

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR Mystery Shopping Survey Finds Persistent Customer Service Gaps Across Major Utility Providers

(Kingston, Jamaica; 2026 July 17): Customers of Jamaica's four major utility providers, Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPS), National Water Commission (NWC), Digicel, and Flow, continue to face delays, inconsistent communication, and incomplete resolutions when seeking assistance through call centres, website chat platforms, and social media channels.

These shortcomings were a key finding of the Office of Utilities Regulation's (OUR) 2025 Mystery Shopping Survey, which highlighted gaps in customer service delivery across multiple service channels. The study found that utility customers' experiences include:

- Long wait times, especially during peak periods.
- Inconsistent answers to basic queries (such as bill explanations, payment updates, service applications, refunds, contract termination).
- Incomplete or contradictory instructions from agents.
- Unclear escalation processes, with shoppers often rerouted or told to "call back".

Director of Consumer & Public Affairs at the OUR, Yvonne Nicholson, is urging utility service providers to consider recommendations from the OUR, which include: building or expanding a unified customer experience standard that includes maximum wait-time thresholds for call centres, in-store visits, and digital channels, as well as mandatory response-time key performance indices for social media and chat; standardised scripts for complex processes and annual certification of frontline staff.

OUR's annual Mystery Shopping Survey, conducted by Market Research Services Ltd., involved individuals across all demographic groups who visited, called, and participated in online chats with the various stores, call centres, and chat rooms of the different service providers. There was a total of four hundred and thirty-seven (437) interactions. The data was collected between 2025 August and 2025 October.

The research found that, when given an option, customers did not always choose digital access as their "first choice". Aggregate digital scores remain around 59–63%, well below in-store scores and, in some cases, call-centre scores. The findings showed that website chat and social media often fail to resolve issues, especially complex ones such as refunds, contract termination, and detailed billing queries.

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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

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