

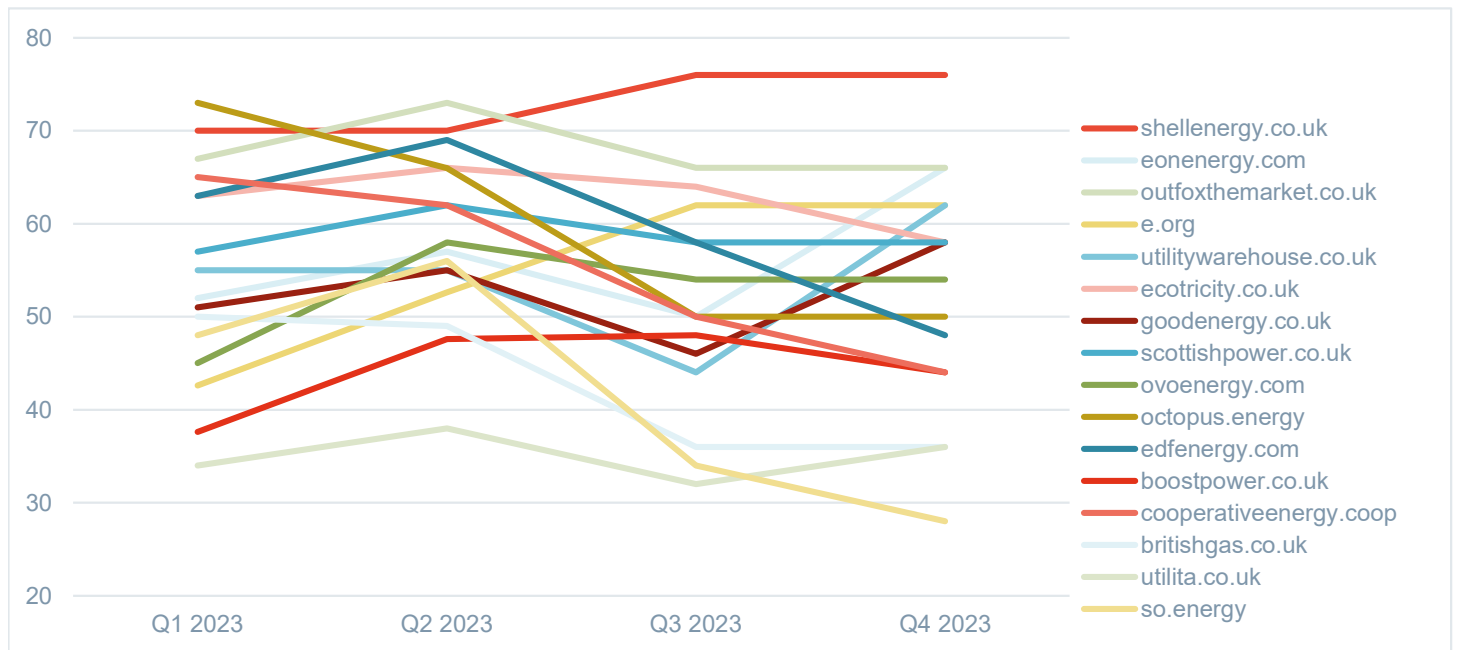
Professor Stephen Littlechild

The latest energy supplier customer service ratings from Citizens Advice, for Q423, are now available. They are of interest to me, and hopefully to readers of this article, but do most customers care, or even know about them? Ofgem now requires that suppliers put their Citizens Advice rating on their website, but it does not enforce this. As of 24 March, for example, Shell Energy – who Citizens Advice rated top last quarter – understandably highlighted its Citizens Advice rating over the last five quarters. Another four suppliers (Good Energy, British Gas, So Energy and Utilita) also provided a link to the Citizens Advice site – bizarrely, these were four of the five suppliers with the lowest ratings in Q423. However, the other 11 main suppliers – two thirds of the total number – simply ignored the instruction and made no reference on their websites to Citizens Advice ratings (at least, that I could find).

Figure 1 shows the Citizens Advice ratings (expressed as %) over the four quarters of 2023. Evidently most suppliers suffered from the revised rating scheme introduced in Q323, although Shell Energy improved then, as did E. In fact Shell Energy has been outstanding throughout.

Overall, the new ratings were fractionally higher than last quarter but, as always, performance was mixed. Utility Warehouse (+18%), EON (+16%) and Good Energy (+12%) soared up, and Utilita (+4%) made a little progress. Seven suppliers were unchanged. Falling suppliers were Boost (-4%), Cooperative Energy, So Energy and Ecotricity (each - 6%) and EDF Energy (-10%).

Figure 1: Quarterly Citizens Advice ratings for 2023



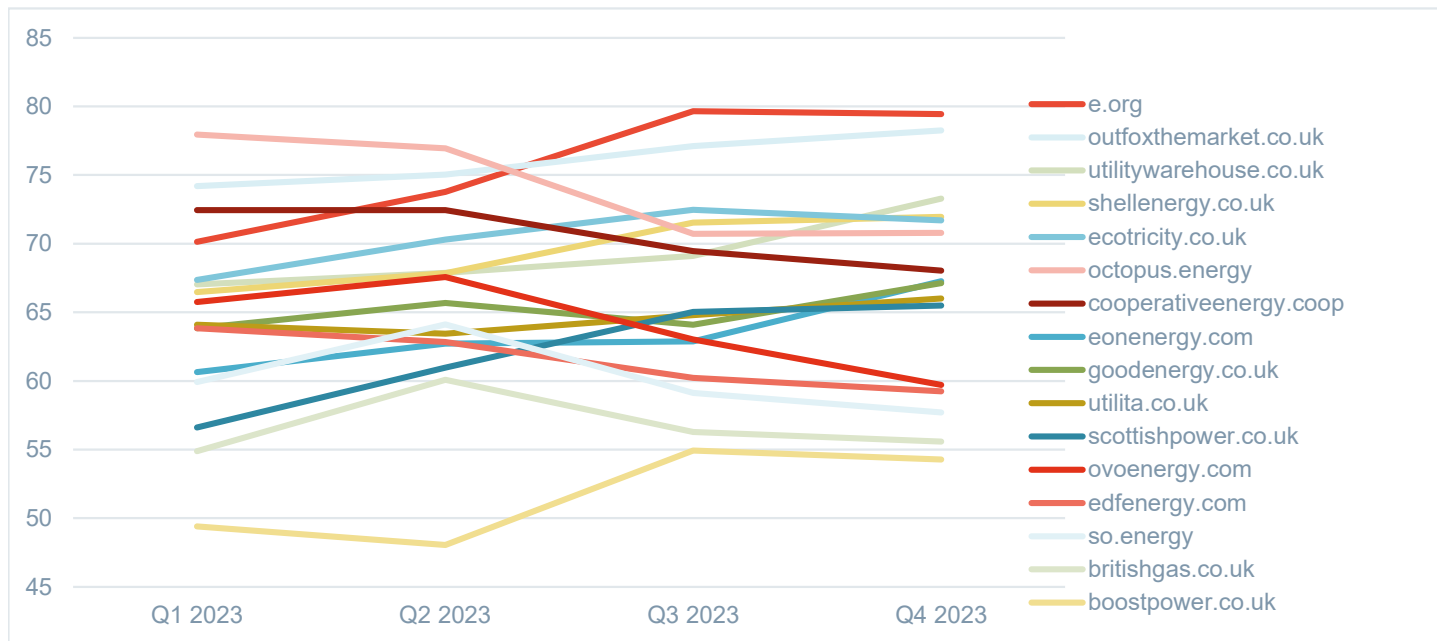
Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

So Energy’s website is rather unfortunate. As of 2 April it still proclaims that its score is 2.8, saying that “Our entire team at So Energy is committed to improving this.” But 2.8 was its Q223 score and, far from improving, its Q323 score was actually down at 1.7. And now its Q423 score is further down to 1.4, leaving So Energy once more at the bottom of the list.

Citizens Advice ratings are important, but as part of a bigger picture. There are also other customer service ratings to consider. I have earlier discussed the latest Ofgem, Which? and Trustpilot scores (Energy Spectrum [889](#) and [892](#)). What do the new Citizens Advice ratings mean for the Overall Customer Service (OCS)

scores? Figure 2 shows how the OCS scores have evolved from Q123 to Q423. Overall, Outfox and E are still firmly in the lead. Utility Warehouse moves strongly into third, with Shell and Ecotricity holding steady below it. Octopus Energy is steady there too, but surprisingly in sixth place instead of in the lead as in the first two quarters and so many before that.

Figure 2: Quarterly Overall Customer Service scores for 2023



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

Cooperative Energy is fading slightly, challenged by Good Energy, Utilita and Scottish Power. So far the picture as a whole looks encouraging. But then rather a large gap before a sadly declining Ovo Energy and slightly fading EDF and So Energy. Finally, British Gas and Boost Power hold steady, but at the bottom of the league.

Overall, if two thirds of the GB energy suppliers are in the 65-80% range as regards quality of customer service, and the remaining one third are in the range 55-60%, that is very good, and a testament to the effectiveness of competition in the retail market. But there is still scope for improvement, as demonstrated particularly in 2023 by E and Scottish Power.