



Improving energy supplier performance information

Energy supplier comparison tool project - for consultation

July 2016

Citizens Advice service in England, Wales and Scotland

The Citizens Advice service provides free, confidential and impartial advice to help people resolve their problems. As the UK's largest advice provider, the Citizens Advice service is equipped to deal with any issue, from anyone, spanning debt and employment to housing and immigration plus everything in between. The Citizens Advice service values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) are the statutory representatives for consumers of energy and postal services in England, Scotland and Wales, and CAS is the consumer representative for water in Scotland. The Citizen Advice service assumed these duties between 2012 and 2014, along with the national Consumer Service helpline, the lead role in consumer education from the former Office of Fair Trading (OFT), and the consumer advocacy role of Consumer Futures.

These changes to the consumer landscape created a single consumer voice with key strengths. We maintain the technical expertise and ability to scrutinise the regulated markets in the same informed way consumers have come to expect. This work is now bolstered by the strengths of the Citizens Advice service, from real-time data to a recognised and trusted brand to a physical presence providing advice in communities across the country.

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Introduction

As the statutory body responsible for representing the interests of consumers in the energy sector, a core function of the Citizens Advice service under the Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2000¹, is the dissemination of advice and information to energy consumers. Under the Utilities Act 2000² Citizens Advice have the explicit responsibility to publish information about the energy market, including data about the performance of domestic energy suppliers.

The Citizens Advice energy team, working closely with other teams across the organisation, source and publish energy supplier performance information. This information currently exists in a few formats on the Citizens Advice website³. Citizens Advice believe that there is scope to improve the current information provided, and create greater value to energy consumers.

The [Citizens Advice 2016-17 consumer work plan](#) sets out the priority areas of work for the energy team over the coming year, one of which focuses on ‘the new energy consumer’. This will explore how the consumer experience of retail energy markets is changing. As part of this work, the energy team is looking at how the use of data and digital tools can better empower energy consumers. The energy supplier comparison tool project commenced earlier this year to explore how domestic energy supplier performance information, published by Citizens Advice, can be further developed. The aims for this project are to:

- Improve the performance information published by Citizens Advice, making it more accessible to consumers.
- Better coordinate how supplier performance information is published.
- Improve how supplier performance information can be shared between Citizens Advice and other organisations.

The project has already begun exploring how existing performance information can be published alongside new information, in a format that is clear and consistent. We envisage the end solution for this project to be an online tool that ranks energy suppliers according to a set of individual metrics as well as an overall performance rating. It is essential for the metrics and overall rating to be robust, independent and impartial, in order to be a credible representation of energy supplier performance.

Citizens Advice intends for this consultation process to inform the project and ensure that the tool we deliver provides value to consumers, energy suppliers and stakeholders across the industry. Citizens Advice is working closely with Ofgem on this project, given our shared objectives in this area.

¹ [Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress \(CEAR\) Act 2007, Section 10](#)

² [Utilities Act 2000, Part 3, Section 21](#)

³ Further detail in Section 1

Section 1 Existing performance information

Citizens Advice currently publishes energy supplier performance information in two main ways. Firstly, the [complaint handling league table](#) ranks suppliers on the weighted volumes of customer contacts made to the Consumer Service, Extra Help Unit and Ombudsman Services: Energy. Secondly, the [energy supplier customer service tool](#) provides information about the service offered by suppliers. The performance information that is published across these sources is fragmented and could be improved. Citizens Advice also has a non-transactional [energy price comparison tool](#).

We believe that the existing sources of information do not provide consumers with a complete picture of energy supplier performance. User research undertaken as part of the project confirmed that there is scope to improve this information, and ultimately enable better consumer outcomes.

User research was undertaken in March⁴ with a small group of consumers to find out what they thought of energy supplier performance information, and what information informed their decisions about their energy supply. In relation to Citizens Advice information, consumers indicated that the current provision of information was not always intuitive and was sometimes difficult to find, to interpret, and make comparisons between the services provided by different suppliers. Overall there was a lack of awareness amongst consumers that Citizens Advice published information about the energy market. However, once they were made aware of this information source some consumers said that they found it useful and informative.

⁴ Research with energy consumers undertaken by [Accent](#) in March 2016

1.1 Energy supplier performance league table

Citizens Advice has a statutory duty under the Utilities Act 2000 to publish information, including complaints data. Complaints data for 20 domestic suppliers (as of July 2016) is published quarterly in a [league table](#) on the Citizens Advice website. The data is collected from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service, the Extra Help Unit and Ombudsman Services for Energy. The table compares how domestic energy suppliers rank for customer complaints using a ratio which accounts for complaint type and volume. The ratio provides consumers with an impartial rating to benchmark the performance of suppliers.

Energy supplier performance: January - March 2016					
Rank	Supplier	Ratio	Movement since October - December 2015	October - December 2015 Ratio	October - December 2015 Rank
1	SSE	28.4	▲	34.9	2
2	Flow Energy	32.6	▲	89.0	6
3	EDF Energy	35.4	▼	34.5	1
4	E (Gas and Electricity)	54.0	◀▶	74.1	4
5	British Gas	69.0	▼	65.3	3
6	Ecotricity	74.8	▲	98.8	9
7	Ovo Energy	90.0	▲	102.6	10
8	E.ON	91.1	▼	88.9	5

The league table receives a good level of publicity through the national press. The most recent publication of the league table was covered by 10 national newspapers as well as online media and trade press.

Citizens Advice is confident that the league table is a robust and accurate source of information. It publishes impartial information which is intended to empower consumers to make informed decisions about their energy supplier. The table also provides a level of transparency about supplier performance, which has the potential to act as an incentive to suppliers to make improvements.

1.2 Energy supplier customer service tool

The [supplier customer service tool](#) contains information about services available from domestic energy suppliers.⁵ The tool includes publicly available information, such as opening hours, contact channels and billing frequency. For the six largest suppliers it also includes two customer satisfaction metrics, on the ease of understanding a bill and ease of contacting a supplier. The tool is an Excel spreadsheet, linked to the consumer pages of the Citizens Advice website. Consumers that wish to view the tool are required to download this Excel spreadsheet from the website.

Energy Company Dashboard			
Company	National Gas		
Opening Hours			
Monday	8am - 8pm		
Tuesday	8am - 8pm		
Wednesday	8am - 8pm		
Thursday	8am - 8pm		
Friday	8am - 8pm		
Saturday	8am - 6pm		
Sunday	Closed		
Different ways to contact your supplier			
Freephone or local rate number	03030311200		
Email 1	customerservices@nationalgas.org.uk		
Email 2	info@nationalgas.org.uk		
Webform	Webform		
Web Chat	No		
Ring backs	if requested		
Mobile hotline	No		
Minicom/Text	No		
Frequency of billing			
	Direct Debit	Cash or Cheque	Prepayment
Annually	Yes	Yes	
6 Monthly	Yes	Yes	
Quarterly	Yes	Yes	
Monthly	Yes	Yes	

The tool is updated on an ad hoc basis when new suppliers enter the market or existing suppliers make changes to their service provision. The format of the tool does not allow consumers to easily compare service offerings across suppliers. We believe there is scope to improve the accessibility of the information contained within the tool.

⁵ Citizens Advice carried out omnibus research in late 2014 to establish which were the most important non price factors for consumers. The results informed the development of our customer service tool.

1.3 Price comparison tool

In October 2015 Citizens Advice launched an energy [price comparison tool](#). The tool allows members of the public to view and compare energy tariffs across domestic energy suppliers⁶

Citizens Advice price comparison tool [start page](#)

citizens advice

Compare gas and electricity prices

We search and compare every single tariff available from every single supplier in the UK. Our average saving is £188.65** per annum

What prices do you want to compare?

- Gas and Electricity
- Electricity only
- Gas only

Citizens Advice price comparison tool results page example

We have located 121 energy plans for you

Based on the information you provided we calculate that your energy spend for the next 12 months will be £480 (see details here)

If you wish to filter these results, please select the filter(s) below:

Tariff Type: Fixed or Variable
 Supplier: Show all
 Payment by: Show all

Tariff Name	Billing	Exit Fee	Personal Projection	Payment by	Savings
Premium Energy Saver					
GB energy	Paper & Paperless Billing	no fee	£327.03 per year	£28.00 Monthly Fixed Direct Debit	You will save £152.97 per year
GnERGY Fixed July 2017					
GnERGY	Paperless Billing	£49.98	£327.25 per year	£28.00 Monthly Fixed Direct Debit	You will save £152.75 per year

⁶ The Citizens Advice price comparison tool is non-transactional, meaning consumers can not switch energy supplier via the site.

Section 2 Proposed new performance information

Citizens Advice aim to build on the strengths of existing domestic energy supplier performance information published and introduce new information alongside this, in order to broaden how supplier performance is presented to consumers. We believe that the energy supplier comparison tool project will help meet this aim.

We recognise that performance information about energy suppliers is published by other industry stakeholders, and customer satisfaction information is published on some third party intermediary websites. It is essential that our comparison tool does not unnecessarily duplicate or conflict with existing information sources, but instead presents a clear, accurate, timely and consistent view of supplier performance. To avoid publishing unhelpful information, we're engaging and consulting with stakeholders throughout the delivery of the project. We also want to ensure that the information we publish is robust, has a high level of integrity and is independent and impartial.

2.1 Metrics and weighting for first release

Metrics

The metrics set out below are intended to present of how suppliers are performing, in terms of the service they provide to their customers. Internal discussions, discussions with stakeholders, and research have helped to identify the following five metrics for the first release of the comparison tool.

Metric	Scope	Market coverage	Detail
Complaints	The existing complaints data published by Citizens Advice, in the supplier performance league table , will provide the complaints metric.	Domestic electricity and gas suppliers with a customer base >50,000. As of July 2016 the published league table includes the performance of 20 suppliers that have a customer base of >50,000. For suppliers that are not in scope for the first release, but are included in the supplier performance league table, their complaints information will still be published but they will not receive	The information contained in the current league table will be incorporated into the new tool. There will be no change to how this information is currently collected and analysed.

		an overall rating in the new tool.	
Customer service	Customer satisfaction with ease of contacting supplier.	Domestic electricity and gas suppliers with a customer base of >150,000. The first release of the tool will include information for the 17 suppliers that have a customer base of >150,000.	Access to representative data from GFK. No requirements for suppliers to provide information for first release. This information is currently published by Citizens Advice for the six largest suppliers.
Billing	Satisfaction with ease of understanding bills.	Domestic electricity and gas suppliers with a customer base of >150,000. The first release of the tool would include this information for the 17 suppliers that have a customer base of >150,000.	Access to representative data from GFK. No requirements for suppliers to provide information for first release. This information is currently published by Citizens Advice for the six largest suppliers.
Switching	Average length of time taken to complete a switch for a customer.	The first release of the tool would include this information for 17 suppliers with a customer base of >150,000.	The average length of time to complete a switch for a customer would be measured over a quarter (counting completed switches in this period). Supplier performance to be judged against the 21 day switching target. Citizens Advice plan to issue an information request to suppliers to obtain this information - see Section 3 for further detail.
Customer commitments	Switch Guarantee Member and/or Billing code Member	Applicable to suppliers signed up to the Switch Guarantee and/or Billing Code, that are in scope for the first release of the tool (17 suppliers with a customer base of >150,000). For suppliers not in scope for the first release, but that are signed up to the guarantee and/or code, we will make this clear on the tool.	This information will be obtained via the Energy UK public website.

We recognise⁷ that price is a significant influence to consumers when making decisions about their chosen energy supplier. However, a metric related to price has been excluded from the first release of the comparison tool. We consider that the inclusion of a metric related to price may make the tool confusing to use when viewing the information it contains alongside the results on a price comparison site (see Section 4.3 for further detail).

Question 1 - Do you agree that the combination of the 5 metrics proposed for the first release will provide consumers with an overall view of suppliers' customer service performance? Please provide any supporting evidence for your answer.

Weightings

Please note the weightings below are indicative. Responses to the consultation will be taken into account when deciding the final weightings for the comparison tool.

Discussions with suppliers at a workshop in June indicated that the weighting for the complaints metric should not dominate the tool. This feedback has been taken into account, and the complaints metric has been closely balanced with the billing and the customer service metrics. However, complaints remain slightly more heavily weighted, as consumer surveys undertaken in recent years have indicated that supplier complaints volumes do often influence a consumer's decision when selecting a supplier.⁸

A lower weighting is proposed for the customer commitment metric, because this metric is based on self-regulatory initiatives, and as such should not receive the same weighting as the metrics we expect all suppliers to be consistently working towards. A lower weighting is also proposed for switching, on the basis that switching as a service has an impact on a smaller number of consumers than the more heavily weighted metrics which are more likely to impact all consumers.

Metric	Weighting	Maximum weighted score out of 5
Complaints	30%	1.5
Customer service	25%	1.25
Billing	25%	1.25
Switching	10%	0.5

⁷ Citizens Advice commissioned a consumer survey in 2014 and found price to be the biggest influence to consumers when making decisions about their energy supplier. User research with energy consumers commissioned in March 2016 found the same.

⁸ Citizens Advice commissioned a consumer survey in 2014 and found volumes of complaints to be the third biggest influence to consumers when making decisions about their energy supplier.

Customer commitment	10%	0.5
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Question 2 - Do you agree that the indicative weightings are an accurate representation of the importance of each metric? If you suggest any changes, please provide an explanation and any supporting evidence

2.2 Market coverage for first release

The comparison tool will contain representative data from as wide a section of the domestic energy market as is feasible. We propose that the first release of the tool will provide a full set of metrics and overall rating for the largest 17 domestic suppliers (those with a customer base of 150,000 and over). Following the first release of the tool we intend to explore the feasibility of extending the scope of the tool beyond these initial 17 suppliers.

We recognise the importance of providing high quality performance information that is market wide. For the 27 domestic suppliers⁹ that have less than 150,000 customers we propose that the first release of the tool incorporates the information contained within the existing energy supplier customer service tool (see Section 1.2). Section 4 contains further detail about how this information would be included.

Question 3 - Do you agree with the decision to limit the metrics and overall rating in the first release of the tool to the 17 largest suppliers from which we are able to collect representative data?

2.3 Metrics out of scope for first release

A number of other metrics have been ruled out at this stage of the project following discussions regarding their feasibility. We will revisit these areas at a later date, and where appropriate consider for possible inclusion in future releases of the tool.

Metric	Scope	Detail
Customer service	Satisfaction with service of supplier	We are due to receive (in Autumn 2016) representative information about levels of consumer satisfaction for the service provided by suppliers. This information will cover 17 suppliers with a customer base of >150,000. We intend to review the information once we have it and consider whether it should be included as an additional

⁹ Current numbers of domestic suppliers operating in the market - [Ofgem website](#)

		customer service metric in the first release, or alternatively for a future release. If we do wish to include this metric, we propose dividing the 25% weighting allocated to customer service equally between two the separate metrics.
Customer service	Speed to answer telephone calls	Average time to answer customer telephone calls to a main consumer helpline, 9am - 5pm, Monday - Sunday. Specialist help teams would be not be included. This information would need to be requested at a future date by Citizens Advice, from all domestic electricity and gas suppliers.
Switching	Accuracy of switching	The number of erroneous transfers by suppliers. Performance would be measured against the industry average for erroneous transfers. This information would need to be requested at a future date by Citizens Advice, it may be obtained from Ofgem or alternatively directly from all domestic electricity and gas suppliers.
Customer commitments	E.g. back-billing code - (alternatives to be scoped)	Which suppliers are signed up to industry initiatives. This information would be obtained from stakeholders where existing or requested at a future date by Citizens Advice, from all domestic electricity and gas suppliers.
Energy efficiency	To be identified	A metric related to energy efficiency has been excluded at this stage, the reason being that a metric has not been identified to effectively demonstrate supplier performance with a wide enough market coverage. Research ¹⁰ with consumers has also indicated that this type of information does not influence a significant number of consumers when selecting an energy supplier, in comparison with other factors.
Smart meters	E.g. level of satisfaction / accuracy of bills (to be confirmed)	We felt it was too early to capture performance information in this area and incorporate it into the tool. There are other Citizens Advice projects underway that are exploring how best to publish information related to smart meters.
Guaranteed standards	To be identified	Due to new reporting requirements, we felt it was too early to incorporate this information into the tool.
Social obligations	To be identified	We will explore how this information may be included in a tool after the first release has been successfully implemented.

¹⁰ Research with energy consumers undertaken by [Accent](#) in March 2016

Question 4 - Do you agree that a future release of the tool would benefit from the inclusion of a performance metric about the average speed to answer telephone calls? Do you agree that the suggested scope of calls between '9am - 5pm, Monday - Sunday' is the appropriate timescale to capture this information? Please provide any supporting evidence for your answer.

Question 5 - Do you agree that a future release of the tool would benefit from the inclusion of a performance metric about the accuracy of switching, based on the number of erroneous transfers? Please provide any supporting evidence for your answer.

Question 6 - Are there any additional qualitative indicators we should be considering for future development of the tool, in order to provide the best possible information for consumers?

Section 3 Switching information request

Citizens Advice will issue an information request to collect the data required to populate the switching metric detailed in Section 2.1. Engagement with Ofgem has led us to conclude that a Citizens Advice information request will be required to obtain the data required for the new tool because existing information collected by the regulator does not cover the 17 suppliers that we wish to include in the tool. The Citizens Advice information request will be aligned to existing requests (from Ofgem or Energy UK) where possible, to ensure we obtain consistent data and also to reduce the burden on suppliers.

Suppliers will be asked to provide information about the length of time it takes to switch a domestic customer. The length of time to switch will be used to indicate supplier performance, and be measured by performance against the 21 day switching target.

We propose to measure the length of time to switch from the initial point of sale between supplier and customer¹¹, to the supply start date. The data would be collected from switches completed in July, August and September 2016. The information request will provide explicit details about how we'd like to collect this information, measure the length of time to switch, and how we would like the information presented.

The information request will be issued as a mandatory request to the 17 largest suppliers that are in scope for the first release of the tool. The request will also be issued to all other domestic suppliers for information, as we envisage this information will be used in a future release of the tool. We will be asking suppliers to provide us with this information on a quarterly basis.

Citizens Advice intends to issue the information request on 12 August 2016 and will require the data by the deadline of 5pm on 28 October 2016. If there are any immediate questions relating to this forthcoming request please send them to isobel.croot@citizensadvice.org.uk before 5pm on 5 August 2015.

¹¹ We are aligned to Ofgem's definition of initial point of sale, which suggests it is the point at which the consumer need not take any further action for the switch to occur.

Section 4 - Energy supplier comparison tool design

This section of the consultation sets out proposals for the design of the energy supplier comparison tool. It explains scoring criteria, the consumer experience of the tool and how we propose to share data with stakeholders and third party intermediaries.

There are two intentions behind the design of the energy supplier comparison tool:

1. To provide an accessible and engaging source of performance information for consumers (Section 4.2).
2. To provide a source of credible information that can be shared with and published by stakeholders and third parties intermediaries (Section 4.3).

Please note that once the development of the tool has started, designs will be tested with stakeholders. We expect that the design of the tool will develop after the first release, as the project progresses and as user testing and feedback reveals what impact it has. The energy team will inform key stakeholders in advance of implementing any significant changes to the tool.

4.1 Scoring criteria

Score	Definition	Metrics - scoring criteria				
		Complaints	Customer service	Billing	Switching	Customer commitment
		* Average score (3) based on Citizens Advice league table - average number of complaints per quarter is approx. 350. The ranges for scores 5,4 and 2,1 have been spaced around the average score, based on the distribution of our existing performance data.	*Average score (3) based on GFK average of total consumers very or quite satisfied in 2015. The ranges for scores 5,4 and 2,1 have been spaced around the average score, based on the distribution of our existing performance data.	*Scoring consistent with customer service metric.	* Average score (3) based on best practice - Energy UK expect that for suppliers signed up to guarantee, 98% of switches will be within the 21 day target	*Suppliers (with over 150,000 customers) that have signed up to switch guarantee and/or billing code as of July 2016.
5	Excellent performance	Less than 50 per 100,000	Over 75% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	Over 75% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	All switches 21 days or less	Signed up to both switch guarantee and billing

						code
4	Good performance	51- 100 per 100,000	70-75% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	70-75% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	95% plus of switches in 21 days or less	Signed up to either switch guarantee or billing code
3	*Average performance	101 to 350 per 100,000	60-69% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	60-69% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	75% plus of switches are 21 days or less	n/a
2	Satisfactory performance	351 to 550 per 100,000	51-59% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	51-59% of consumers are very or quite satisfied	50% plus of switches are 21 days or less	n/a
1	Poor performance	Over 550 per 100,000	50% and below of consumers are very or quite satisfied	50% and below of consumers are very or quite satisfied	Under 50% of switches in 21 days	n/a

The customer service and billing metrics have been given consistent scoring criteria. We receive the data for both of these metrics from GFK, and in 2015 the data we received indicated that satisfaction levels for consumers who were very or quite satisfied were lower for the billing metric, in comparison with the customer service metric. However, we are proposing that both metrics have a scoring criterion based around the higher average levels of satisfaction for the customer service metric, as this more closely reflects the standard of performance we would hope to see all suppliers achieving.

See appendix D for example of scoring.

Question 7 - Do you agree that the scoring definitions and scoring criteria proposed are appropriate to use for the comparison tool? Please provide any supporting evidence with your response.

When the individual scores for each metric are given, they will be weighted accordingly (see Section 2.1) and then added together to reach an overall score out of 5. We are proposing to round up the overall score to the nearest quarter score (see appendix D). We believe this level of granularity will show differences between supplier scores, whilst remaining clear enough for consumers to easily understand. More granular detail of supplier performance against each metric will be included in the tool (see image 4 of appendix B for example).

Question 8 - Do you agree that rounding supplier scores to the nearest quarter score will show sufficient granularity, while remaining clear enough for consumers to understand?

Alternative scoring criteria

We would also like to collect feedback from stakeholders about an alternative scoring criteria. The alternative scoring criteria would rank the 17 suppliers by their performance against each metric and award an overall ranking based on a total weighted score.

The suggested methodology is as follows:

- Suppliers allocated a score between 1 and 17 for each metric, ranked by how well each supplier performs e.g. a score of 17 would be awarded to the lowest complaints ratio and a score of 1 to the highest complaints ratio.
- The metric weightings described in Section 2.1 are used.
- For identical performance, scores are divided equally between suppliers. The customer commitment metric is approached like this too, but where suppliers have not met the customer commitment a score of 1 is awarded.
- Suppliers receive a performance ranking based on their total score. For identical performance, suppliers are awarded the same final ranking.

Please see appendix D for an example of how the scoring criteria would work.

Question 9 - Do you prefer the alternative scoring criteria over the initial scoring criteria set out in Section 4.1? If so, why?

4.2 Consumer experience

Please note that the accompanying screenshots (appendix A and B) for this section are for illustrative purposes only and to gain feedback on early designs of the consumer journey of the energy supplier comparison tool. The detail, including text and data, is provided as an example and the final design of the tool will reflect the decisions regarding what information will be included in the tool. Please also note that there are no illustrations provided for the alternative scoring criteria. Once development begins, the designs will change and stakeholders will be given an opportunity to view and provide feedback.

Current consumer experience

Consumers who currently wish to view energy supplier performance information published by Citizens Advice are required to locate this in the energy supplier performance league table and the energy supplier customer service tool (see Sections 1.1 and 1.2). The league table presents complaints data for the largest 20 domestic suppliers (published as of July 2016), whereas the customer service tool includes information on all domestic suppliers.

The limitation of having performance information separated over these two sources is that it becomes difficult for consumers to gain a complete view of the performance of individual suppliers. In addition, the format of the customer service tool does not allow consumers to easily make direct comparisons between different suppliers.

The Citizens Advice price comparison site is accessed through a separate web page to the league table and customer service tool, on the Citizens Advice website.

See appendix A for visual representation of the current consumer journey.

New consumer experience

The energy supplier comparison tool proposes to introduce 4 new performance metrics (outlined in Section 2.1) alongside the existing complaints data contained with the league table (see Section 1.1) and present this information in a new format on the Citizens Advice website. The 5 individual metrics will be collated to provide an overall performance rating for suppliers. This proposal is initially for the 17 largest domestic suppliers only.

We will retain the information in the existing complaints league table, incorporating this into the new tool. The process for collecting and analysing the complaints data will not change.

In addition to the metrics and overall performance rating we will incorporate into the new tool information about suppliers that is currently contained within the customer service tool. This includes the range of contact channels and opening hours, frequency and range of billing options. For the first release of the tool we do not propose incorporating this information into the metrics, but we will explore the feasibility of incorporating them in future releases.

The suppliers that will not receive performance metrics and an overall rating in the first release of the tool (suppliers with less than 150,000 customers) will still be listed in the tool with the information currently contained within the customer service tool. If a supplier is not included in the 17 larger suppliers, but has a complaints ranking or is signed up to the switching guarantee and/or billing code, this information will be provided in an appropriate format..

Consumers will be able to view all the information in one area on the Citizens Advice website. Consumers would not need to enter information into the tool. We intend to explore how users may filter the tool based on certain criteria (this may not be incorporated into the first release of the tool).

See appendix B for a visual representation of how consumers would navigate the information.

4.3 Sharing data with third parties

In addition to providing better information to consumers through the delivery of the new tool, we intend to publish our data in a way that allows third parties to access it easily. As part of the tool's development an application programming interface (API) is being built so that the data contained in the tool can be published in a way that will allow stakeholders to use it independently.

The purpose of sharing data in this way is to show our overall performance rating (or an alternative message for suppliers out of scope for an overall rating in the first release of the tool) alongside the results page of an energy price comparison site. We wish to integrate our new rating on the Citizens Advice [price comparison tool](#) initially (see image 6 of appendix B), and then offer it to external price comparison sites. We will ensure that we have the correct agreement in place with any third party intermediary that decides to make use of our data¹².

The design of the tool will also permit more efficient data sharing with key stakeholders such as Ofgem, Ombudsman Services: Energy (OSE) and [BEIS](#).

Question 10 - Do you agree that the proposed tool will make improvements to the experience consumers currently have when accessing Citizens Advice performance information?

¹² The intention to include this feature on the Citizens Advice price comparison tool is linked to our plans to develop the tool, in light of recent remedies set by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The CMA's proposal to remove the whole of market requirement for price comparison sites has led to the Citizens Advice tool being nominated to provide the backstop whole of market comparison for consumers. We expect that the site to gain more visibility as a result, and want to ensure that it provides a high quality service to consumers.

Section 5 High-level delivery plan

Please see appendix C for the delivery plan. Please note that the delivery plan is presented at a high-level and will be subject to change. There is also flexibility built into the plan, in order to factor in the responses to the consultation and consider changes that may be needed as a result.

The scoping of the requirements for the development and implementation of the final tool is underway, and this will determine the detail for the design and development workstream.

We have proposed that the first release of the tool takes place in Autumn 2016. An exact date is to be confirmed. It is expected that additional releases of the tool will take place subsequently.

Further details regarding stakeholder workshops will be circulated in early August.

Annex A - Summary of questions

Qu	Section	Question
1	2	Do you agree that the combination of the 5 metrics proposed for the first release will provide consumers with an overall view of suppliers' customer service performance? Please provide any supporting evidence for your answer.
2	2	Do you agree that the indicative weightings are an accurate representation of the importance of each metric? If you suggest any changes, please provide an explanation and any supporting evidence
3	2	Do you agree with the decision to limit the metrics and overall rating in the first release of the tool to the 17 largest suppliers from which we are able to collect representative data?
4	2	Do you agree that a future release of the tool would benefit from the inclusion of a performance metric about the average speed to answer telephone calls? Do you agree that the suggested scope of calls between '9am - 5pm, Monday - Sunday' is the appropriate timescale to capture this information? Please provide any supporting evidence for your answer.
5	2	Do you agree that a future release of the tool would benefit from the inclusion of a performance metric about the accuracy of switching, based on the number of erroneous transfers? Please provide any supporting evidence for your answer.
6	2	Are there any additional qualitative indicators we should be considering for future development of the tool, in order to provide the best possible information for consumers?
7	4	Do you agree that the scoring definitions and scoring criteria proposed are appropriate to use for the comparison tool? Please provide any supporting evidence with your response.
8	4	Do you agree that rounding supplier scores to the nearest quarter score will show sufficient granularity, while remaining clear enough for consumers to understand?
9	4	Do you prefer the alternative scoring criteria over the initial scoring criteria set out in Section 4.1? If so, why?
10	4	Do you agree that the proposed tool will make improvements to the experience consumers currently have when accessing Citizens Advice performance information?

Annex B - Consultation process

Citizens Advice welcomes responses from suppliers, key stakeholders and any other interested parties on the issues raised in this document.

Citizens Advice asks for responses to this consultation to be submitted in writing before the deadline of 5pm on 9 September 2016.

The preferred method of response is by email, to:

isobel.croot@citizensadvice.org.uk

Responses may also be sent by post to:

Isobel Croot
Citizens Advice
200 Aldersgate Street
London
EC1A 4HD

Citizens Advice will acknowledge all consultation responses received. Please remember to state your contact details in your response.

Citizens Advice will publish responses to this consultation on its website and may refer to their contents in subsequent publications. If you wish all or part of your response to remain confidential, or if you would like it to be published anonymously, please indicate this in the response. Similarly, if you would prefer your response to be published only once the consultation has ended, please let us know.

If your response is to remain confidential and you would prefer Citizens Advice not to reference its contents in a non-specific manner that does not breach this confidentiality - such as a general summary of responses - please indicate this in your response.

Please note that information held by Citizens Advice, including the content of Consultation responses, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000). For more details, please visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.