

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Makes Decisions Regarding Complaints Handling by Utility Providers

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2024 March 21): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has issued several decisions regarding complaints handling by utility service providers.

These decisions are contained in the OUR's **Determination Notice for Complaints Handling for Utility Service Providers**, which can be viewed on its website.

They emerged following a consultation process over a three-year period, mainly through discussions and input of the utility service providers at the OUR's annual Quality of Service Symposia between 2018 and 2021, from which the Guidelines for Complaints Handling for Utilities' Service Providers was developed and shared with providers in 2022.

While the Guidelines outline a process to be observed by customer service/customer experience or other staff with responsibility for handling matters of dispute or complaint, the actions outlined in the document were voluntary and left to the discretion of the respective utility service providers.

In recognition that all utility service providers need to have an established complaints handling process in place, the OUR determined that minimum standards should be prescribed to which utility service providers are expected to adhere. This led to the development of the Determination Notice document.

The following decisions are contained in the Determination Notice:

1. **A definition of Complaint that all utility providers will adopt.** Complaints have been defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not and however made, about the standard of, or the delivery of service, the actions or lack of action by the utility service provider, or its staff, which affects an individual service user or groups of users.'*
2. **Complaints Handling Process** - All utility service providers must document and implement a Complaints Handling Process for their customers and publish information on their complaints handling process, including the right of the customer to complain about unsatisfactory service, the process to lodge a complaint, and a commitment to keep customers' data and other personally identifiable information confidential.
3. **Complaints Management System** - All utility service providers must establish a Complaints Management System to include the nature of the problem, the staff member who is handling the complaint, any resolution made by the provider and customer feedback. The Complaints Management System must have proper security features in place to restrict the level of access by staff and how the utility service provider records and notifies affected customers of its decisions or resolves complaints.
4. **Training Manual** - Utility service providers shall establish a Training Manual for customer service representatives.

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QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

OUR RULES: The management and staff of the OUR are committed to Regulating Utility services in accordance with our Legislative powers and to the Enhancement of customer Satisfaction through continual improvement of our quality management system.

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5. **Training and Coaching Programme** - Utility service providers must establish a Training and Coaching Programme for customer service representatives and should engage in at least one training session annually with their customer service staff.
6. **Continual Improvement** – The OUR has determined that utility service providers shall review their Complaints Handling Process and Complaints Management Systems once every four (4) years.

Timelines have been set for the implementation and reporting on each Determination Notice. Details can be found in the [Determination Notice on Complaints Handling for Utility Service Providers](#).

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Contact: OUR's Public Affairs Unit - 876-968-6053 or publicaffairs@our.org.jm

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