

NEWS RELEASE

OUR intervenes to reduce Customers' Credit Depletion Complaints

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2018 January 17): The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has intervened on behalf of consumers, concerning credit depletion complaints against telecommunications operator, Digicel. As a result of OUR's intervention, the number of complaints from Digicel's customers regarding this issue has been significantly reduced.

Specifically, customers have complained to the OUR's Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) that their call credit was being used for data services whenever their data credit expired. This was being done without notification from the operator that their data credit is nearing exhaustion, or has been exhausted.

Data from the CAU revealed a significant jump in complaints from customers about call credit depletion, during the 2017 April-June quarter. The OUR received twenty six (26) complaints in that quarter, compared to no complaints for the 2017 January-March period. During the 2017 July-September period, only three (3) contacts were received on this matter. The data is derived from conventional contact with customers as well as customers' complaints on social and mainstream media.

Following on meetings and correspondence between Digicel and the OUR, which started in 2017 July, Digicel advised that credit depletion mitigation measures were being implemented, which included a reconfiguration of their system which would result in a ceiling being set for data allotment under a prescribed plan. This configuration does not allow access to data once a customer's data plan expires. Digicel further advised that where data is depleted on handsets with LTE feature, the company will absorb all associated costs until the end of 2017, when the proposed system changes were to be fully implemented.

Since the implementation of these mitigation measures, Digicel has advised that it has seen a reduction in complaints related to data charges/credit depletion to its Customer Care Centre. Data from the CAU for the 2017 October–December period also confirmed the downward trend with only one complaint being received. Notwithstanding, given that the full implementation of the mitigation measures would not have been completed until the end of 2017, the OUR will conduct a further assessment within the first quarter of 2018.