

Professor Stephen Littlechild

Professor Stephen Littlechild, former Director General of Electricity Supply and Associate of the Energy Policy Research Group at the University of Cambridge, describes how suppliers' positions in the Overall Customer Satisfaction (OCS) League have changed over the past few months.

25 August saw the publication of Ofgem's latest customer service data, for Q222. One of the four components of the OCS score is a weighted average of three elements of these customer service data: the number of complaints per 100,000 customer accounts (50% weight), the proportion of complaints resolved by end of next working day (25% weight) and the proportion of complaints resolved within 8 weeks (25% weight).

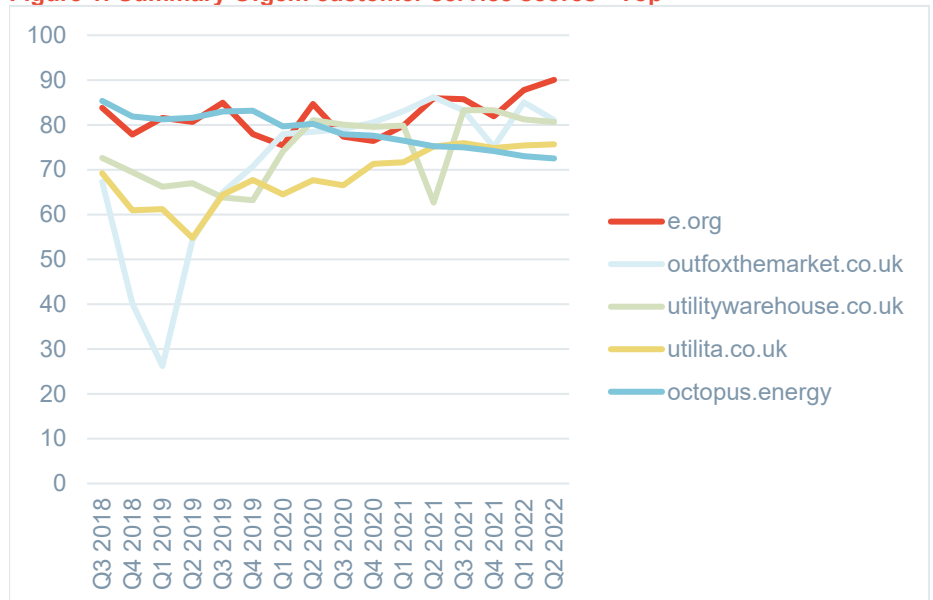
Briefly, there were improvements in this customer service index for Ecotricity (+4.5 percentage points) and especially Ovo Energy (+6.7), but declines for Outfox the Market (-4.0), Shell Energy (-7.5), E.ON Energy (-7.6) and especially So Energy (-9.2).

Before examining the implications for OCS, we explore the evolution of this summary Ofgem customer service score over the last four years. 15 suppliers have provided data across this whole period. After a very mixed first year, especially for Outfox the Market and Utilita, the Top group (Figure 1), which also includes E, Utility Warehouse and Octopus Energy, has broadly maintained its high scores (70%-90%) over the last three years, and over the last quarter.

The Middle group (Figure 2) has a more varied history. So Energy has declined from over 90%. Bulb and Good Energy declined but then revived. E.ON Energy rose, fell and rose again, while Shell Energy has generally risen, both from around 40%. But all these suppliers have fallen over the last quarter, from the 65%-75% range to the 55%-70% range.

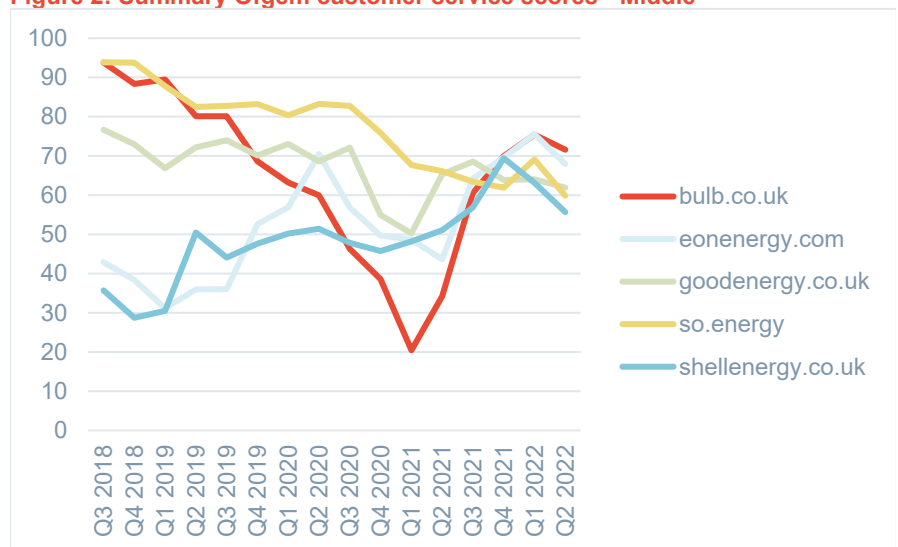
The Bottom group (Figure 3) again originally spanned a wide range. Ecotricity has steadily fallen from around 80% to around 50%. Ovo Energy fell too, down to 30% but is recovering to 40%. British Gas

Figure 1: Summary Ofgem customer service scores - Top



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

Figure 2: Summary Ofgem customer service scores - Middle



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

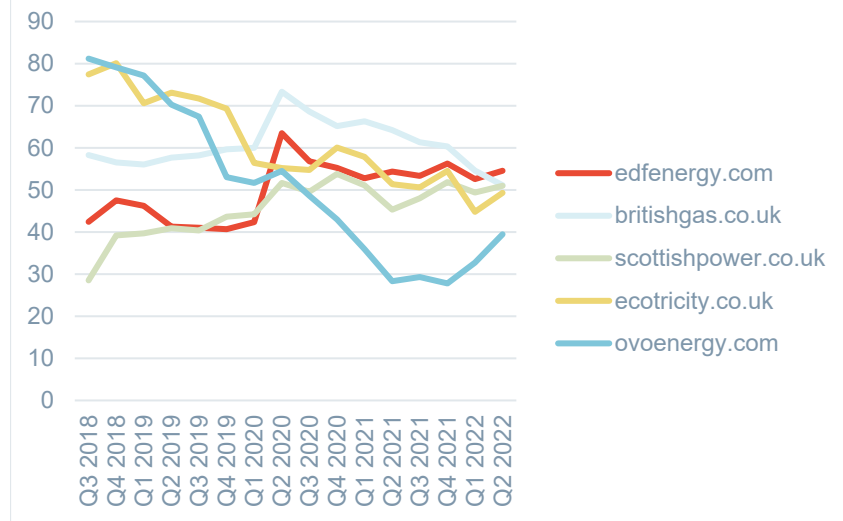
showed a slight decline in the last two quarters after an earlier improvement, EDF Energy and Scottish Power improved from 40% or lower to hold steady around 50%. All but one of these suppliers improved over the last quarter.

Along with recent changes in Ofgem scores, there have been small changes in Trustpilot Scores: fractional improvements (2 percentage points) for Boost Power (which has the same Ofgem score as its parent Ovo Energy), British Gas and So Energy, similar fractional declines for Bulb, Co-op and Scottish Power.

What does all this mean for the OCS league? Figure 4 shows the OCS scores for 13 suppliers since 8 April 2022, which covers one rating by Which? magazine, two by Citizens Advice and three from Ofgem. Unfortunately, Which? magazine does not provide ratings for E (which presently has the highest Ofgem score), Good Energy and Ecotricity.

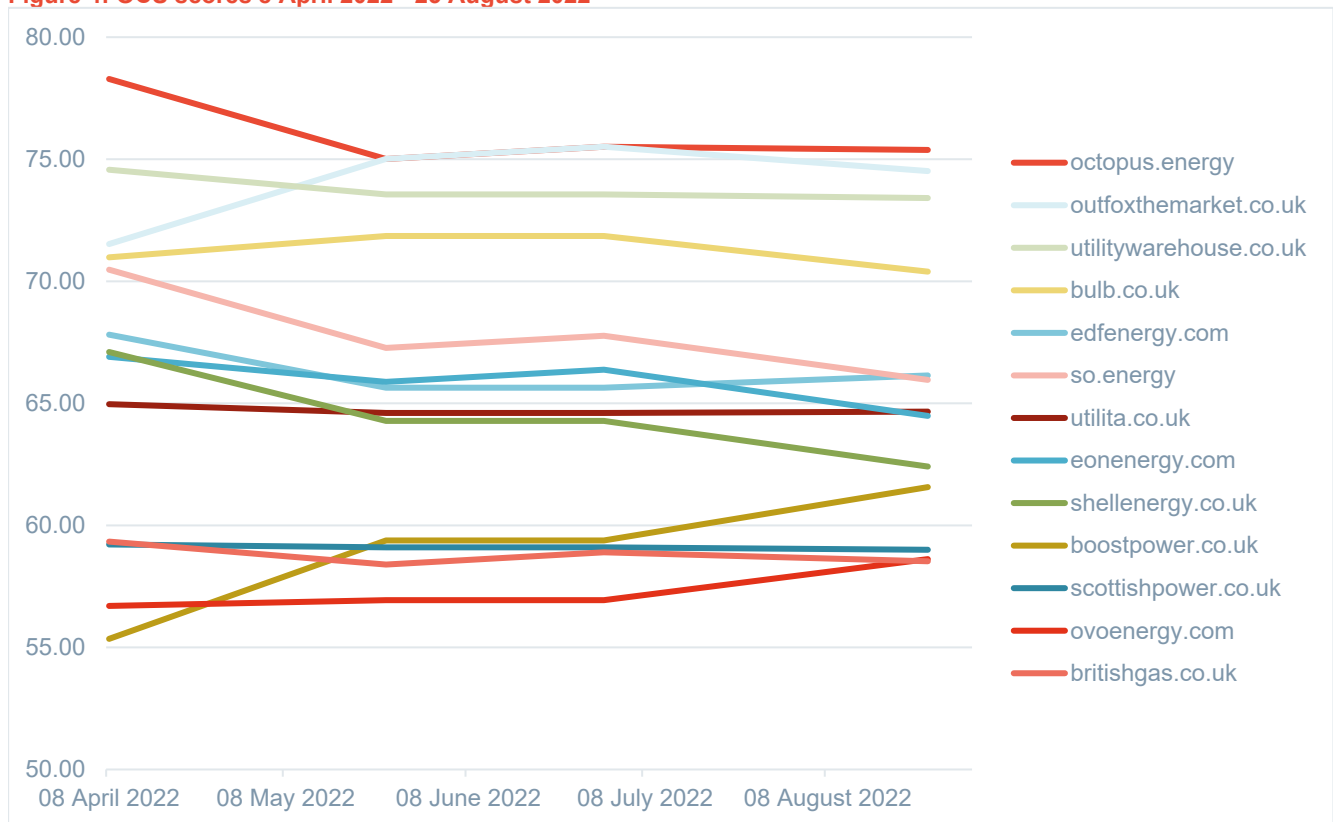
At the top of the OCS league are still Octopus Energy, Outfox the Market and Utility Warehouse, with Bulb falling off the pace a little. In the middle group are EDF Energy and Utilita holding steady, plus So Energy, E.ON Energy and Shell Energy all fading slightly over the summer. Boost Power has risen markedly to challenge the middle group. This leaves Scottish Power, British Gas and the improving Ovo Energy holding up the rest of the league. Overall, there has been some narrowing of the gap between the highest and lowest scoring suppliers, and the average level of performance has held up well over an increasingly problematic summer of 2022.

Figure 3: Summary Ofgem customer service scores - Bottom



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild

Figure 4: OCS scores 8 April 2022 - 25 August 2022



Source: Professor Stephen Littlechild