

Nutwood

Developments in the OCS League Q124, & consistency over time

Professor Stephen Littlechild

Citizens Advice has issued its [latest energy supplier star ratings](#) for Q124. It says that “average ratings have fallen by 10.5% compared to the same period in 2021 and have flatlined since the end of 2023.” It calls for stronger regulatory powers.

But the basis of calculating the star ratings has changed over this period. There has also been a severe retail price cap, forcing some two-thirds of suppliers to leave the sector, including several who provided above average customer service. To attract and keep customers with good customer service is no longer as profitable as it used to be. Perhaps less, rather than more, regulation is required?

Citizens Advice provided an interesting graph of average star rating score over the period since Q417. Let’s look at the 15 existing suppliers in our Overall Customer Service (OCS) league. Table 1 here shows their average star rating (out of 5) from Q417 to date, compared with their score in the latest quarter Q124.

Table 1: Citizens Advice star ratings: average since Q417 compared to Q124

Average Q417- Q124	Score	Q124	Score
<i>Top third</i>		<i>Top third</i>	
EDF	3.71	Ecotricity	3.77
Octopus Energy	3.68	Outfox the Market	3.31
So Energy	3.59	OVO Energy	3.27
E	3.28	Utility Warehouse	3.09
Outfox the Market	3.25	E	3.07
<i>Middle third</i>		<i>Middle third</i>	
Cooperative Energy	3.24	E.ON	2.96
Utility Warehouse	3.22	Scottish Power	2.94
British Gas	3.20	Good Energy	2.87
Scottish Power	3.07	Octopus Energy =	2.52
E.ON	2.89	Cooperative Energy =	2.52
<i>Bottom third</i>		<i>Bottom third</i>	
OVO Energy	2.85	Boost Power =	2.52
Good Energy	2.82	So Energy	2.50
Ecotricity	2.67	British Gas	2.39

Boost Power	2.44	Utilita	2.08
Utilita	2.00	EDF	2.06

Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

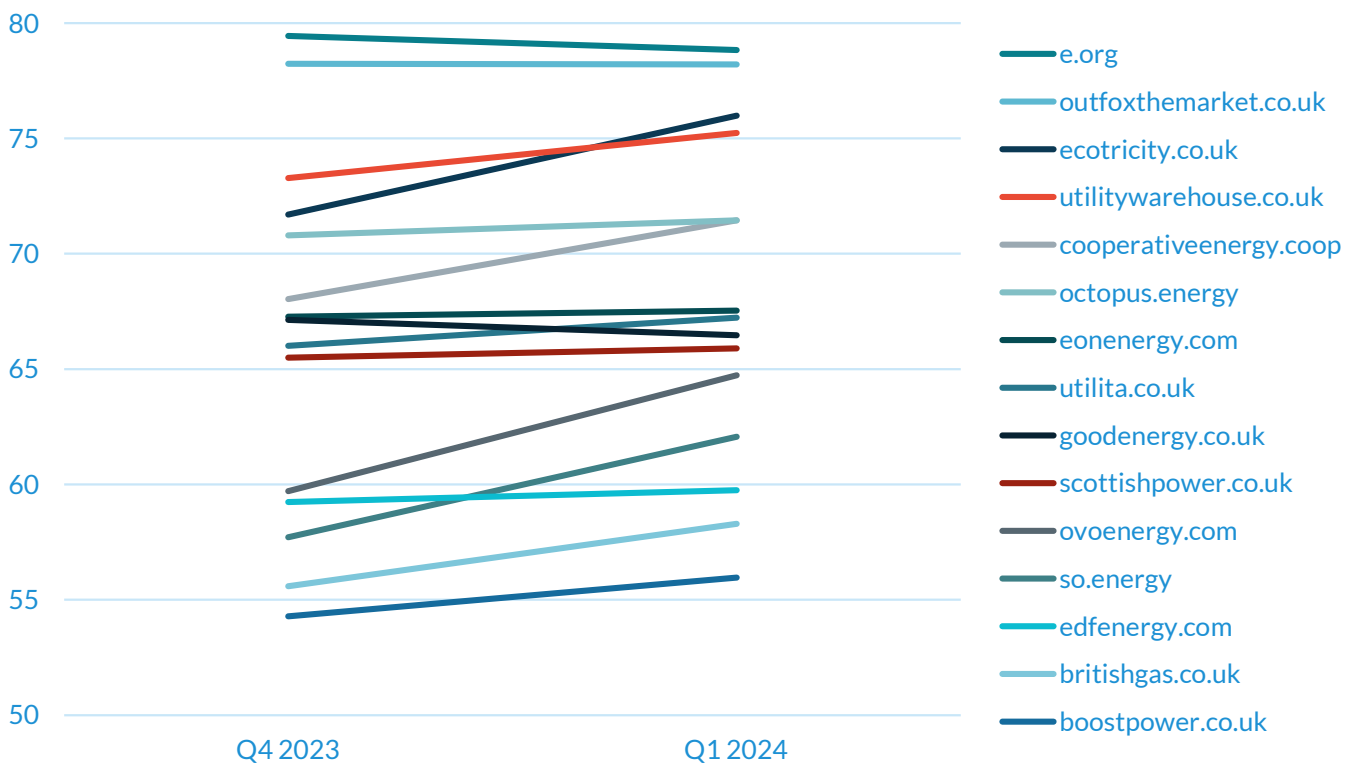
The differences in performance over time are quite remarkable. EDF is on average the highest-rated supplier, but the lowest in this last quarter. Octopus Energy and So Energy are on average the second- and third-highest rated suppliers but are both now in or around the bottom third. The good news, perhaps, is that OVO Energy and Ecotricity, both in the bottom third over time, have now risen into the top third. E and Outfox the Market were and remain in the top third, Utilita was, and remains, in the bottom third.

But we have always argued for a broader perspective rather than relying on one single rating agency. What has happened to the OCS scores in quarter Q124 compared to Q423?

The Ofgem complaints index showed small falls for a few suppliers: Boost Power down 5%, Good Energy down 4%, Scottish Power and Utilita down 3% (percentage points out of ratings expressed out of 100). And small gains for a few others: Cooperative Energy and Octopus Energy both up 3%.

The changes in the Citizens Advice star ratings were much more significant: So Energy up 22%, Ecotricity up 17%, British Gas up 12%, OVO Energy up 11%, Boost Power, Cooperative Energy, and Utilita up 6%. But EDF and E.ON both down 7%.

Figure 1: OCS League Q423 - Q124



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

No new ratings from Which? magazine. So, finally, what of Trust Pilot? Small positive increases of 2% each for Boost Power, EDF, OVO Energy, Utility Warehouse, and E.ON Next, and a small 2% fall for E.

E and Outfox the Market are still out in the lead (Figure 1). A much-improved Ecotricity and Utility Warehouse are challenging them strongly. Cooperative Energy, also much improved, and Octopus Energy are stranded between Divisions One and Two.

Not much change in the central Division Two: E.ON, Utilita, Good Energy, and Scottish Power all hold firm. But some tangible improvements in Division Three, from OVO Energy (now challenging for Division Two), So Energy, British Gas, and Boost Power, though no change at EDF.

Finally, what about the OCS league positions over the last five years? Do they show a similar pattern to the Citizens Advice star ratings, or something rather different?

Table 2 shows a few similar contrasts, such as So Energy in the top third on average but in the bottom third this last quarter. But that seems to be the exception. On the whole, there is much more consistency, especially at the top. Octopus Energy, Outfox the Market, E, and Utility Warehouse have provided the best OCS score, on a range of criteria, over the last six years and in last quarter too. And Scottish Power, E.ON and Utilita have all shown significant improvement.

Table 2: OCS scores: average since Q417 compared to Q124

Average Q417-Q124	Score	Q124	Score
Top third		Top third	
Octopus Energy	80.4	E	78.8
Outfox the Market	76.6	Outfox the Market	78.2
So Energy	74.1	Ecotricity	76.0
E	74.0	Utility Warehouse	75.2
Utility Warehouse	73.2	Octopus Energy =	71.5
Middle third		Middle third	
Cooperative Energy	68.4	Cooperative Energy =	71.5
OVO Energy	67.5	E.ON	67.5
Ecotricity	66.1	Utilita	67.2
EDF	64.7	Good Energy	66.5
Good Energy	64.5	Scottish Power	65.9
Bottom third		Bottom third	
Utilita	63.6	Ovo Energy	64.7
British Gas	61.0	So Energy	62.1
E.ON	58.5	EDF	59.7
Boost Power	58.0	British Gas	58.3
Scottish Power	55.0	Boost Power	56.0

Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild