

## **Utility customers reap almost \$130 million through OUR-led actions**

**(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2018 April 19):** Last year utility customers benefitted from payouts of \$129,383,876.97 as a result of breaches of the Guaranteed Standards as well as credits and compensation secured for them by the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU).

The Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) and National Water Commission (NWC) paid out approximately \$127.8 as a result of breaches of the Guaranteed Standards. Of this sum, approximately \$124 million was paid by JPS and \$3,840,000 by NWC. An additional sum of \$1.5 million was secured in credits and compensation for utility customers through actions taken by the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU). JPS and NWC accounted for 18% and 80% of total credits respectively, with the remaining 2% being secured from C&WJ (FLOW) and Columbus Communications (Flow).

For the year 2017, JPS committed a total 75,571 breaches which attracted potential compensation of approximately \$151.8 million. Actual payments amounted to approximately \$124 million, representing 82% of total potential amounts, which was paid out through automatic compensation. The remaining 18% of compensation not paid related to the few breaches for which the required claim forms were not submitted for validation.

In 2017, the NWC committed a total of 2,561 breaches of the Guaranteed Standards which attracted potential compensation of approximately \$8.1 million. Actual payments amounted to approximately \$3.84 million, representing 47% of total potential amounts with the remaining 53% not being paid as the required claim forms were not submitted.

This data is from the OUR's Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) for October to December 2017, which also gave a snapshot of activities for all of 2017. The Quarterly Performance Report is prepared by the CAU and provides the public with information and analysis about the contacts received from utility customers. 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 performance of the Unit against the Appeals Process timelines. The statistics for each reporting period is gathered from our Customer Information Database and is reflective of the contacts received from utility consumers island-wide. These contacts are received via various channels, namely: letters, telephone, walk-in, e-mails, fax and social media.

A total of 1,047 contacts were received by the CAU during the October - December 2017 quarter. This represents the highest number of contacts received in any one quarter throughout calendar year 2017. With the exception of equipment damage complaints, there was a general increase in all other main complaint categories. Service interruption, unavailability of service and disconnection showed the greatest increases over the preceding period at 64%, 45% and 33% respectively. The data for geographic distribution of contacts shows that 55% of contacts were from the Kingston Metropolitan Region.

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For the quarter under review, JPS paid out over \$38.9 million to customers for 19,241 breaches of the Guaranteed Standards. The total amount was paid out by way of automatic compensation. The NWC paid over \$1.1 million (74% of total potential payment) to customers for the 483 breaches committed of the Guaranteed Standards during the October-December 2017 quarter. This was paid by way of automatic compensation on customers' bills. Unpaid compensation for the NWC totaling \$399,774.32 resulted from customers not claiming for breaches.

Utility customers who used the OUR's Appeals Process during the review period received credits (or compensation) in the sum of \$50,923.18. NWC, at 83%, accounted for the greater share of the credits secured by the CAU, while Digicel accounted for the remaining 17%.

During the quarter, the two main reasons for utility customers contacting the CAU related to billing (46%) and interruption of service (23%). Other utility customer concerns were: Guaranteed Standards (3%), customer service (3%), unavailability of service (3%), equipment damage (2%), disconnection (2%) and redress not received (2%). Completing the list was 'All other categories', representing 17% of all contacts.

Examine the latest Quarterly Performance Report on our website: [www.our.org.jm](http://www.our.org.jm). Access it directly at: [http://www.our.org.jm/ourweb/sites/default/files/documents/business\\_plan/revise%20final%20quarterly%20performance%20report%20october%20-%20december%202017.pdf](http://www.our.org.jm/ourweb/sites/default/files/documents/business_plan/revise%20final%20quarterly%20performance%20report%20october%20-%20december%202017.pdf)

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