Nutwood

Developments in the OCS League at end September 2023

Professor Stephen Littlechild

Citizens Advice has recently published its star ratings for energy suppliers' customer service 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.

There was little change in the overall level of Citizens Advice ratings from Q123 – on average, an increase of about 3 percentage points (here written 3%) compared to the previous quarter. But some suppliers were rated significantly higher than before, notably Ovo Energy up 13%.

E and Boost Power were both up 10%, though both rated among the lowest quarter of suppliers. Other improvers were So Energy (up 8%), Outfox the Market and EDF Energy (both up 6%), Scottish Power and E.ON (both up 5%). Those with lower scores included Octopus Energy and SSE (both down 7%).

Outfox the Market now leads the Citizens Advice ratings, followed by Shell Energy and EDF Energy. In lowest positions are SSE, Utilita and Boost Power.

Not surprisingly, there was relatively little movement in Trustpilot TrustScores over the last three weeks. Nevertheless, four suppliers – E, Good Energy, Scottish Power and Utilita – all recorded a 2% increase in TrustScores. Notable increases in numbers of reviews during those three weeks were 7% increases for Cooperative Energy and Octopus Energy, 4% for Scottish Power and 3% for E, EDF Energy and Ovo Energy. It seems as though the encouragement from E and Scottish Power was most effective.

In absolute terms, the suppliers with highest TrustScore are Cooperative Energy, Good Energy, M&S Energy and Octopus Energy, all with a remarkable 96%. The lowest scores are from SSE and British Gas (both 76%) and Scottish Power and Bulb Energy (both 78%) – but these are remarkably high in absolute terms.

What effect did these two sets of changes have on positions in the Overall Customer Satisfaction League? Figure 1 contrasts the situation on 29 September 2023 with that obtaining about three weeks earlier.

Octopus Energy still leads Division One of the League, but once again is challenged strongly by Outfox the Market. E too advances strongly and pushes Cooperative Energy into fourth place.

Another battle for leadership of Division Two: here, Ovo Energy surges into a narrow lead, just overtaking Shell Energy and Ecotricity. Slightly lower in Division Two, but holding steady, are Utility Warehouse, Good Energy and Bulb Energy.

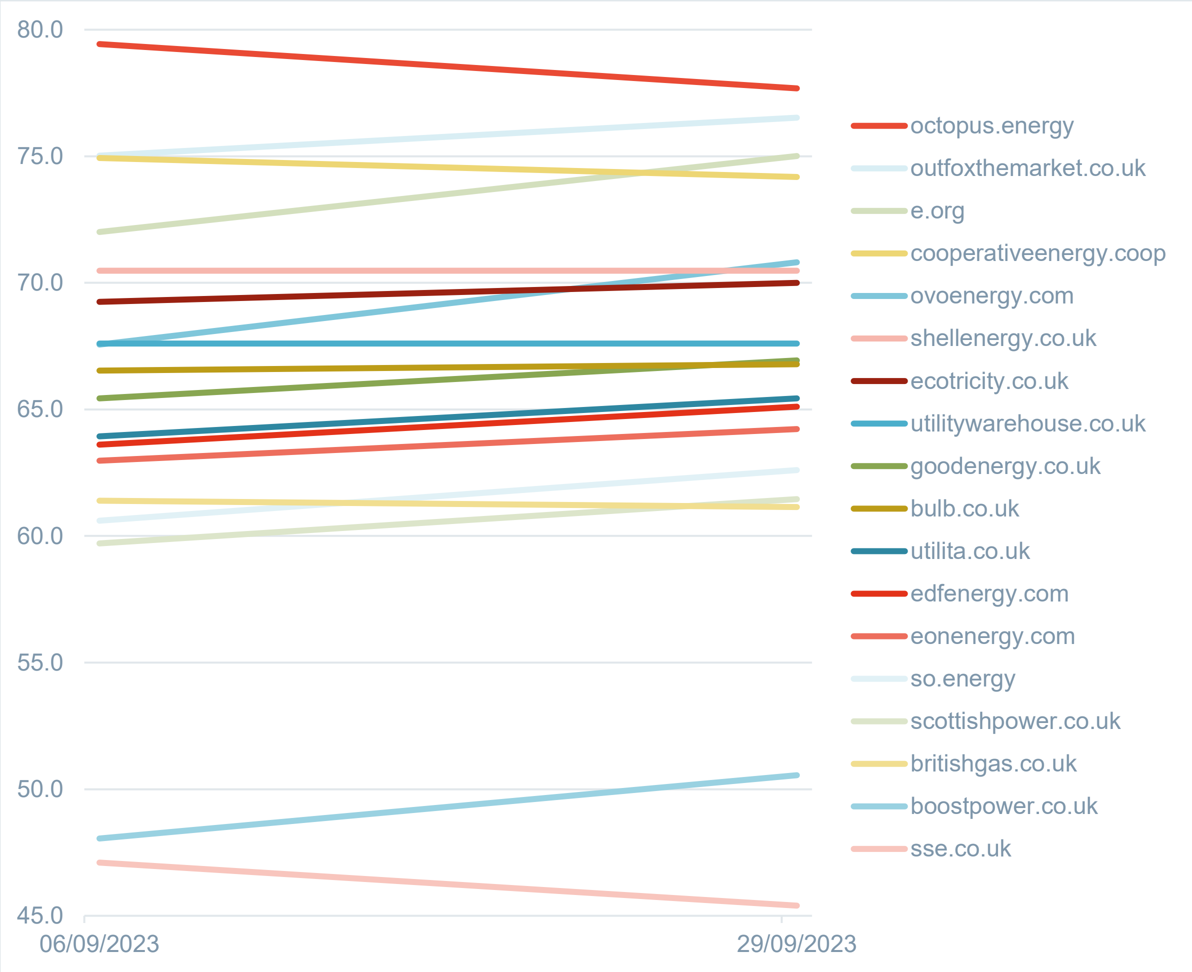
Then by the narrowest of margins comes Division Three: Utilita, EDF Energy and E.ON Energy, all slightly improving together. So Energy and Scottish Power are keeping pace with them, albeit slightly behind. British Gas is holding steady, but in relative terms just falling behind.

Finally, in a Division Four that is way out of touch with the rest of the League, come Boost Power, desperately showing some improvement, and SSE takes last place.

In summary, all but two major energy suppliers are scoring on average over 60% on four main indicators of customer satisfaction, most suppliers are actively vying for position in the 60% to 70% range, and four others are jockeying for leadership at around 75% or above.

This does seem encouraging news that competition is alive and well in the GB domestic retail energy sector, despite the artificial restrictions imposed by the price cap and related regulatory measures.

Figure 1: OCS League 6 - 29 September 2023



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild