NWC to connect a new supply within 10 working days). These three (3) standards represented 91% of total breaches and potential payments.

Figure 7: NWC Reported GS Breaches



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

In keeping with the provisions of their Licenses and OUR Determination Notices, licensed 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.

As is shown in Table 3, the PWSSP were mostly compliant as seven (7) of eight (8), representing 88%, submitted their QoS reports for the 2023 April - June period. However, only RESL's submission was received within the stipulated timeline.

Table 3: Private/Small Water and Sewerage Service Providers' QoS Reporting Requirements and Submissions

Licensees to Submit Quarterly QoS Reports	2023 April - June	
	Due Date	Submission Date
Can-Cara Development Ltd. (CDL)	2023.08.15	2023.09.15
Dynamic Environmental Services Ltd. (DEML)		2023.09.01
Dairy Spring Ltd. (DSL)		2023.09.13
Runaway Bay Water Company Ltd (RBWC)		2023.08.16
Landmark Developers Ltd (LDL)		OUTSTANDING
Rosehall Development Ltd. (RDL)		2023.08.18
Richmond Environmental Services Ltd. (RESL)		2023.08.11
Tryall Golf and Beach Club (TGBC)		2023.08.30

Analysis of the quarterly GS reports received from the PWSSP indicates that 6 GS breaches were committed during the review period. For these breaches, potential compensation amounted to approximately \$30,240, with no payments being made. Details of the GS breaches and compensation for the review period for these service providers are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: GS Breaches and Compensation for Private/Small Water and/or Sewerage Service Providers

Service Providers	Total Breaches	Potential Compensation (\$)	Actual Payments (\$)
Can-Cara Development Ltd.	0	0	0
Dairy Spring Ltd.	0	0	0
DEML	0	0	0
RESL	0	0	0

RBWC	0	0	0
RDL	0	0	0
TGBC	6	30,240.00	0
Total	6	30,240.00	0

The analysis also showed that TGBC was responsible for the six (6) GS breaches and potential compensation related to GS 6 *Meter Reading* (which requires all these service providers to bill accounts monthly based on meter readings, where there is access to the meters). For TGBC, customers are required to submit a claim form for the processing of the relevant compensation for a breach of GS 6. TGBC's report indicated that no compensation payment was made as 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:

As seen in Table 5, the NWC Call Centre Report for the review period indicates an increase in the time taken for the *Average Speed of Answer*, *Average Talk Time*, and *Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)* when compared to the preceding period. The *Percentage of Abandoned Calls* increased by 1.7 percentage points and the *Percentage Service Level* fell by three percentage points when compared to the preceding period. However, the NWC's FCR performance improved by four percentage points to 87% over the preceding period, thereby exceeding the agreed target of 70%.

Table 5: NWC's Call Centre Performance

Performance 2023

<i>KPIs</i>	<i>KPI Definition</i>	Jan - Mar	April - Jun
<i>Average Speed of Answer</i>	Average time for answering calls	0:00:19	0:00:39
<i>Average Talk Time</i>	Average time spent talking to customers	0:04:50	0:04:51
<i>Average Length of Call (Call Handle Time)</i>	Combination of Average Talk Time, Average After Call Work and Hold Time	0:06:34	0:07:14
<i>Percentage Service Level</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds	91%	88%

<i>Percentage of Abandoned Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced	1.4%	3.08%
<i>First Call Resolution Rate</i>	Customer's complaint/issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre	83%	87%

JPS:

As seen in Table 6, the JPS Call Centre Report for the review period indicates a reduction in the time taken for the *Average Speed of Answer*, *Average Talk Time*, and *Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)* when compared to the preceding period. The *Percentage of Abandoned Calls* decreased by one percentage point and the Percentage Service level improved by one percentage point over the preceding period. However, JPS's FCR performance fell by 7.1 percentage points, to 63.9% over the preceding period, thereby not attaining the agreed target of 70%.

Table 6: JPS Call Centre Performance

<i>KPIs</i>	KPI Definition	Performance 2023	
		Jan-Mar	Apr - Jun
<i>Average Speed of Answer</i>	Average time for answering calls ³	0:00:19	0:00:17
<i>Average Talk Time</i>	Average time spent talking to customers	0:05:04	0:04:44
<i>Average Length of Calls (Call Handle Time)</i>	Combination of Average Talk Time, Average After Call Work and Hold Time ⁴	0:06:03	0:05:29
<i>Percentage of Abandoned Calls</i>	Percentage of calls not serviced ⁵	2%	1%

³ Within 20 seconds, as per the international standard

⁴ Goal of no more than 5 minutes set by JPS

⁵ Less than or equal to 8%

<i>Service Level Answer</i>	Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds ⁶	94%	95%
<i>First Call Resolution Rate</i>	Customer's complaint/issue being resolved/solved at the first point of contact with the Call Centre	71%	63.9%

⁶ 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 a 72% compliance rating for this standard, indicating that the company fell twenty-eight 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.

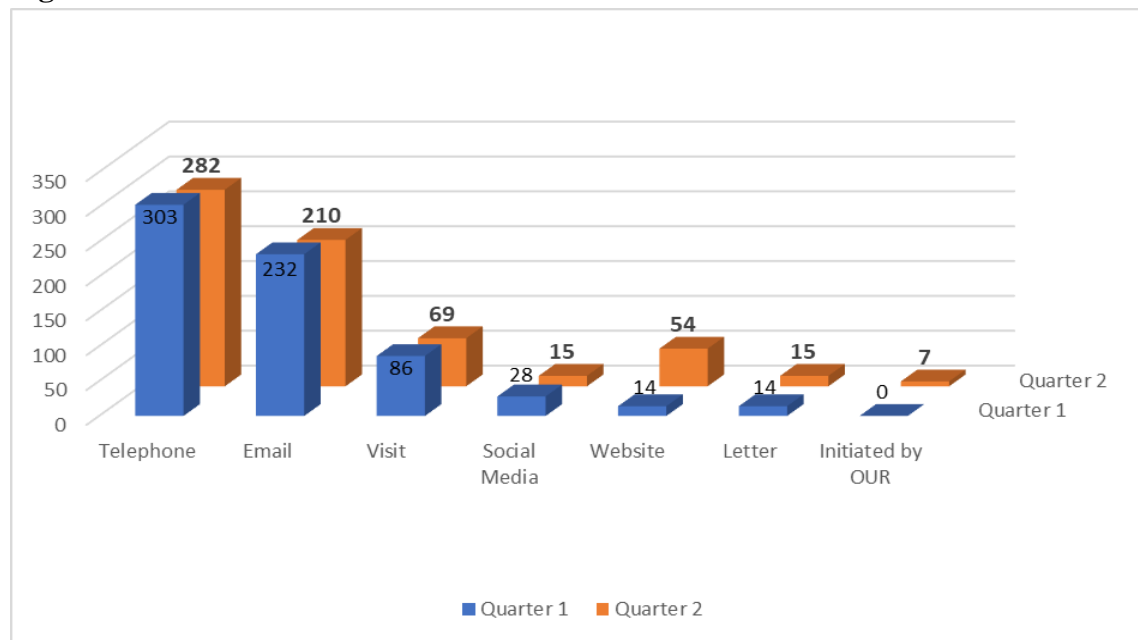
Based on NWC's notifications to the public, none was sent for outages of a duration of no more than 4 hours.

For notifications exceeding four hours, the NWC attained a performance rating of 69% to provide at least 24 hours advance notice, which fell 21 percentage points short of the established target. Of the 16 (16) related notifications received, 11 complied with the stated target.

Chapter 6: Customer Contact Distribution

The telephone, at 282 (43%), continued to be the most frequently used method for customers contacting the OUR. Emails, visits, and website followed with 210 (32%), 69 (11%), and 54 respectively. Social Media, letters and contacts initiated by the OUR shared the remaining 37 (5%). The details are provided in Figure 8.

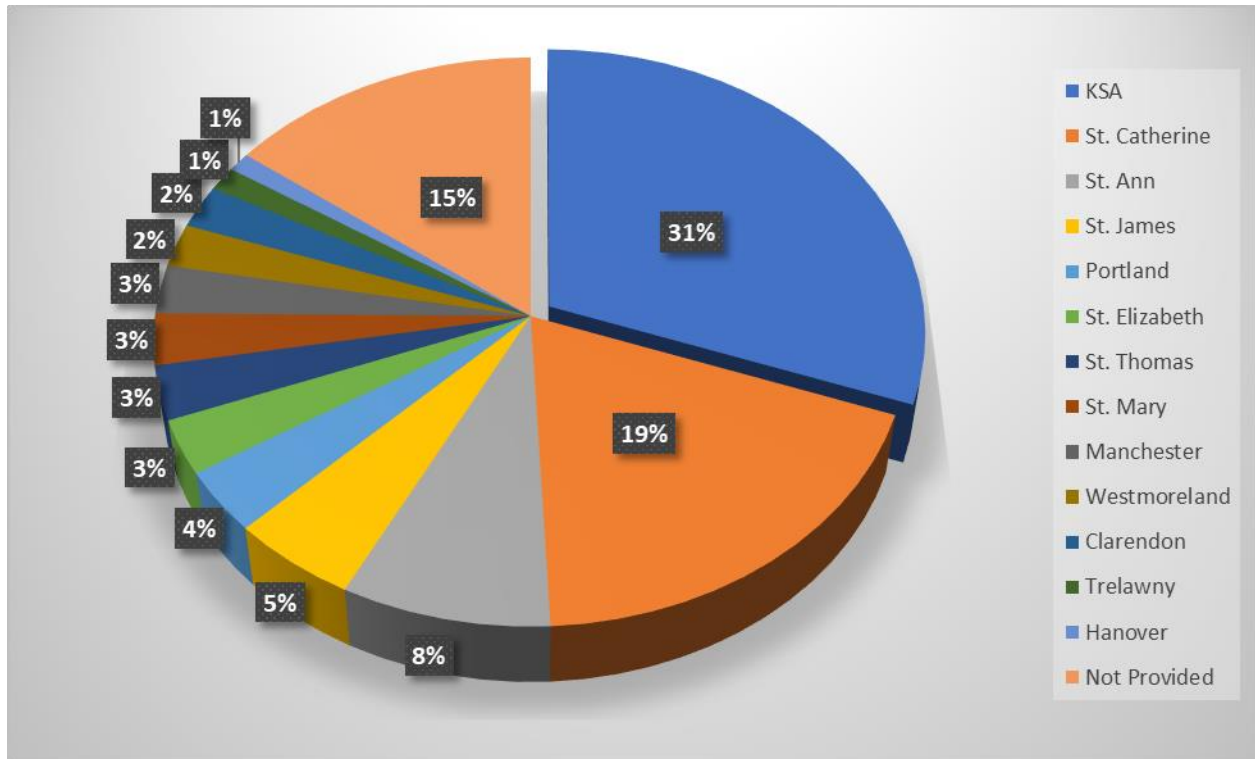
Figure 8: Methods of Contact



Geographical Distribution of Contacts

At 31%, Kingston and St. Andrew continued to account for the most contacts. St. Catherine, St. Ann and St. James followed with 19%, 8% and 5%, respectively. Portland accounted for 4% while all other parishes each had a share of 3% or less. Fifteen percent (15%) 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 ⁷

Thirteen (13) appeals were closed during the review period, with one being resolved in the customer's favour and the remaining twelve being resolved in favour of the utility service providers. Six (6), representing 46% of the closed appeals were resolved within the established sixty-five (65) working days with the remaining seven (7) being closed outside of the timeline.

(ii) Outstanding Appeals ⁸

At the end of the review period, nine (9) appeals remained outstanding in that they exceeded the established 65 business days for resolution. Of these appeals, seven (7) 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 five (5) outstanding appeals, which relate to four (4) billing matters and one (1) disconnection.

Appeals Process Resolution Rate

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

Of the four (4) appeals for which all relevant information was received, final decisions were made and communicated to two (50%) customers (by way of Final Letters), within the established 65 working days. Further details on the CAU's performance on some key Appeals Process activities are provided in Table 11, Appendix I.

⁷ Breakdown of Appeals Closures can be seen in Table 9 on page 29

⁸ Breakdown of Outstanding Appeals can be seen in Table 10 on page 29

Chapter 7: Consumer Affairs Highlights

(i) Credits/Compensation

Through the OUR's intervention, \$468,781.66 was secured for utility consumers. Of this sum, NWC and JPS accounted for \$440,032.09 (94%) and \$21,028.99 (4%), respectively. The remaining 2% was shared between C&WJ (Flow) and Columbus Communications (Flow).

(ii) Investigation into Concerns about the NWC's \$100 Fee for Kiosk Bill Payments

In 2023 January, the NWC advised of its initiative to install bill payment kiosks at its commercial offices to facilitate bill payments. Specifically, the NWC advised that, among other things:

- (a) the installation of kiosks is part of its "*...drive to improve operational efficiency as it integrates digital technologies in all aspects of its business.*
- (b) Customer's use of the kiosks will be optional.
- (c) There is a \$100 fee requirement to use the kiosks.
- (d) Bill payments, reconnection, and new supply service requests and payments made at the kiosks will be updated within 24 hours.
- (e) Kiosks were already installed at its Marescaux Road, Montego Bay and Portmore commercial locations.

Following the NWC's advisory, the OUR began receiving complaints regarding the kiosks, which mainly related to:

- (i) The \$100 customer charge to use the kiosks to pay NWC bills at NWC parish offices; and
- (ii) The kiosk being the only available option to make bill payments in cash at the NWC locations where they are installed.

Consequently, the OUR undertook an investigation into the customers' concerns which included exchange of correspondence, meetings, and a kiosk demonstration at the NWC's Marescaux Road offices. During the investigation, the NWC advised, in 2023 February, that it has reverted to its original decision to use the kiosks as an option only for bill payments being made in cash,

at the offices where they were installed. In addition, the NWC advised that it had suspended the kiosk installation programme.

In 2023 August, the NWC advised the OUR of its intention to complete the kiosk installation at its remaining Commercial Offices island wide. The OUR will therefore continue to monitor this activity to ensure that NWC customers' needs are protected.

Appendices:

Appendix I: List of Tables: 2023 April - June

Table 7: Contact Activity Summary (All Utilities)

	Description	JPS	NWC	C&WJ (FLOW)			Columbus		Digicel			Private Telcoms Providers	Private 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	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(ii)	New Complaints	167	120	2	5	12	53	17	2	1	12	0	9	3	403
(iii)	New Enquires	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	4	16
(iv)	New Opinions	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(v)	New Referrals	74	100	6	1	10	19	2	2	0	3	1	0	7	225
	Total Contacts	246	230	8	6	22	72	20	6	1	16	1	10	14	652
B	Closure/Resolution of Appeals:														
(i)	Resolved in Favour of Customer	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(ii)	Resolved in favour of utility	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
	Total Closures	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
C	Total Appeals from Previous Periods:														
	Outstanding Appeals with OUR														
(i)	Undergoing Analysis/Determination	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
(ii)	Awaiting Service Provider's Response	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total Outstanding Appeals	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9

Table 8: Distribution of Contacts by Categories

Complaint Category	Service Providers									Total
	JPS	NWC	Digicel	C&WJ (FLOW)	Columbus Communications (Flow)	Small/Private Telcoms Providers (Hometime Entertainment Ltd)	Small/Private Water/Sewerage Providers	OUR/Other (Not Utility Related)		
Billing Matters	126	151	7	7	22	0	5	1	319	
Customer Service	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	
Defective Street Lights	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Disconnection	5	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	9	
Equipment Damage	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	
Guaranteed Standards	8	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	
Guaranteed Standards Query	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Health & Safety	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
Illegal Connections	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Interruption of Service	29	12	4	9	39	0	3	0	96	
Irregular Supply	11	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	
Leak at Meter	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Other	15	12	4	8	9	0	0	10	58	
Payment Arrangement	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Phone Credit Depletion	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	8	
Poor Service Quality	5	1	0	3	9	1	1	1	21	
Prepaid Metering Service	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Property Damage	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
RAMI Service Connection	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Reconnection	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Rebate	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	
Refund	1	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	8	
Service Connection	5	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	10	
Terms and Condition of Service	0	2	2	2	3	0	1	0	10	
Unable to get through to Provider	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Total	246	230	23	36	92	1	10	14	652	

Table 9: Distribution of Closed Appeals by Utilities

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	4	6	10
Equipment Damage	1	0	1
Property Damage	2	0	2
Total	7	6	13

Table 10: Distribution of Appeals (Outstanding)

Appeal Category	Service Providers		Total
	JPS	NWC	
Billing Matters	1	4	5
Equipment Damage	2	0	2
Property Damage	1	0	1
Disconnection	0	1	1
Total	4	5	9

Table 11: CAU's Performance on Service Standards (New Appeals)

Activity	Service Standards	% Compliance	Comment
Acknowledgement of Appeals	Within two business days of receipt of customer's correspondence	100%	All new appeals were acknowledged within the established timeline.
Case Letters/ Other Utility Contact	Within five business days of acknowledging customer's correspondence	100%	All new 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	50%	Final responses were prepared and dispatched within the established timeline for two (2) of the four (4) new appeals 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 ⁹
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 ¹⁰
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

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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

<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 ¹¹
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

¹¹ 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