



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

URCA Issues Statement of Results and Final Determination on Licensee Consumer Complaints Handling Consultation

On June 6, 2012, the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) released its Statement of Results and Final Determination on the regulator's public consultation for licensee handling of consumer complaints. Initiated December 23, 2011 with the issue of the consultative document "*Guidelines for Developing Licensee Consumer Complaints Handling Procedures*" [URCA document reference ECS 23/2011], the principal objective of the consultation is to establish minimum standards by which URCA licensees, providing services to the public for commercial gain, will be required to set out their own complaints handling practices and procedures.

The concluding response date to the consultative document was February 10, 2012, by which time URCA received three responses, including two licensees and a member of the general public.

This Statement of Results and Final Determination that URCA now publishes [URCA document reference ECS 16/2012] serves four core purposes. It:

1. Summarises issues raised in the submitted responses
2. Provides URCA's analysis of these submissions
3. Provides URCA's final determination, given the aforementioned
4. Establishes minimum standards that licensees will be required to incorporate in their respective complaints handling procedures

Requirements include but are not limited to:

- Licensees must advise consumers of their right to complain and of the existence of a mechanism to do so, which must be reasonably accessible to the consumer.
- The licensee must also clearly indicate the means by which complaints may be made.
- Licensees must formally acknowledge to consumers that their complaint has been received and must do so within no more than five business days of such receipt.

The Final Determination also establishes standards for retaining records, internal escalation processes for resolving complaints, the communication of decisions regarding complaints and the closing of complaint cases. Licensees are additionally encouraged to establish provisions for complainants that may have “special needs”, particularly in instances where such persons may require third party assistance and/or representation on their behalf.

These guidelines became effective with the June 6, 2012 issue of the Statement of Results and Final Determination.

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