

Code administrators performance survey

Supply Point Administrator Agreement (SPAA)

ElectraLink Ltd

Introduction

As part of its 2016 Code Governance Review Final Proposals (Phase 3) (CGR3), it was decided that Ofgem should commission a standardised cross-code study to monitor and assess the performance of code administrators in their role in respect of each code that they administer.

The study was evaluates the service provided by code administrators in accordance with the principles of the Code Administration Code of Practice (CACoP) which aims to align processes across the industry codes and identify areas of best practice.

This report looks specifically at the results for the Supply Point Administrator Agreement (SPAA) administered by ElectraLink Ltd (Electralink) and all verbatim comments were provided in respect of the SPAA and/or ElectraLink, however they may be more widely applicable.

Method

A mixed mode programme of research was conducted with organisations interacting with industry codes consisting of:

- 15 depth interviews to inform questionnaire design
- A core survey with 204 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators (30 participants answering about the SPAA)
- 22 follow-up depth interviews to get a more detailed understanding of drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction

Throughout the report, results are shown:

At a total level (aggregated results for all codes)

At a total for the SPAA (due to small base sizes, results are not broken down by subgroup)

*If SPAA results are significantly higher than the average, the total is shown in **green***

*If SPAA results are significantly lower than the average, the total is shown in **red***

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this could be due to rounding or the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'Not applicable' responses

Quotes from respondents included in the report and are not intended to be representative of the range of views, but rather offer a range of opinions, feedback and suggested improvements

*Where base sizes are small, this is shown by an * for bases less than 30 and ** for bases less than 15. This indicates that the data should be treated with caution*

Industry context

It is important that the structure and perceptions of the energy industry in which organisations operate are taken into account when interpreting survey results.

Organisations recognise that the energy market is going through a transitional phase and that the changes occurring may affect how they interact with codes. Highlighted changes include:

- Requirement for codes to be in line with European legislation

- Prevalence of new entrants into the market
- Attempts to streamline processes, such as the Code Administrators Code of Practice

Some feel that the market is getting more complex and there are occasions when Ofgem can add to the complications of processes associated with codes.

Codes are perceived as complex and typically very different, with some being more technical than others. Organisations highlight that increased cross-code coordination overall and simplifying operational aspects of codes would greatly assist them. For example, when changes to one code affect another, communications and associated processes should be in place for all the codes that are impacted. There is also a call for a cross-code accession process (to avoid having to provide the same information to each code administrator).

Some organisations believe that industry-wide interventions could be initiated centrally to help streamline processes.

These external factors can influence how organisations perceive the service provided by code administrators. Nonetheless, they are generally considered to be performing well.


Executive summary

ElectraLink perform well on most aspects of service provision for the SPAA:


- Just under three-quarters are satisfied with the service provided.
- Three-quarters are satisfied with the provision of support.
- When it comes to satisfaction with the support received when requested, 60% are satisfied.
- While results are, on balance, positive there are a few areas where ElectraLink could further improve service with regards to the SPAA:
 - Helping organisations with interpreting information
 - Improving the website user experience
 - Keeping customers sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code

Organisation profiling

ORGANISATION'S SIZE

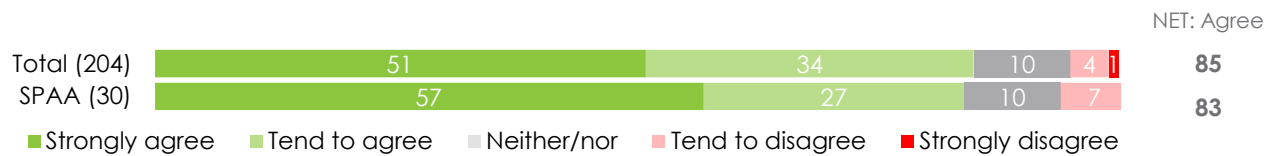
	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (204)	27%	17%	15%	38%
SPAA (30)	37%	20%	7%	33%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Total (204)	13%	10%	76%
SPAA (30)	14%	23%	63%

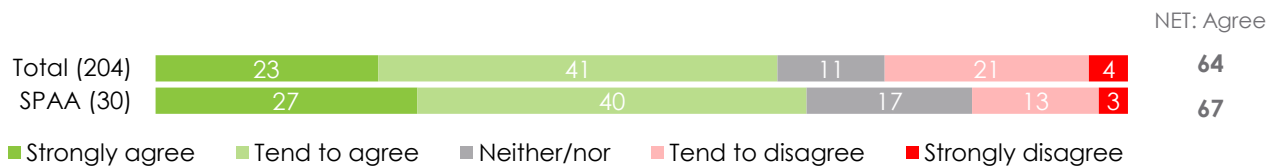
Across all codes, there are some broad differences between organisations of different sizes and their length of operation in the energy market. Individuals employed by small organisations (0-49 employees), or new entrants to the market (within the last 5 years) tend to express slightly lower levels of contentment throughout the survey across all codes. It is likely this is due to lack of resource and expertise, which are more frequently highlighted as issues by these groups. However, even those working for larger organisations say they sometimes face challenges when interacting with codes.

SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES



Q1. To what extent would you agree or disagree that your organisation has sufficient expertise to enable you to deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

ORGANISATION'S RESOURCE



Q2. And to what extent would you agree or disagree that you have enough resource within your organisation to sufficiently deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

There is a view among smaller organisations that it is not always a level playing field.

"The things that bothers us is that the big suppliers do not follow the rules, and no one enforces them. As a small player that's a big deal for us - big teams and departments stonewall us. There's no enforcement by the code administrator."

Key findings

KPIs

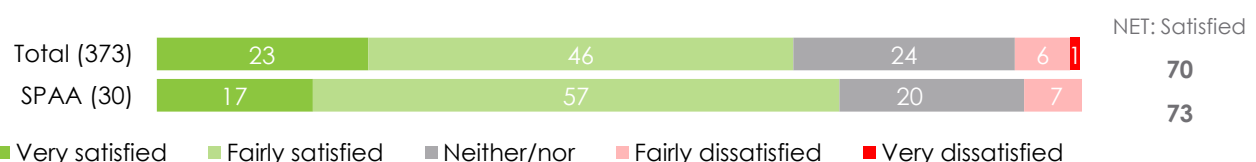
The survey collected three measures of satisfaction:

1. Overall satisfaction with the service provided to their organisation
2. Satisfaction with the provision of support
3. Satisfaction with support received when requested

ElectraLink is rated, on balance, positively across across all KPIs. There is no strong dissatisfaction reported across any of the measures. However, organisations are less satisfied with the support Electralink provides when it is requested.

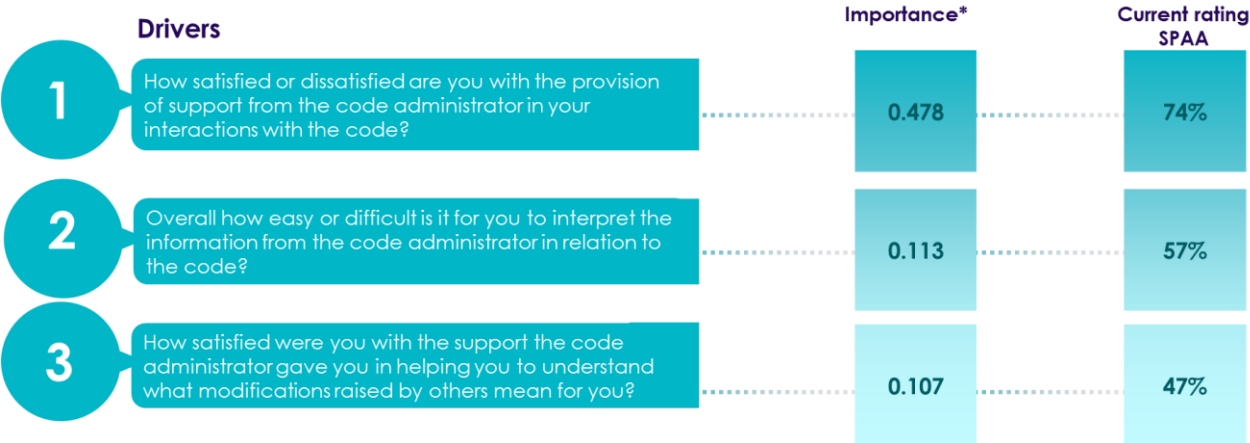
OVERALL SATISFACTION

Seven in ten (73%) organisations are satisfied with ElectraLink's overall services with regards to the SPAA.



Q10. Thinking about all aspects of your dealings with the code administrator in relation to <this/these> codes, overall how satisfied are you with the service provided to your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

To understand the aspects of service delivery that most impact overall satisfaction, key driver analysis (KDA) was conducted.¹ The aspects of service that have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction are:



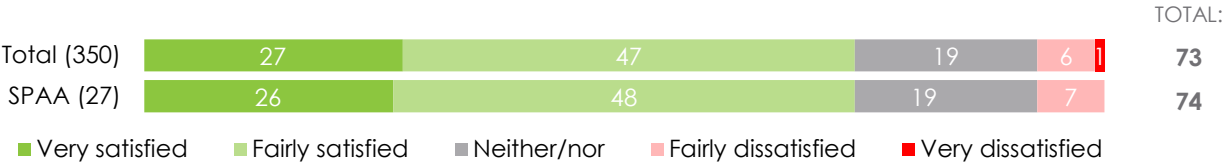
* The importance value will always have a value between -1 and +1, where, a large positive correlation means two ratings 'move together' and a negative correlation means the ratings move in the opposite direction. A correlation of 1 means an exact linear relationship (i.e. everyone gives the same rating for overall satisfaction as for provision of support.)

Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the SPAA. ElectraLink receives a good overall satisfaction score as regards the SPAA.

SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION OF SUPPORT

Generally, organisations acknowledge the need for comprehensive detail from administrators. However additional support in interpreting this information is appreciated, particularly for small organisations or those new to the market. ElectraLink are generally felt to be doing well, but some felt there was more that could be done to engage customers that were party to the SPAA.

Almost three-quarters of ElectraLink customers say they are satisfied with the provision of support.



Q11a/Q11c. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Although customers are generally satisfied with the level of support from Gemserv, some highlight some areas of improvement.

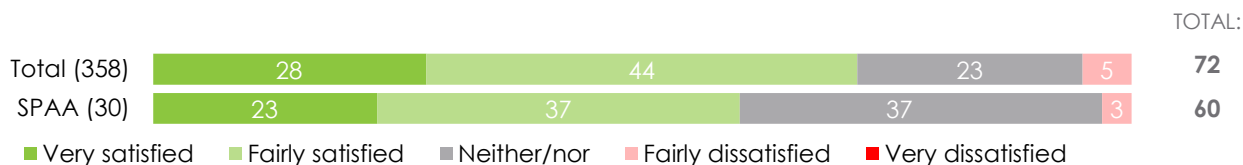
"More frequent contact with customers."

"More regular communication. Maybe they do send information, but it's not going to me."

¹ KDA tests the strength of the correlation between ratings of core metrics against perceived level of satisfaction by which we can derive which factors have the greatest impact on overall attitudes – this is a subconscious measurement rather than a stated level of importance.

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

Three in five are satisfied with the support received when requested from ElectraLink. Those party to the SPAA tend to feel ElectraLink are approachable and easy to contact if they have issues.



Q13/Q13b. And when you request support from the code administrator in relation to the <code> how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you receive? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"SPAA is a bit different, they will go out of their way to find the information that you need. ElectraLink are approachable – if I need something I just call them."

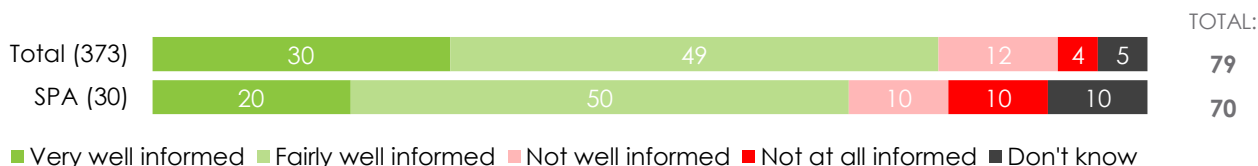
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the SPAA from ElectraLink 1 - 2 times a week and for the vast majority (91%), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

At an overall level, there is correlation between the experience and size of an organisation and perceptions of being informed about the codes. This demonstrates that resource and familiarity tend to produce a more comfortable position in which to deal with code processes.

ElectraLink perform well in this area: seven in ten say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the SPAA.

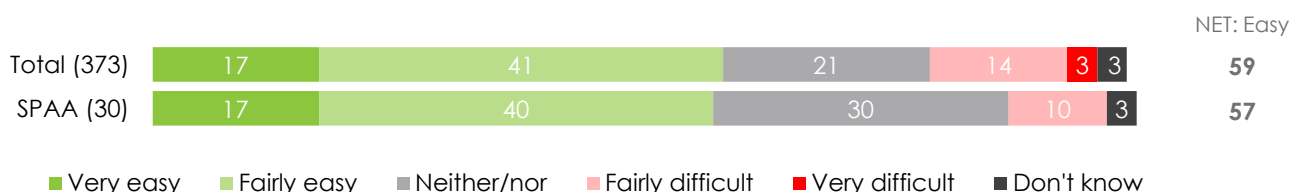


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

At an overall level, those with more experience of industry codes find it easier to interpret related information. While organisations face some challenges with interpretation of all the codes, they acknowledge that it may be difficult to simplify information due to the complexities of the code itself.

Around six in ten say it is easy) to interpret information about the SPAA.



Q15/Q15b. Overall how easy or difficult is it for you to interpret the information from the code administrator in relation to Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"Make the updates supply specific as some changes are not relevant. Make that clear from the start. Often you'll read all the way into the document and realise it doesn't apply."

Perceptions of direct services

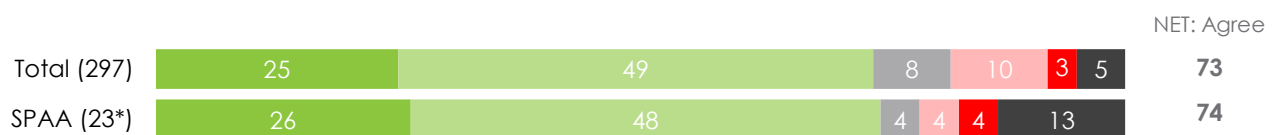
EMAIL

Generally, organisations prefer to receive information via email so they do not have to manually search through websites to keep track of developments. It helps them to stay on top of changes to the code and provides a ready-made audit trail they can reference.

Some emails are considered too content heavy and the volume of information can be hard to digest for those with limited resource. Organisations mention difficulties in identifying which emails require immediate action or contain information that is relevant to them. This can lead to important information being missed. There is appetite for a more tailored service across all codes, such as mailing lists that are specific to company type (such as generators or suppliers) or company size.

There is a relatively high level of agreement that ElectraLink's emails are easy to understand (74%) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (74%). By simplifying and tailoring information for different types of organisations, ElectraLink could further improve these scores.

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'



'The emails I receive make it clear when action needs to be taken'



■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those receiving information from code administrator (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"Identify more clearly whether information is relevant to us as a supplier."

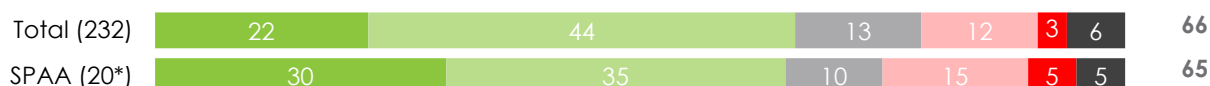
WEBSITES

At an overall level, those accessing specific code websites more regularly find them easier to navigate, while those less familiar feel it can be difficult to find the information they are looking for. Code administrator websites are thought to vary in quality and some are not updated as frequently as others.

There is some dissatisfaction expressed with ElectraLink's website in relation to the SPAA: one in five disagree that they are able to easily find information and that the website keeps them sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code. Improving website accessibility could help those less familiar with the code to navigate it to find the information they are looking for more easily.

'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'

NET: Agree



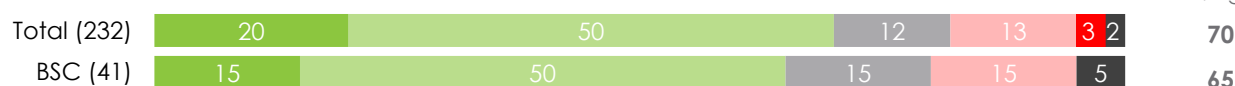
'I am able to easily find information on the website'

NET:
Agree



'The information on the website is easy to understand'

NET: Agree



■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Q20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those using code administrator website (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Easier access to the website is an area highlighted for improvement by customers.

"Improve access to the website."

"You'll eventually find what you're looking for."

MEETINGS

Overall, meetings and workshops are perceived as well run and useful. Introductory sessions are valuable for new entrants, chairs are generally impartial and effective, and organisations find it easy to contribute. Organisations indicate that code administrators try to encourage attendance from stakeholders.

However, organisations say it can be difficult to attend all meetings due to resource and financial constraints. Meetings are perceived as mainly London centric, which can be problematic for those not based in the Capital.

Teleconference facilities can be problematic due to audio problems (hearing and being heard), and confusion about who is talking.

The proportion of those who have attended a meeting or workshop about the SPAA in the last 12 months is significantly lower than average at 23%. At an overall level, 43% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with.

Organisations attending SPAA meetings were particularly positive about the meeting facilities being fit for purpose and about being able to actively participate in discussion.

'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'



'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



'The materials that I receive prior to the meeting(s) provide me with enough information about the objectives'



'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'



■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those attending meetings (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

There are some specific improvement suggestions highlighted for meetings.

"For SPAA especially, I would suggest firmer actions and firmer controls within the working groups, and much firmer chairing in the working groups."

"Attention to detail and making sure the meeting invites give the correct meeting location,,,, just not the same amount of attention to detail made as some others."

RAISING MODIFICATIONS

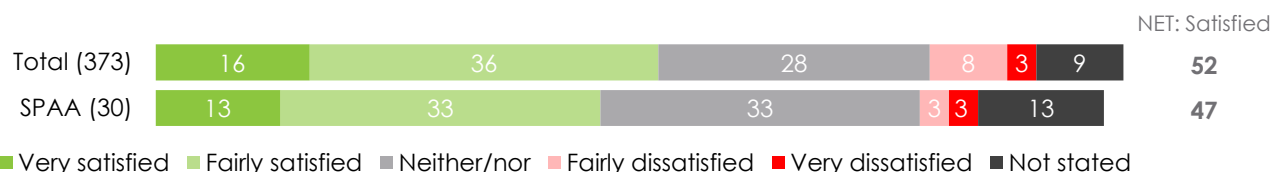
Just one person surveyed raised modifications in respect of the SPAA within the last 12 months compared to the average of 13%.

The individual who raised a modification found the process easy and was satisfied with the support ElectraLink gave in the development of their proposal.

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Overall, half of organisations are satisfied with the support their code administrator provides to help to understand what modifications raised by others mean for them.

A minority are satisfied (47%) with how ElectraLink helps them to understand SPAA modifications, although, very few organisations are dissatisfied,



Q28. How satisfied were you with the support the code administrator gave you in helping you to understand what modifications raised by others mean for your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

An organisation highlighted that it is more of a challenge for newer (and often smaller) businesses to take account of modifications.

"One of the issues with the modifications is that they're often made by big independent companies. For a very new business, which is still trying to develop its IT systems, each modification costs us thousands of pounds (in development time etc). For those trying to enter the market it's a lot of money, there should be more leeway for smaller businesses to help us keep up."

ACCESSION PROCESS

Just over two in five respondents (43%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to, the SPAA in the last five years. Of these, around half (54%) found the process easy, just 8% found the process to be difficult while the rest were neutral or said they no direct involvement with the process.

Conclusions

- ElectraLink are performing well on most aspects of service provision in relation to the SPAA
- There is scope to improve the ease of interpreting information for organisation. Improving this aspect of service may increase overall satisfaction with the service ElectraLink is providing in relation to the SPAA
- There are aspects of the website that are identified as in need of attention; particularly the ease of finding information on websites and keeping customers informed of any changes or modifications to the code