



Fair Trading Commission

**Analysis of Cable & Wireless (Barbados) Limited
Annual Standards
of Service Report**

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

December 13, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

This report analyses Cable & Wireless (Barbados) Limited's (C&W) Standards of Service performance from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Analysed herein are the Guaranteed Standards of Service (hereinafter referred to as Guaranteed Standards or "GTS"), which measure C&W's compliance in relation to the standards of its fixed-line services. Failure to meet a Guaranteed Standard requires C&W to compensate the affected customer. Thus, this report also documents C&W's compensation to customers for the period under review while also comparing compensation paid to consumers from 2019 to 2022. Included in the reporting of customer claims is analysis of the number of customer claims eligible for compensation and actual compensation paid.

This report also analyses Overall Standards of Service (hereinafter referred to as Overall Standards or "OTS"). Overall Standards measure C&W's efficiency in delivering its services to its customers at the national level.

It is important to note that the Commission issued a Standards of Service Decision on December 13, 2022, which became effective on January 1, 2023. Therefore, this report records the Standards of Service performance in relation to the previous Standards of Service Decision which covered the period April 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, whereas the December 13 Decision covers the period January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023. The December 13 Decision includes the following amendments to the Standards:

- The target to install or transfer a residential customer's service has been reduced from seven (7) days to five (5) days;
- The "Response to Customer Complaints" Standard has been removed and replaced with the Standard "Customer Complaint Resolution Time";
- The target for "Customer Appointments" have been amended from two (2) time periods for appointments to four (4) time periods; instead of appointments scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 12:01 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.,

appointments are scheduled between the hours of (8:00 – 10:00, 10:00 – 12:00, 12:00 – 14:00 and 14:00-16:00);

- The target for “Billing Accuracy” has been amended from billing errors being corrected within thirty (30) days of notification by the customer to bills being 100% error free;
- There is the introduction of a new Standard referred to as “Account Cancellation Time after Customer Request”; and
- There is the introduction of an Overall Standard referred to as “Complaint Resolution Rate”.

The analyses in this document are a continuation of the Commission’s approach which has been used since the establishment of the Standards of Service regime. The target applied to each standard has been informed from public consultation and a written hearing where all stakeholders had the opportunity to participate. With respect to a threshold of non-compliance where there is no specific target, the analysis makes an informed determination based on previous enforcement experience since the imposition of the Standards of Service framework, to determine whether C&W’s performance is satisfactory.

1.0 GUARANTEED STANDARDS OF SERVICE

This section reviews C&W's compliance with regard to the nine (9) Guaranteed Standards categories. Each Guaranteed Standard is assessed based on the percentage of compliance, and is compared to the level of compliance in the previous review period. Failure to meet Guaranteed Standards requires C&W to compensate each affected customer via credits to the affected customer's account. For most Guaranteed Standards, a breach results in automatic compensation.

Another consideration worthy of note is the difference which occurs between eligible compensation and actual compensation paid. This occurs because credits are normally applied to customers' accounts in the month following the confirmation of the breach of the Standard, and for that reason, actual compensation and eligible compensation for the review period may differ.

Captured in **Figure 1** is C&W's performance from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. Note, the level of compliance is divided into two categories, namely, compliance with regard to residential customers and business customers. Discussed herein are the different targets which apply to each category of customer for each Guaranteed Standard.



- GTS 1- Installation or Transfer of Service
- GTS 2 - Fault Repair
- GTS 3 - Repeated Loss of Service
- GTS 4 – Response to Customer Complaint/Customer Complaint Resolution Time
- GTS 5 - Customer Appointments
- GTS 6 - Reconnection after Disconnection for Non-payment
- GTS 7 - Wrongful Disconnection
- GTS 8 - Billing Accuracy

GTS 4 Target I - acknowledgement of complaints forwarded by registered mail shall occur within seven (7) working days of receipt of the complaint. Complaints delivered to C&W's head office on its approved official complaint form must be acknowledged immediately.

GTS 4 Target II - acknowledgement of telephone, fax or email complaints shall occur within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint.

Figure 1: Guaranteed Standards of Service Compliance Rates (April 2021-March 2022)

GTS 1 – Installation or Transfer of Service

GTS 1 refers to the time taken between the customer’s application for a new service or a transfer of service and the actual installation or transfer of service. The target for

compliance is that service installation or transfer should take no more than five (5) working days.¹

Table 1: GTS 1 Installation or Transfer of Service Compliance Rates

April 1, 2021 - March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
96.26%	97.93%	95.67%	97.78%

Business category

For the year under review there were 14 reported breaches compared to 10 breaches in the previous period. For the current period, compliance was 95.67%, whereas in 2021-2022 it was 96.26%, a difference of -0.59%.

Residential category

For the residential category, there were 47 reported breaches compared to 43 reported breaches in the previous period. For the current period, compliance was 97.78%, whereas in 2021-2022 it was 97.93%, a difference of -0.15%.

GTS 2 - Fault Repair

This Standard requires that faults due to failure of C&W’s network/equipment are corrected in no more than two (2) days for both residential and business customers. This does not include faults which result from customer-owned equipment or the inside wiring at the customer’s residence.²

¹ “Working Days” refers to Mondays to Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. only and excludes public holidays and weekends. In measuring the response time for targets expressed in terms of working days, the day the complaint is made is excluded. Any other reference to days means calendar days.

² ‘Fault’ and ‘Loss of Service’ have the same definition.

Table 2: GTS 2 Fault Repair Compliance Rates

April 1, 2021 – March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
70.78%	76.87%	81.31%	76.52%

Business category

C&W reported 199 breaches with a compliance of 81.31%. This is a significant reduction of breaches compared to 2021-2022, which had 411 breaches with 70.78% compliance.

Residential category

Compliance for the residential category averaged 76.52%. There were 1,886 breaches compared to 2,747 breaches during the 2021-2022 period. Despite the significant decrease in breaches, compliance actually decreased from 76.87%. Though marginal, this is a decrease nonetheless. Performance in 2021-2022 was attributed to the impact of the “freak storm” which occurred on June 16, 2021, but C&W has attributed its performance in 2022-2023 to damaged fibre and multiple network node outages. According to C&W, “there were material issues with reference to having the damaged fibre resolved”. C&W attributed the decline in its performance to the impacts of the storm. The storm caused power outages, fallen trees and infrastructure damage and disruptions due to severe thunder showers with over 4,7000 lightning strikes in an hour, high winds, and heavy rainfall. In light of nature of the event, C&W compliance is considered under *force majeure*.

GTS 3 - Repeated Loss of Service

Loss of service is defined as disrupted or degraded service including, inter alia, no dial tone. This Guaranteed Standard dictates that there should be no reoccurrence of a fault of the same nature on C&W’s network within 30 days of occurrence of the original fault.

Table 3: GTS 3 Repeated Loss of Service Compliance Rates

April 1, 2021 - March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
97.43%	97.26%	96.99%	97.97%

Business category

Compliance decreased marginally to 96.99% from 97.43% with a corresponding marginal increase in breaches, which tallied to 32 as compared to 29 in the previous period.

Residential category

In the residential category, compliance increased marginally with a corresponding decrease in breaches. Compliance and the number of breaches were 97.97% and 140, respectively.

GTS 4 - Response to Customer Complaints /Customer Complaint Resolution Time

As mentioned earlier, Response to Customer Complaints covered the period April 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, whereas Customer Complaint Resolution Time covered the period January 1, 2023 to March 31 2023.

Response to Customer Complaints stipulates the maximum allowable time in which C&W shall acknowledge a customer’s complaint relating to billing, malfunctioning network or quality of service. An acknowledgement occurs when C&W communicates to the customer orally, in writing or electronically that it has received their complaint. The targets for compliance are segmented in two general categories as follows:

- i. **Target I**— acknowledgement of complaints forwarded by registered mail shall occur within seven (7) working days of receipt of the complaint. Complaints delivered to C&W’s head office on its approved official complaint form must be acknowledged immediately.

- ii. **Target II**– acknowledgement of telephone, fax or email complaints shall occur within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint.

Table 4: GTS 4 Response to Customer Complaints

April 1, 2021 - March, 30, 2022				April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023			
Business Category		Residential Category		Business Category		Residential Category	
Target I	Target II	Target I	Target II	Target I	Target II	Target I	Target II
93.62%	83.63%	100%	90.95%	NA%	100.00%	100.00%	98.89%

Business category

There were no instances related to Target I, hence, there were no breaches or data to compute compliance. Target II had 100% compliance which, when considered with respect to either Target I or Target II in the previous period, is a significant improvement.

Residential category

Compliance for Target I was, full compliance at 100.00%. Target II improved from 90.95% to 98.89% with 38 breaches. This is again a high level of compliance, and as such, do not raise compliance concerns.

GTS 4 - Customer Complaint Resolution Time (New)

This Standard stipulates the minimum time to resolve an individual customer’s complaint from the time the complaint is made either via telephone, email or post. The Standard is meant to be a catchall for all complaints that could be brought against C&W in relation to regulated services. For the avoidance of doubt, the term ‘complaint’ shall be defined as any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer of C&W’s regulated services, related to service/network functionality, billing or customer service. Resolution in this instance occurs when C&W has assessed the customer’s complaint, has made a decision on the facts presented and has communicated this to the customer. Should the customer be in disagreement with C&W’s decision, he or she may submit an official complaint to

the Commission for final resolution of the disputed issue. C&W is exempted if the issue was caused by the customer's internal wiring.

For the year under review, this Standard has been enforced in the last quarter in the period under review. Thus far, there have been two (2) breaches, with an average compliance of 98.33%. in the business category. There were no breaches under the residential category, hence, there is no data with which to compute compliance.

GTS 5 - Customer Appointments

This Standard covers scheduled appointments by C&W's agents to correct faults on the network where access to customer premises is necessary but restricted. The appointments are to correct faults on the C&W's network up to and including the network interface device. The targets for this Standard have been revised in the December 13, 2022 Decision, therefore, for the period under review, two targets have been applied. With regard to the previous target, appointments are to be kept but may be rescheduled upon notifying the customer at least eight (8) hours prior to the scheduled appointment. All customer appointments should be honoured with the following compliance targets:

- i. Appointments may be scheduled: Morning (8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon) or afternoon (12:01 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)
- ii. Appointments may be rescheduled; however, the customer must be notified at least eight (8) working hours prior to the scheduled appointment.

With regard to target in the revised Standard stipulated in the December 13, 2022 Decision, all scheduled appointments should be honoured. In addition, the target for "Customer Appointments" has been amended from two (2) time periods for appointments to four (4) time periods; pursuant to the revised Standard appointments must be scheduled between the hours of (8:00 – 10:00, 10:00 – 12:00, 12:00 – 14:00 and 14:00 - 16:00).

Table 5: GTS 5 Customer Appointments

April 1, 2021 – March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
98.07%	97.72%	96.90%	97.41%

Business category

There were 32 breaches and an average compliance of 96.90%. The previous period had 27 breaches and an average compliance of 98.07%. This is also a marginal decrease in compliance compared to the previous period, but a satisfactory performance nonetheless.

Residential category

Compliance decreased marginally from 97.72% to 97.41%, but there were 201 breaches compared to 349 in the previous year. A marginal decline in compliance with significantly less breaches do not raise any compliance concerns.

GTS 6 – Reconnection after Disconnection for Non-Payment

This Guaranteed Standard requires that both residential and business customers be reconnected within six (6) working hours³ of notification of payment being received by C&W’s call centre.

Table 6: GTS 6 Reconnection after Disconnection for Non-Payment

April 1, 2021 – March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
100.00%	99.84%	100.00%	99.98%

Business category

Compliance was again 100% for GTS 6. C&W systems continue to work efficiently in restoring customers’ services after disconnection for non-payment.

³ “Working hours” are between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on a working day.

Residential category

Compliance was again high in the residential category –in this period 99.98%. It is worthy to note that residential disconnections as a result on non-payments are thousands of times more than in the business category. The business category tends to have single digit disconnections, whereas residential disconnections can range from 1,500 to 7,500. As such it can be expected that there may be a few breaches.

GTS 7 - Wrongful Disconnection

This Guaranteed Standard refers to the loss of service due to system errors by the service provider. The target for residential and business customers is reconnection within 1 (one) working hour of notification by the customer. Note, this does not apply where disconnection arises out of circumstances pertaining to an overdue amount.

Table 7: GTS 7 Wrongful Disconnection

April 1, 2021 - March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
17.00%	21.29%	5.56%	13.13%

Business category

Performance in this category is again less than satisfactory with even a further decline in compliance compounded by declines in the two previous periods. With 5.56% compliance, C&W continues to state:

C&W's justification for not meeting target

C&W's justification is the same as the last quarter. C&W said the following:

*"Customers are calling the Contact Centre to report these disconnections. Because they are business accounts, if they are not straightforward issues, the [Contact Centre] escalates to the business Support teams for investigation. This process usually takes more than an hour and so the standard cannot be met."*⁴

⁴ Cable and Wireless (Barbados) Limited. FTC Reporting GTS Q1-2023.pdf

This low level of performance will have to be addressed with urgency. Staff will devise a plan to ensure satisfactory performance in this Standard.

Residential category

Compliance was 13.13%. C&W continues to cite the same reasons for its underperformance. As stated in Cable and Wireless (Barbados) Limited. FTC Reporting GTS Q1-2023 pdf document dated April 27, 2023.

“ Though recording average times in excess of one hour, the majority of recorded breaches did not arise due to the fault of the company. Payments in these instances were made through a third party and not recorded on our system at the point of disconnection. These require investigation to track and apply the payment to the account and in most cases this process would inevitably mean the one working hour deadline is missed on this standard.”⁵

GTS 8 - Billing Accuracy

This refers to the incidence of billing errors on customers’ individual billing statements. The target for residential and business customers is that billing errors are to be corrected within thirty (30) days of notification by the customer.

Table 8: GTS 8 Billing Accuracy

April 1, 2021 - March, 30, 2022		April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023	
Business Category	Residential Category	Business Category	Residential Category
97.37%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Business category

C&W’s 100.00% compliance demonstrates that the Commission’s revised target that bills should be 100% error free is an effective target. This high level of compliance indicates

⁵ Ibid.

that the imposition of this standard is not only effective but achievable and protective of consumers.

Residential category

Full compliance was again achieved over this period.

GTS 9 - Account Cancellation Time

This Standard stipulates the minimum time in which a customer's account shall be cancelled after the customer's request. All requests for cancellation must be recorded either physically or digitally and each customer must be given a copy of said request. C&W shall not be allowed to issue any new charges on the account for any period beyond five (5) working days after the request is made. For example, if a customer requests cancellation on the day before his/her next cycle begins, C&W may charge on a pro rata basis for service during the five (5) working days allowed to effect full cancellation of the account, not thereafter. In addition, no charges should accrue beyond the five (5) day period, if charges accrue, the customer shall receive full compensation for those charges.

This Standard has been in place for the last quarter of 2022 - 2023. There were no instances in the business category, thus, there is no data with which to compute compliance. In the residential category, there were 487 breaches with an average compliance of 73.9%.

Customer Claims Summary

Customers are compensated by direct credit to their accounts for breaches of Guaranteed Standards of Service. **Figure 2** shows compensation for 2019 to 2022 and January to March 2023. In 2022 and January to March 2023, C&W paid \$46,380 and \$21,835.82, respectively. In 2022, there were 2,533 persons eligible for compensation, whereas from January to March 2023, there were 685 persons. As eligible compensation is usually brought forward from one period to another due to the lag in settlement of claims, one sees that the percentage of compensation paid normally exceeds 100%.

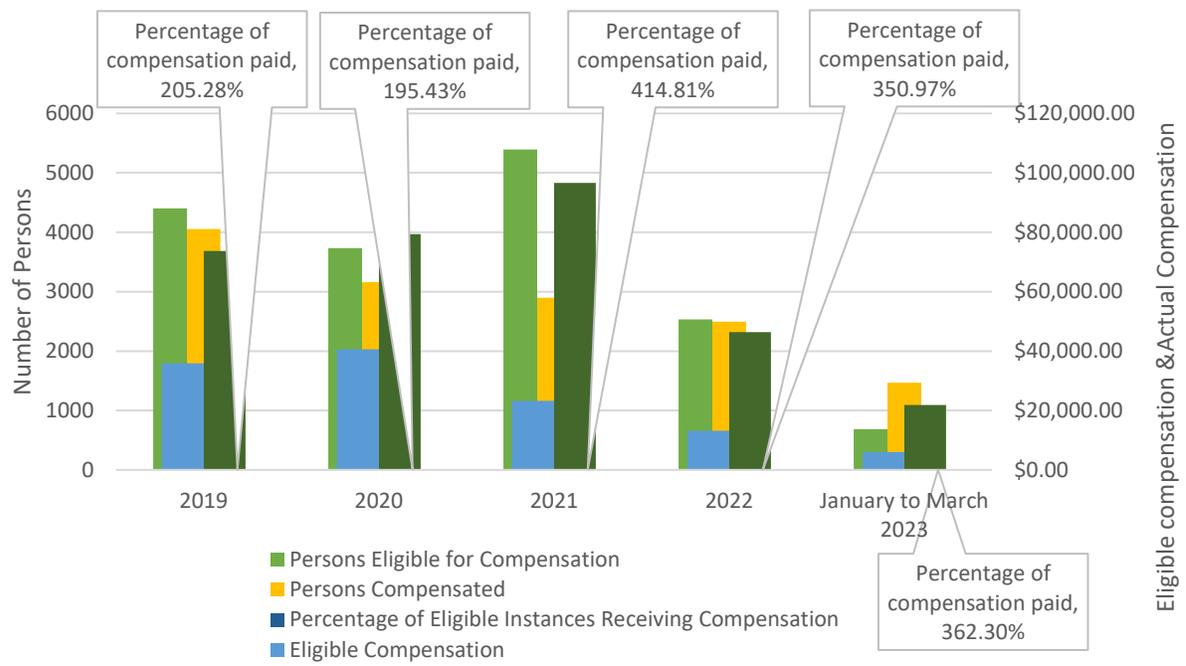


Figure 2: Customer Claims Summary (2019-2022 and January to March 2023)

2.0 OVERALL STANDARDS OF SERVICE

Overall Standards of Service (OTS) assess C&W's performance at the national level. Similar to Guaranteed Standards, it covers the provision of fixed line telephony services, however there is no compensation to individual customers in the event of a breach. Where a breach persists, the Commission may invoke Section 43 of the Fair Trading Commission Act, CAP. 326 of the Laws of Barbados and Sections 31 and 38 of the Utilities Regulation Act, CAP. 282 of the Laws of Barbados, which allow for the imposition of fines.

As was the case in the previous period, **Figure 3** shows deficiencies in compliance with regard to breaches in OTS 1 and OTS 6 and satisfactory performance in the other Standards.

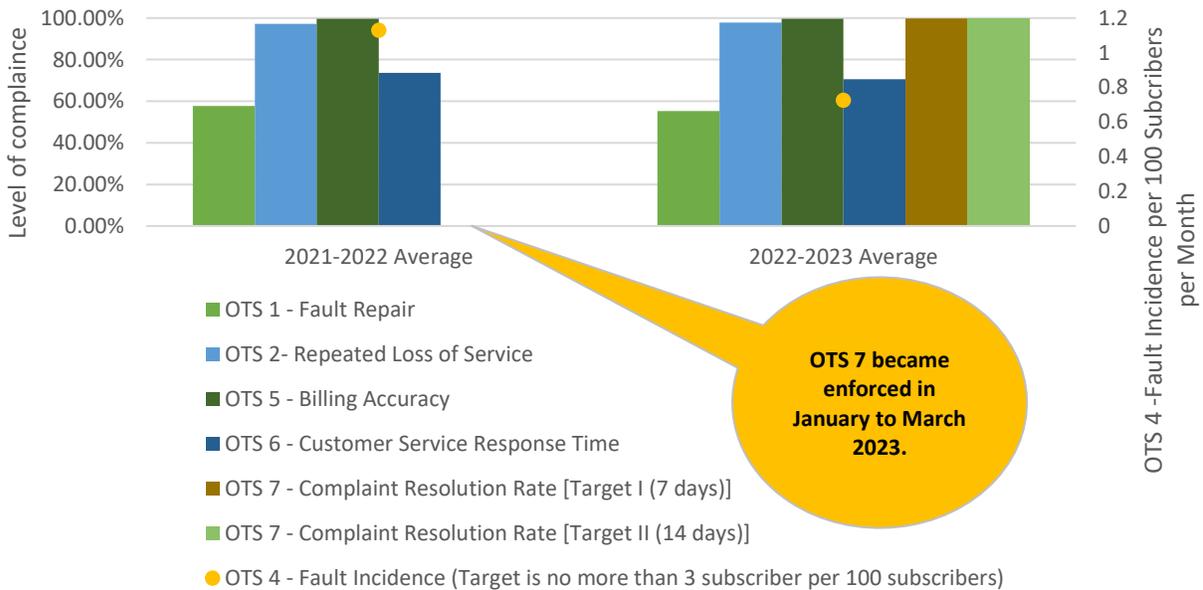


Figure 3: OTS Compliance Rates (April 2021-March 2022 and April 2022- March 2023)

OTS 1 – Fault Repair

The target for this Standard is that at least 80% of faults should be repaired within the first 24 working hours of reporting. For the period ending March 31, 2023, average compliance was 55.28%, a decline from 57.73% in the previous period. As the approved target is 80%, failure to meet that mark in this instance is less than satisfactory. Plans are in place to address C&W's underperformance in this area. This will be particularly more important when the Commission receives the authority to enforce Standards of Service regulation in other telecommunications services. As indicated in C&W's justification below, issues appear to stem from broadband issues which affected other services that C&W provides to customers, such as broadband and subscription television delivered over internet protocol. There are also issues regarding network security which the Commission will have to consider in a more extensive Standards of Service regime.

C&W's justification for not meeting the target

According to C&W:

“There were network attacks and multiple node and video outages. Instances of damaged fiber and broadband issues related to slow speeds.” (sic)⁶

OTS 2 – Repeated Loss of Service

This Standard refers to the repeated or frequent loss of phone service resulting from a fault of the same nature within thirty (30) days of the occurrence of the original fault. The target for this Overall Standard is 95% compliance. The average compliance for the period under review was 97.84%, marginally higher than 97.23% in the previous period. As C&W continues to meet this target there are no compliance concerns.

⁶ Cable and Wireless (Barbados) Limited. (2022, December). FTC Reporting OTS and Notes Q4-2022.pdf

OTS 3 – Working Payphones

This Standard refers to the number of payphones which are fully functional on a daily basis. The compliance target for working payphones is 75%. C&W's report indicates that no data for payphones was submitted for the period under review and as such this is recorded as 'N/A' for the period. NB: C&W no longer utilizes an automatic Payphone Management System as the revenue from payphones does not support the cost. Instead, C&W relies on manual reports from G4S coin processing. Given the ubiquity of mobile services and the highly diminished use of payphones, consideration will be given to the removal of this Standard. Even though C&W is currently tasked with the provision of universal service, including payphones, global ICT trends suggest an evolution of universal service to include broadband, while acknowledging that payphones are fast approaching obsolescence.

OTS 4 – Fault Incidence

This measures the percentage of faults occurring on C&W's network. The minimum acceptable level of performance is no more than three (3) faults per 100 subscribers per month (i.e. a fault rate of no more than 3% per month). Average compliance for the current period was 0.725, compared to 1.13 in the previous period. C&W continues to meet this target with satisfactory performance.

OTS 5 – Billing Accuracy

This reflects the accuracy of the service provider's billing system. This Overall Standard allows for an inaccuracy rate of no more than 0.5% for all issued bills. The average percentage compliance for the period ending March 31, 2022 was 99.73% – marginally different from the previous period which was 99.70%.

OTS 6 – Customer Service Response Time

This Standard stipulates the target for the time taken by a customer service representative to answer a call after it is handed off by the interactive voice response (IVR). At least 80%

of the calls must be answered within sixty (60) seconds of hand-off from the IVR system. C&W achieved 70.59% compliance compared to 73.62% in the previous period. This decline takes C&W further below the target. C&W attributed its low performance to multiple broadband and video outages.⁷ Underperformance in this Standard is of serious concern since the last justification C&W gave for not meeting this target was the impact of Covid-19 on staffing. As Covid-19 should no longer have a significant impact on staffing, there is the concern that C&W's justification in this instance raises concerns related to C&W's network resilience.

OTS 7 - Complaint Resolution Rate (New)

This Standard stipulates the target for the amount of customer complaints successfully resolved given the number of total complaints submitted on a monthly basis. On a monthly basis, a minimum of 75% of all complaints must be resolved within seven (7) days while a minimum of 95% of all complaints must be resolved within 14 days. C&W is exempt when the problem is due to the customer's equipment or inside wiring. This Standard has been enforced in the last quarter in the period under review. Compliance for the seven-day target and the 14-day target were both 99.85%.

⁷ Cable and Wireless (Barbados) Limited. (2022, December). FTC Reporting OTS and Notes Q4-2022.pdf

3.0 SUMMARY

This report assessed C&W's Standards of Service performance. This report includes the amendments which were introduced in the Commission's Standards of Service Decision on December 13, 2022. C&W continues to perform below the target for GTS 7, Wrongful Disconnection. The justification given for failure to meet the target is similar to that made in the previous period, and that is, "Customers are calling the Contact Centre to report these disconnections. Because they are business accounts, if they are not straightforward issues, the [Contact Centre] escalates to the business Support teams for investigation. This process usually takes more than an hour and so the standard cannot be met." C&W's performance in this area will be monitored closely as it is unacceptable for a target to be continually missed.

As it relates to the Overall Standards of Service however, C&W's performance is no longer impacted by the social and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, but Standards such as OTS 6 continue to miss the target due to network issues. Network vulnerability is a cause for concern.

The Commission will continue to monitor all Standards to ensure compliance, while simultaneously developing a provisional Standards of Service framework for the telecommunications sector. The provisional framework will incorporate elements of the current Standards of Service, namely:

- Installation or transfer of service;
- Fault repair time;
- Repeated loss of service;
- Customer complaint resolution time;
- Customer appointments;
- Reconnection after disconnection for non-payment;
- Wrongful disconnection;

- Billing accuracy;
- Account cancellation time after customer request; and
- Customer service response time

In addition to the current quality-of-service metrics above, the provisional framework would also include quality-of-experience metrics. This would entail the use of a customer satisfaction tracker⁸ which is intended to capture:

- Satisfaction with service overall;
- Satisfaction with value for money;
- Customers with a reason to complain;
- Overall satisfaction with complaint handling;

⁸ This resembles the customer service tracker used by communications regulator in the United Kingdom, The Office of Communication.