

Professor Stephen Littlechild

In the last month or so, Ofgem has published its complaints statistics for Q1 2023, Citizens Advice has published its revised star ratings for the same quarter, and as always there are evolving customer ratings on Trustpilot. This article summarises the new data and traces the impact on the Overall Customer Satisfaction scores. It also estimates some Which? values for three suppliers that were only partially scored this year, enabling us to include them in the OCS league.

As always, there are differences between what Ofgem records as complaints data and how individual suppliers publish them (or do not publish them). Of the 18 suppliers discussed here, 7 publish the same data for Q1 2023 as Ofgem, 2 post slightly different data and 3 post disaggregated data that Ofgem aggregates as one (Ovo Energy). Where available, I have used suppliers' own data. But 1 supplier has not yet posted its latest data, 2 have not published for a few quarters, 2 do not publish the data at all and Bulb's website has just been closed as all customers have now migrated to Octopus Energy.

On average, our measure of Ofgem complaint scores (out of 100) is down by 2 percentage points (here written -2%). On the positive side, British Gas (+10%) has begun to recover from last quarter's serious fall, and Shell Energy (+4%) is also up, but these are outweighed by Boost Power (-19%) and SSE (-15%), also Utility Warehouse (-8%) and E.ON Energy (-7%).

In contrast, Citizens Advice star ratings are slightly up (+1%) on average. There were rises for Shell Energy (+9%), E.ON Energy (+8%), Ecotricity (+7%), Ovo (+7%) and Octopus Energy (+6%), but falls for So Energy (-12%), Outfox the Market (-7%) and Utility Warehouse (-5%).

Since the last calculation, there have been 3% increases on average in TrustScores. In particular, 4% increases for British Gas, E.ON Energy, Scottish Power and So Energy, but also a 4% reduction for Boost Power.

Which? magazine's latest calculations show its total scores for each supplier as the average of a customer score and a Which? assessment score. Three suppliers (Outfox the Market, Good Energy and Ecotricity) received too few survey responses for Which? to give them a customer score. But it would be useful to have such well known and generally highly rated suppliers in the OCS league.

So for present purposes I have estimated what their customer scores might be, in light of the relationships with Which? assessment scores exhibited by other suppliers. This seems sufficient for present purposes. (Even if my estimate were out by, say, 8 percentage points, the average Which? score would be out by only 4 percentage points, and the OCS score, as an average of 4 component scores, would be out by only 1 percentage point.)

Figure 1 shows the resulting OCS League positions of the 18 suppliers since January 2023.

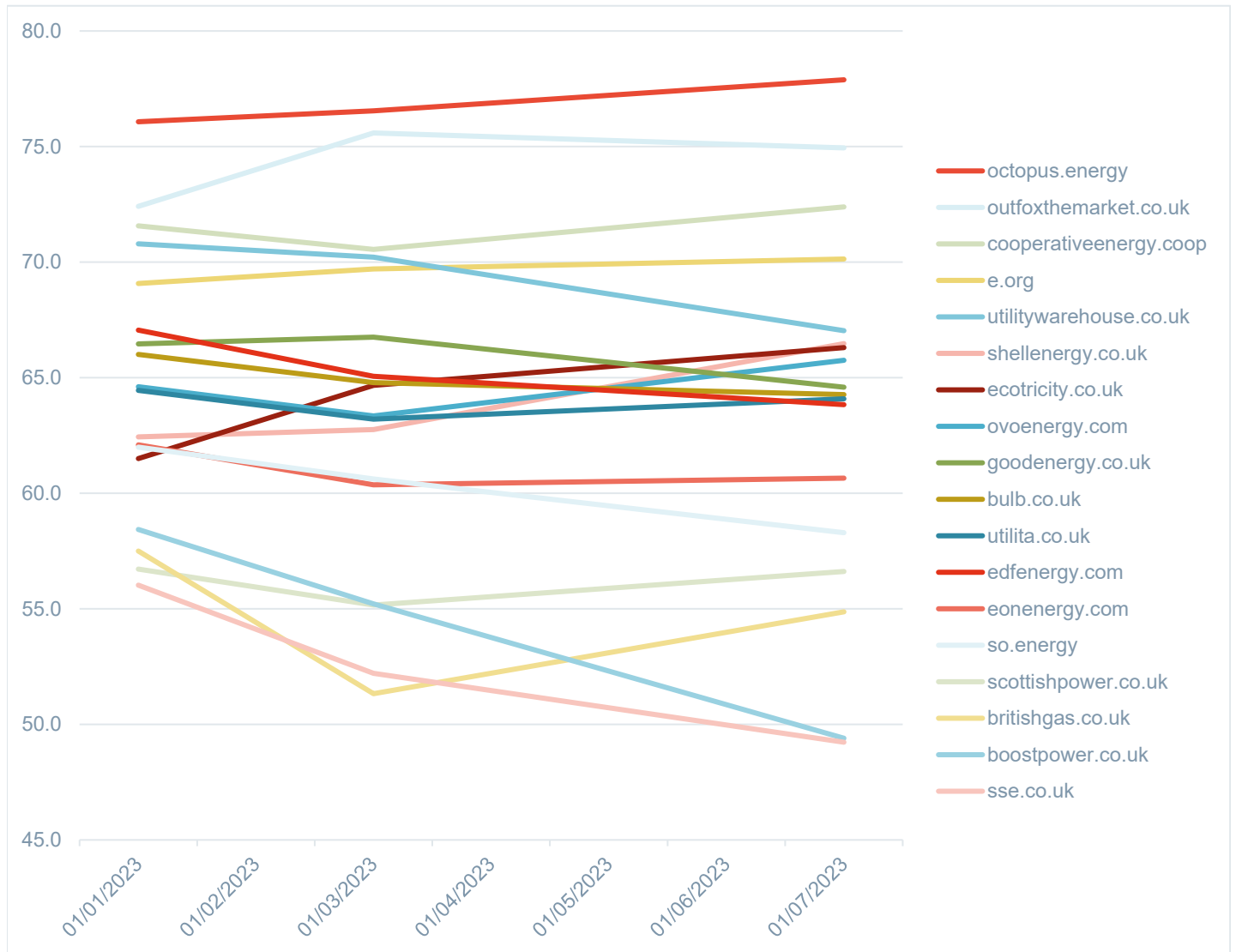
The indefatigable Octopus Energy at 78% remains top of Division One, significantly ahead of all other suppliers. Outfox the Market is at 75%, Octopus Energy's partner Cooperative Energy at 72%, and E at 70%.

Utility Warehouse has slid back to 67%, relegated to the top of a tightly packed Division Two. It is closely followed by Shell Energy, then Ecotricity and Ovo Energy, who have risen slightly to 66% in recent months. Then come Good Energy on 65%, and Bulb Energy, Utilita and EDF Energy, all at 64%.

Division Three is less populated and more widely spaced, with E.ON Energy holding steady at 61%, So Energy slipping to 58%, Scottish Power rising slightly to 57%, and British Gas rising more significantly from 51% to 55%.

Finally, the two Ovo brands Boost Power and SSE have slipped significantly to 49%. They are so far behind all the other suppliers that they have to be put in a Division Four of their own.

Figure 1: OCS League January - July 2023



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

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