

OFT response - Measuring energy supplier performance

Section 1 – Quantitative measures

Q1: Please state which types and combination of the following quantitative measures you think best reflect industry performance and your reasons for this.

A combination of all of the suggested data would best reflect industry performance because it will provide a comprehensive view across a range of measures as well as highlighting potential improvements in the current arrangements. It will also give consumers a complete overview of industry performance in relation to the handling of complaints.

Additionally, we agree that cases which are coded as “information” as set out in paragraph 1.2 and “enquiries” in paragraph 1.5 should not be included in any performance related publication.

Q2: Please state whether you think the following measures should have a greater or lesser weighting and your reasons for this.

We agree that the weighting of the measure should reflect the seriousness of the complaint and the effort spent by the consumer to get it resolved.

Q3a: Consumer Focus seeks views on which option would provide the most accurate picture, how you think it should be funded and how the customer satisfaction measure should be incorporated into the model; for example, as a standalone measure or as a positive metric (see section 4) as part of the overall ranking calculation.

Consumer Direct believes that customer satisfaction should be conducted either independently or by the regulator and should be included as part of the overall measures. We have no view on how this should be funded or how this is incorporated into the overall model.

Q3b: Consumer Focus seeks views on whether any additional qualitative indicators should be included in order to provide the best possible information on customer service for consumers.

Consumer Direct has no view on what additional measures could be included to give the best possible information on customer service for consumers.

Q4: Consumer Focus seeks views on what types of positive indicators would best reflect supplier performance and be useful to consumers.

Additionally do you think these indicators should be combined with the complaint data or provided as a stand alone measure of performance?

Consumer Direct has no particular view on positive indicators but welcomes a range of measures which overall provide a balanced assessment of the industry which will be useful and meaningful to consumers.

Q5a: What performance information do you think should be published on the nine smaller suppliers? Should this information be combined with that of the big six or shown as a standalone measure separately?

Consumer Direct believes that whilst it is important to ensure all energy companies are measured on a consistent basis, it should be noted that none of the smaller domestic suppliers have agreed referral arrangements with the Consumer Direct service and therefore it may not be appropriate to combine performance information with the big six suppliers.

Q5b: What performance information on business suppliers do you think Consumer Focus should provide for micro-business consumers? In what ways do you think it should differ from the provision for domestic consumers?

Consumer Direct has no particular view on what information should be provided to micro-business consumers but welcomes a range of measures which provide a balanced assessment of the industry which will be useful and meaningful to consumers.

Q6: In what format do you think the performance information should be displayed to ensure it is easily understood and useful to consumers?

Consumer Direct has no particular preference but agree the format of such performance information should be provided in a clear, intelligible format and in consultation with consumers.

Q7a: How often do you think the performance information should be updated?

Whilst Consumer Direct has no recommendation in terms of reporting periods, we welcome an approach which ensures the information available to consumers allows them to make meaningful comparisons whilst providing the industry with sufficient time to implement change.

Q7b: Excluding the Consumer Focus website, where do you think links to the information should be displayed to ensure as many consumers as possible can access to the information?

While CD accepts that information should be available to as many consumers as possible it has no recommendation in terms of where it should appear although it would seem appropriate to publish information on a selection of advice agency websites.

Q8: Please provide any further examples of best practice you think should be adopted from other sectors.

No response.

Q9: While Consumer Focus hopes to have covered the current and relevant issues within this document, please let us know if you have any additional comments or issues you would like to raise.

No response.