

# Code administrators performance survey

## Uniform Network Code(UNC)

The Joint Office of Gas Transporters

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### 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 Uniform Network Code(UNC) administered by the Joint Office of Gas Transporters (Joint Office) and all verbatim comments were provided in respect of the UNC and/or Joint Office, however they may be more widely applicable.

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### 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 (39 participants answering about the UNC)
- 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 UNC (due to small base sizes, results are not broken down by subgroup)*

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

*If UNC 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*

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### 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 rationalised 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

Overall, the Joint Office is regarded highly.


- Just over three-quarters are satisfied with the overall service provided to their organisation (with two in five saying 'very' satisfied).
- Around four in five are satisfied with the provision of support (81%) and the support received when requested (82%).
- Customers feel well informed about the UNC and the majority find it easy to interpret the information about the code; the Joint Office performs particularly strongly on this aspect.
- Perceptions of the Joint Office's direct services are largely positive but there is room for further improvement in terms of:
  - website navigation and helping customers to easily find information
  - teleconference facilities for meetings

## Organisational profiling

### ORGANISATION'S SIZE

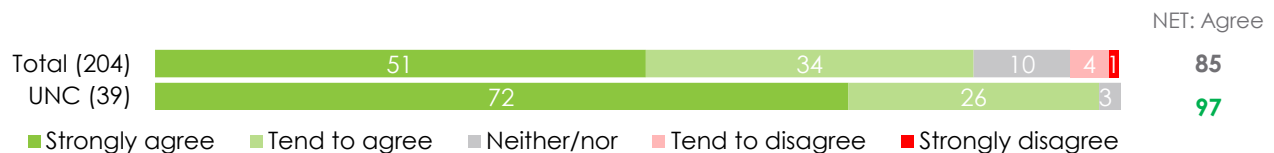
	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (204)	27%	17%	15%	38%
UNC (39)	26%	10%	5%	56%

### ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Total (204)	13%	10%	76%
UNC (39)	5%	5%	90%

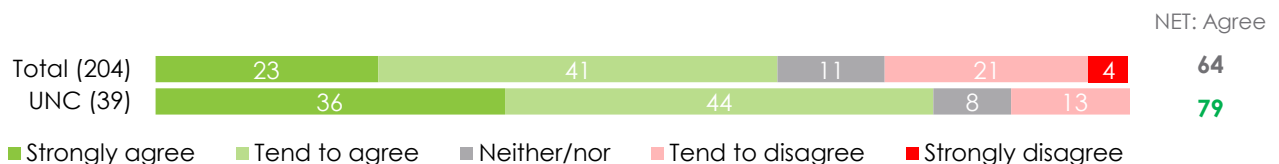
Across all codes, there are some broad differences between organisations of different sizes and their length of operation in the energy market. Individuals employed by small organisations (0-49 employees), or new entrants to the market (within the last 5 years) tend to express slightly lower levels of 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 %)

## Key findings

### KPIS

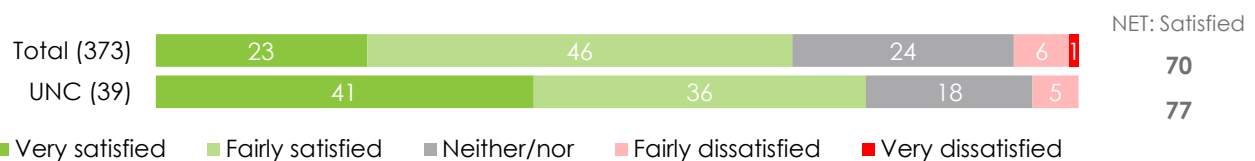
The survey collected three measures of satisfaction:

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

The Joint Office performs strongly on all three KPI measures: most are satisfied and there is very little in the way of dissatisfaction. Overall, just over three-quarters are satisfied with the service provided to their organisation and four in five are satisfied with the support provided and received when requested.

## OVERALL SATISFACTION

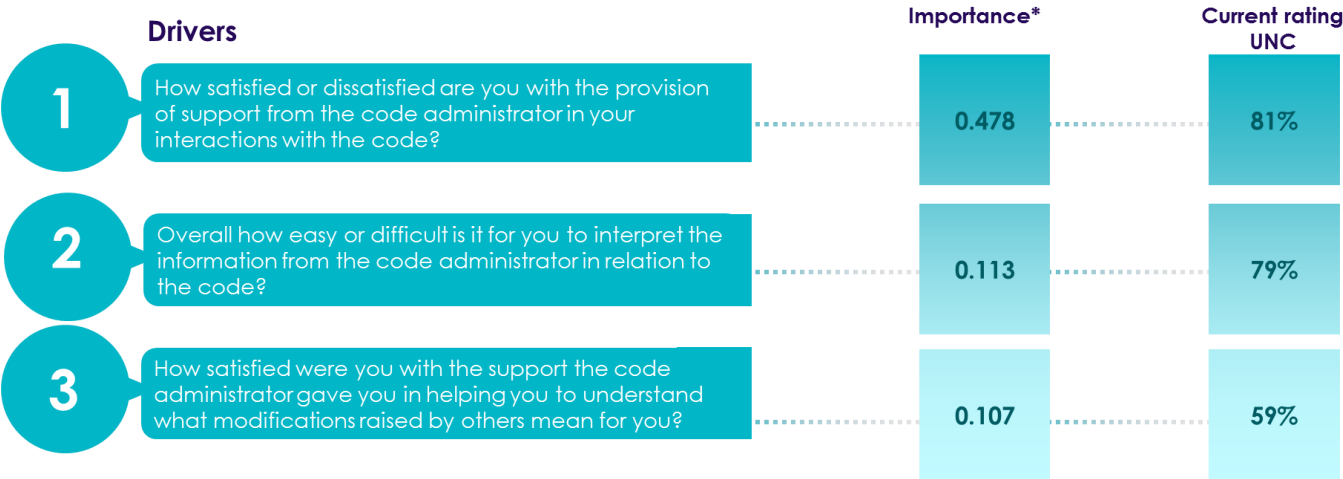
At an all code level, seven in ten say they are satisfied with the service provided by their code administrator with a large number (41%) saying they are very satisfied.



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 %)

*"The Joint Office are more proactive in regards to managing change."*

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



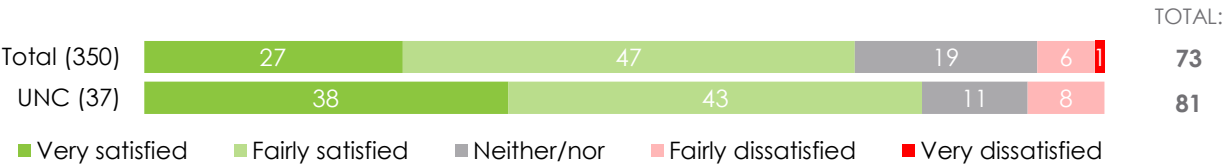
\* The importance value will always have a value between -1 and +1, where, a large positive correlation means two ratings 'move together' and a negative correlation means the ratings move in the opposite direction. A correlation of 1 means an exact linear relationship (i.e. everyone gives the same rating 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 UNC. Joint Office scored well for the UNC but there is room for improvement in some service areas, particularly in the administering of meetings.

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.

Joint Office customers are highly likely to be satisfied with the provision of support as regards the UNC.



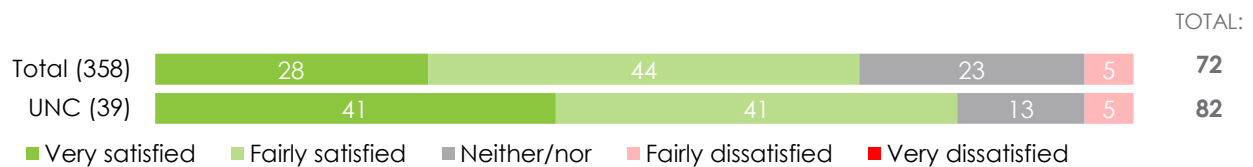
Q11a/Q11c. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

*“They are the one stop shop for distributing industry communication but there are things they don't send out that would be useful if they did.”*  
*“Be a bit more interactive with their customer base.”*

<sup>1</sup> 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

Satisfaction with the support received when requested from the Joint Office is also slightly higher than the average (eight in ten are satisfied).



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 %)

While most are satisfied with the support they receive on request, some say that the Joint Office is in need of more resource.

*"I think they require more resourcing to facilitate in the industry."*

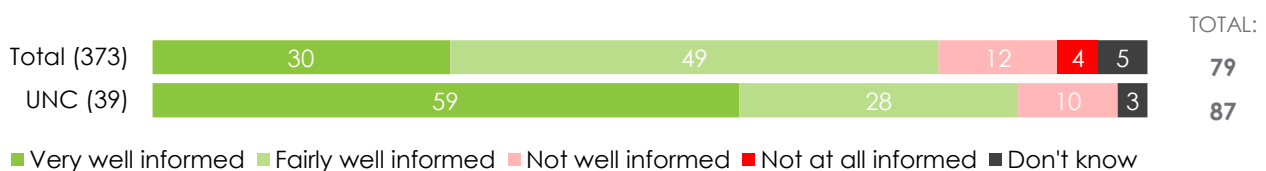
## Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the UNC from the Joint Office four to five times a week and for the vast majority (83%), 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.

The Joint Office performs very well in this area: almost nine in ten say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the UNC (six in ten feel very well informed).

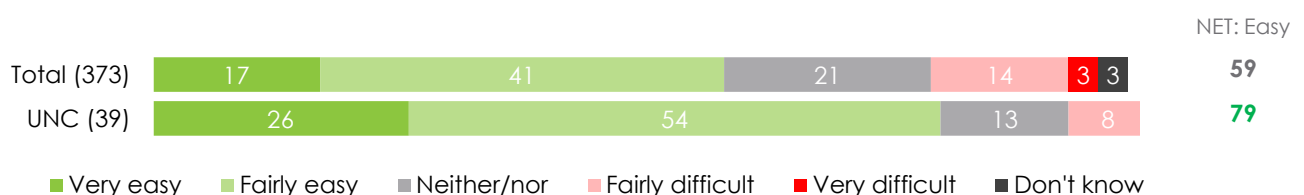


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

### 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 across all codes, they acknowledge that it may be difficult to simplify information due to the complexities of the code itself.

Most organisations find it easy to interpret information about the UNC.



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 %)

Although the UNC performs well in relation to interpreting information, some still made suggestions for areas of possible improvement.

*"The traffic light system on their documents should be outside the document and embedded in the email to remove one level of clicking."*

## Perceptions of direct services

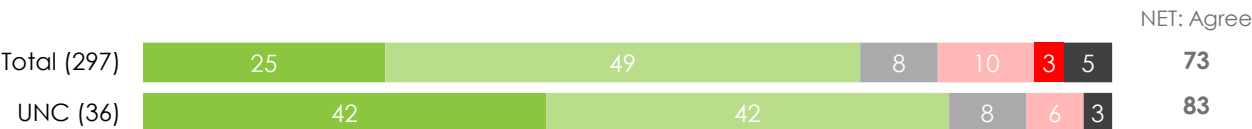
### EMAIL

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, such as mailing lists that are specific to company type (such as generators or suppliers) or company size across all codes.

There is a very high level of agreement that Joint Office's emails are easy to understand (83%) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (86%).

#### '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 %)

Although organisations are generally very positive about emails, there are some areas highlighted as in need of improvement.

*"I would prefer if the email were tailored to my role, so that I only get the ones that are relevant for me. I get so many emails from the Joint Office that there's a risk that you might ignore something that's important."*

*"Can a mail service/software be used to consolidate multiple emails into one update?"*

*"Greater clarity with their email and decent teleconference facilities."*

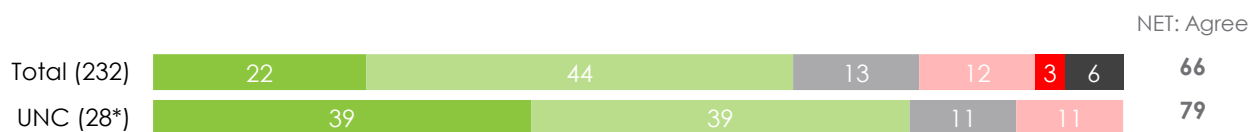
### WEBSITES

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.

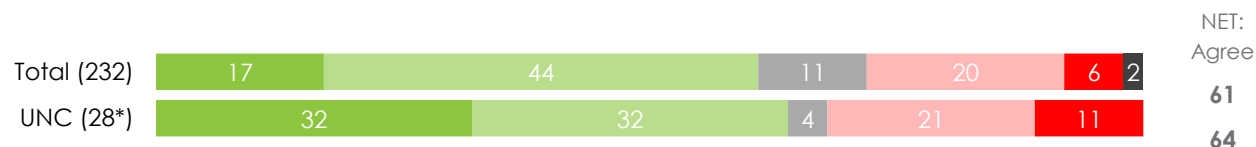
Some aspects of the Joint Office's website are well regarded, around four in five agree that the website keeps them sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code and that the

information on the website is easy to understand. However, around a third disagree that they are able to easily find information.

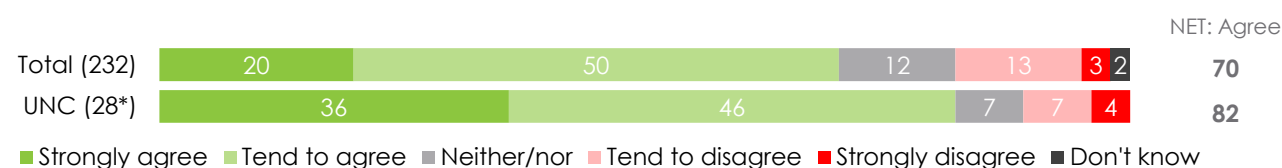
**'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'**



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



**'The information on the website is easy to understand'**



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 %)

There are a few aspects of the website that are highlighted as in need of improvement:

*[In relation to the Joint Office website] "Need easier access to Xoserve file formats and Nexus papers."*

*"Make it a little bit more user friendly on the website - it's a very comprehensive website and you really need to be experienced in order to use it. They could do more for new people."*

## MEETINGS

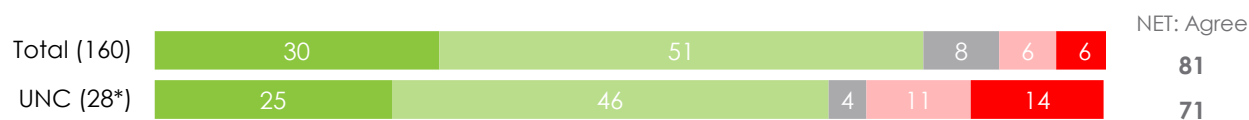
Overall, meetings and workshops are perceived as well run and useful. Introductory sessions are valuable for new entrants, chairs are generally impartial and effective, and organisations find it easy to contribute. Organisations indicate that code administrators try to encourage attendance from stakeholders.

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 UNC in the last 12 months is significantly higher than average at 72%. At an overall level, 43% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. With regards to the different aspects of the meetings/workshops, there is some dissatisfaction with receiving information in sufficient time before meetings and the impartiality of the chair. There are significant concerns regarding the teleconference facilities.

### 'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



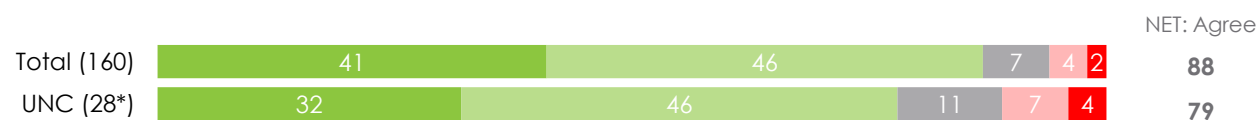
### 'The meeting chair acts impartially'



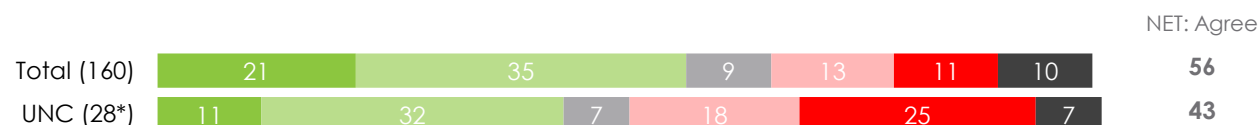
### 'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



### '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 %)

Organisations put forward a range of suggestions to improve meetings.

*"Teleconference facilities - it's virtually impossible to be involved when dialling in, you cannot hear what's happening."*

*"Facilitate contribution by all meeting attendees. Meeting documentation could be improved to be more useful for those unable to attend meetings."*

*"Greater rigour needs to be applied regarding document provision by attendees to meetings. In many cases documents are provided the night before which is simply too short notice."*

*"I would have an independently funded chair to ensure neutrality"*

*"There are lot of meetings in London, and they're often only for 2 and 3 hours. Once I'm there I would lke to stay to blitz a lot of work. There are often a lot of actions made for next time which we could potentially sort out then. So I would like fewer but longer meetings."*

## RAISING MODIFICATIONS

A third have raised modifications in respect of the UNC within the last 12 months, which is significantly higher than the average (13%) for all codes.

Of those raising a modification, around three-quarters (77%) said the process of raising a modification was easy and over two-thirds (69%) are satisfied with the support Joint Office gave in the development of their proposal.

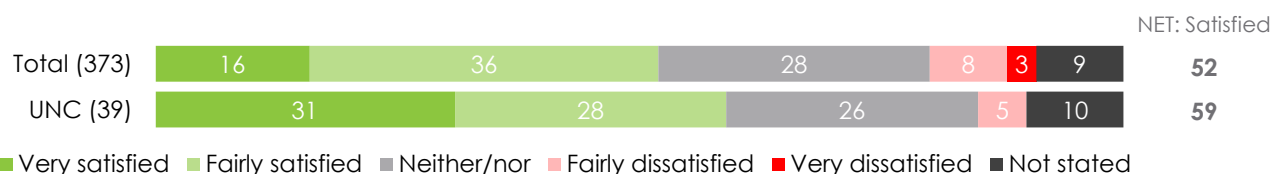
*"Process is quite slow to get anything changed. Simple changes seem to take forever to get approved."*

*"I'd like them to be more approachable and supportive when I'm raising modifications."*

## 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.

Around six in ten organisations are satisfied with the support Joint Office gives them to help them understand UNC modifications.



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 %)

*"Keep pressure on modification proposers to reduce jargon, keep explanations clear and in plain English, and focus on expected outcomes as well as the change process."*

*"There is an assumption that parties understand all industry jargon when they don't. Language needs to be clearer as some modifications are still very hard to read."*

## ACCESSION PROCESS

For the UNC, accession is administered by Xoserve, not the Joint Office. Ten people are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the UNC in the last five years. Of these, four found the process easy, one found the process difficult, and the rest either said neither easy nor difficult or had no direct involvement with the process.

## XOSERVE

74% of those party to the UNC interact with both the Joint Office and Xoserve. When these customers were asked if there were any comments they had in respect to Xoserve, half (50%) had no comment. Of those commenting, there are mixed opinions. Organisations mention difficulties obtaining and understanding information, a lack of impartiality, slow responses and the need for more expertise. However, some acknowledge that improvements are being made and others praise them for being helpful.

*"Xoserve are supportive when we are trying to raise UNC mods but don't always respond very quickly to questions raised, which means it can take a long time to get the modification wording right and ready to go."*

*"They rely on the fact that they have a few people that know the UNC inside out... They understand transporters business very well but not shippers."*

*"Xoserve do not always provide information very clearly and it's hard to find it, so often it's easier to go direct to the code. It's not something that everyone can do... They could do better at simplifying and presenting processes."*

*"Xoserve need to improve responsiveness, transparency and flexibility. They are aware of this and improvements are slow but happening."*

*"Xoserve are generally very helpful on a day to day basis, however, some of their communication can lack clarity."*

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## Conclusions

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- The Joint Office performs strongly on most aspects of service provision. It performs well across the three KPI measures and customers generally feel well informed about the UNC.
- The majority find it easy to interpret the information about the UNC; an area of strength for Joint Office.
- Perceptions of Joint Office's direct services are largely positive but there is room for further improvement in terms of:
  - website navigation and helping customers to easily find information
  - running of meetings, especially teleconference facilities