

Ofgem has recently published its complaints statistics for Q223, and as always there are evolving customer ratings on Trustpilot. This article summarises the new data and traces the impact on suppliers' Overall Customer Satisfaction (OCS) scores.

On average, our measure of Ofgem complaints scores (out of 100) is up by 3.3 percentage points (here written +3.3%). Most improved are British Gas (+16%), Ecotricity (+9%), So Energy (+7%) and Shell Energy (+6%). Biggest downrating's are SSE (-20%) and Boost Energy (-15%), both of which now have negative Ofgem scores. They are included in the OCS calculations with zero for this component. Other falls in Ofgem scores are EDF (-10%), Utilita (-9%), and Ovo Energy (-6%).

Most changes in Trustpilot TrustScores are relatively small: slight increases of +2% for British Gas, Cooperative Energy, E, Ecotricity and Octopus Energy, and a slight fall of -2% for Sainsbury's Energy. But there was a remarkable increase of +10% for Scottish Power, following an equally remarkable 8% increase in number of customer reviews, said to be organic rather than invited views, and almost entirely in July and August 2023. Only Octopus Energy had a higher increase (13%) in number of customer reviews over the same period.

What does all this mean for the 18 companies in the OCS league? Figure 1 shows the scores from 19 January to 6 September 2023 (as in the last report in July, the Which? components for three suppliers - Outfox the Market, Good Energy and Ecotricity - are based on adjusted Which? scores). Almost all suppliers show some improvement since July, albeit sometimes slight.

No longer surprisingly, Octopus Energy (79%) is still at the top of Division One. Then Outfox the Market and Cooperative Energy at 75% and E (72%).

Shell Energy (70.5%) continues to improve (up from 62% in January) and is now at the top of Division Two. Still in the same Division are Ecotricity (69%), Utility Warehouse and Ovo Energy at 68%, Bulb (66.5%) and Good Energy (65%).

A dividing line has to be drawn somewhere. So Utilita and EDF, both at 64% fractionally lower than in July, slip down to the top of Division Three. They are followed by E.On (63%) and British Gas much improved at 61% compared to 55% in July. So Energy (61%) and Scottish Power (60%) are both 3 percentage points up on July.

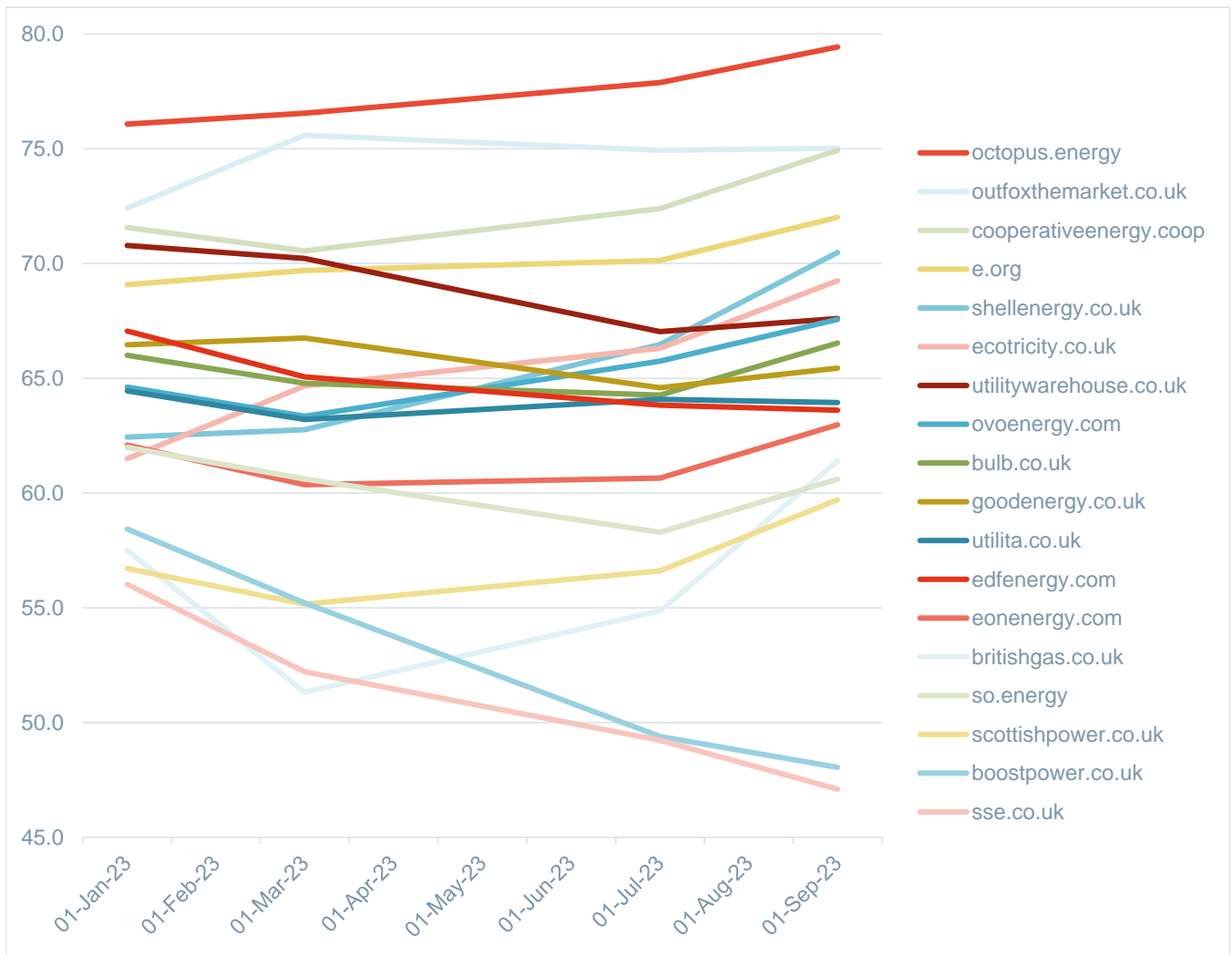
Finally to Division Four. As in July, here reside the two Ovo Energy affiliates Boost Power (48%) and SSE (47%), this time with even worse OCS scores because of the latest Ofgem complaints scores.

What does the overall customer service picture look like, compared to, say, nearly four years ago? The average OCS score over the 18 charted suppliers is now 65% - as it was in October 2019 over the 26 suppliers then evaluated.

But the variance is much reduced: the standard deviation is now eight compared to 13 before. In more concrete terms, at present there are no suppliers with OCS scores over 80%, none with scores between 50% and 59% and only two with scores in the 40-49% range. Back in October 2019, there were five suppliers with scores over 80%, three with scores in the 50-59% range and five with scores in the 40-49% range.

Then, precisely half of the 26 recorded suppliers were in the 60-79% range and half were outside it. Now, 16 of the 18 recorded suppliers are in that range and only two – about one tenth – are outside it. Although prices may be higher now, it seems a less erratic market in terms of customer service.

Figure 1: OCS League January - early September 2023



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

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