

## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### OUR ASKS JPS TO DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS OFFICE CLOSURES

**(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2025 May 18):** The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has asked the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS) to develop a plan of action to address the gap in customer access to their services caused by the closure of ten (10) of its fifteen (15) Customer Service Offices (CSOs) across the island between February 2020 and March 2021.

Having analysed the results of the OUR's Parish Closure Impact Assessment (Phase 2), the OUR has asked JPS to review the space it has made available for customers to interface with JPS staff and develop a customer solution that satisfies face-to-face requests for its services, such as new service applications, reporting complaints, making bill queries and requests for service reconnection and disconnection.

JPS is to consider and action recommendations for opening convenient hubs in high-traffic areas and/or at post office locations, making the MyJPS Mobile App zero-rated to offset any increased cost to customers to access JPS services through this channel, and negotiating with bill payment agencies to install courtesy phones at these locations.

The impact assessment study found that seventy-seven percent (77%) of JPS's customers in parishes without CSOs want the offices to be reopened.

The study found that cost, convenience, and access are the main reasons why nearly eighty percent (80%) of JPS customers surveyed think they should reopen some of their offices. This despite customer satisfaction with intermediary bill payment agencies and other channels such as the mobile app and online payment portals. Notably, only five (5) JPS CSOs now serve over half a million customers, with only two offices serving customers in each of the counties of Cornwall and Surrey.

OUR Director General, Ansord Hewitt, in reacting to the findings, says, *"The study conveys the sentiment of most of JPS's customers impacted by the office closures, and certainly, the views of those with whom we have interacted in the various communities and through our Consumer Affairs Unit. The OUR takes customer care and customer service seriously and has made great efforts to address this issue. While the OUR is reluctant to prescribe specific modes for utilities to address their customer service obligations, it remains unequivocal in its position that the options offered must not impose undue inconvenience or hardship for customers to access or make use of them. In this regard, we encourage JPS to consider creating more face-to-face options for customers and explore other options to close the gaps highlighted by affected customers."*

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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.

**ISO 9001:2015 certified**

The research was commissioned by the OUR in light of the public outcry about the office closures, and JPS's announced initiatives to mitigate the impact of such closures on its customers.

The OUR found it necessary to conduct a scientific impact assessment to *inter alia*: assess the effect the closures have had on customers and the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the measures/channels implemented by JPS to deliver customer service.

JPS justified the closures by citing dwindling walk-in visits to their CSOs, fuelled by digitisation and further impelled by the Government and globally imposed 'no-contact' COVID-19 policies, which restricted customer footprint.

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