Code administrators performance survey

Distribution Code (DCode)

Energy Networks Association (ENA)

Introduction

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

The first study was conducted in 2017 and intended to evaluate 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.

The study was not intended to take account of the relative funding of the Code Administrators (CA), or whether they offer value for money.

In 2018, the study has been repeated to monitor performance and identify any developments. Specifically, the survey has been developed to:

- **Identify:** Organisations' interaction with codes and CAs; including awareness of CA responsibilities, confidence in dealing with codes, and expectations of the service which Code Administrators should be providing

- **Measure:** Overall performance of CA on key metrics, including overall satisfaction, support, communications and modification process

- **Assess:** Specific aspects of service delivery, including email, websites, meetings and accession process.

Method

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

- A total of five in-depth interviews to inform questionnaire design (14-20 Feb 2018)

- A core survey with 216 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators – **35 participants answering about the DCode** (27 Mar – 11 May)

- 25 follow-up in-depth interviews to get an understanding of drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (18 May – 20 Jun)

Throughout the report, results are shown:

At a total level (aggregated results for all codes)

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

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

Organisations still acknowledge that codes are inherently difficult to navigate with some more technical than others. While the environment is challenging:

- Organisations do expect the governance of codes to be stringent
    - They believe that this is essential as it protects business, and smaller organisations in particular
- There is recognition that complexities associated with an individual code impact the way each code administrator operates

Perception that Ofgem could play a much bigger role in providing guidance and protection for business; this is driven by a view that the market does not always lend itself to a level playing field:

- Concerns around some businesses submitting tactical modifications for their own commercial gain
- View that smaller organisation more likely to be impacted as they have limited resource for personnel to attend meetings and to raise such modifications

Executive summary – DCode

The service provided by ENA, in relation to the DCode is very well regarded
- Three-quarters are satisfied with the overall service provided to their organisation
- Nine in ten are satisfied with the provision of support
- 17% feel the service has improved over the last year

However, there are a few areas where ENA could improve its service offering:
- Helping organisations with interpreting information
- Making it clear when emails need to be actioned

Organisation profiling

The level of expertise organisations have to deal with codes remains consistent with 2017. It is encouraging that there is a positive directional improvement around availability of resource.

The means to deal with the codes and their requirements is linked to the size and experience of the company. However, compared to 2017, smaller businesses are reporting greater confidence in their ability to deal with codes.
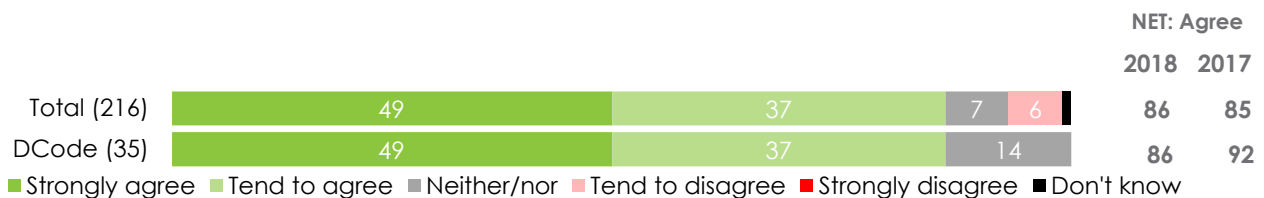
ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	**50-249**	**250-999**	**1,000+**
Total (216)	18%	16%	14%	47%
DCode (35)	26%	14%	14%	46%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	**6-9 years**	**10+ years**
Total (216)	16%	6%	76%
DCode (35)	9%	9%	83%

SUFFICIENT ORGANISATONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES

		NET: Agree	
		2018	2017
Total (216)	49 / 37 / 7 / 6	86	85
DCode (35)	49 / 37 / 14	86	92

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

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

		NET: Agree	
		2018	2017
Total (216)	32 / 38 / 9 / 15 / 4	70	64
Dcode (35)	29 / 40 / 11 / 14 / 6	69	69

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know
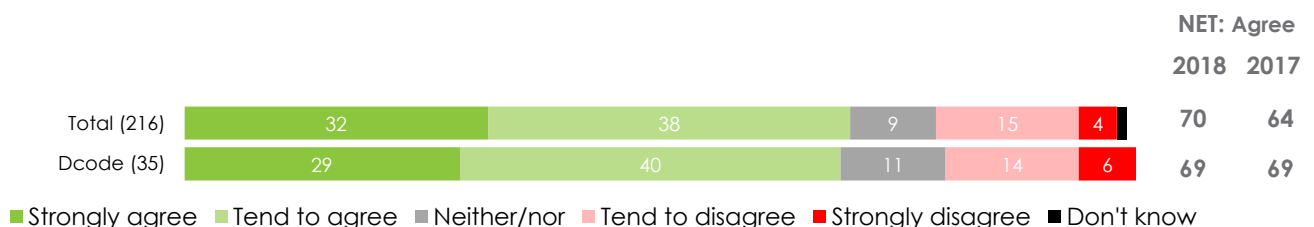
Q2. And to what extent would you agree or disagree that you have enough resource within your organisation to sufficiently deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Smaller organisations indicate that they often deal with multiple codes, which can make it challenging to know the intricate detail of the DCode, or other codes they may deal with.

Key findings

The survey collected four wide measures of satisfaction:

1. Perceived improvements from service received in the last year (new for 2018).
2. Overall satisfaction with the service provided to their organisation.
3. Satisfaction with the provision of support.
4. Satisfaction with support received when requested.

Organisations rate ENA highly in relation to the DCode across all KPIs. There is little dissatisfaction reported across the measures and around a third say they are 'very satisfied' with the overall service. Nearly all say they are satisfied with the provision of support from ENA in respect of their interactions with the DCode.
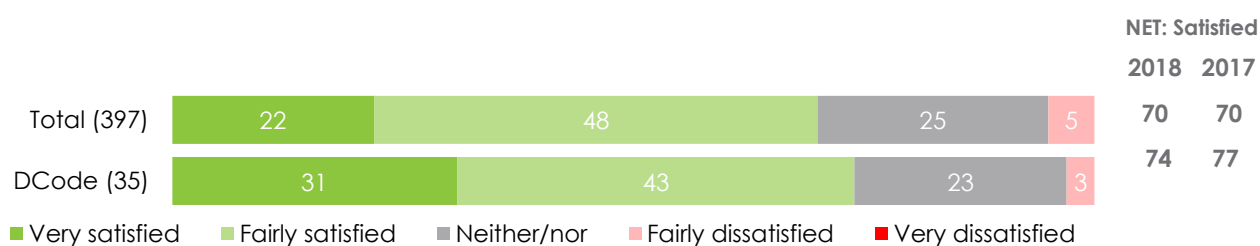
PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

A high proportion of organisations feel the service received in relation to their code has not changed (57%). For the DCode, 66% indicate that service levels have not changed from last year. Encouragingly, 17% say the service has improved.

	NET: Improved
	2018
Total (397) 5 | 12 | 57 | 4 | 1 | 21	**17**
Dcode (35) 6 | 11 | 66 | 3 | 0 | 14	**17**

■ Improved a lot ■ Slightly improved ■ Has not changed ■ Slightly worsened ■ Worsened a lot ■ Don't know

Q29b. Thinking about the service that you have received in relation to the <code> in the last year, would you say it has improved, remained the same or got worse? (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)
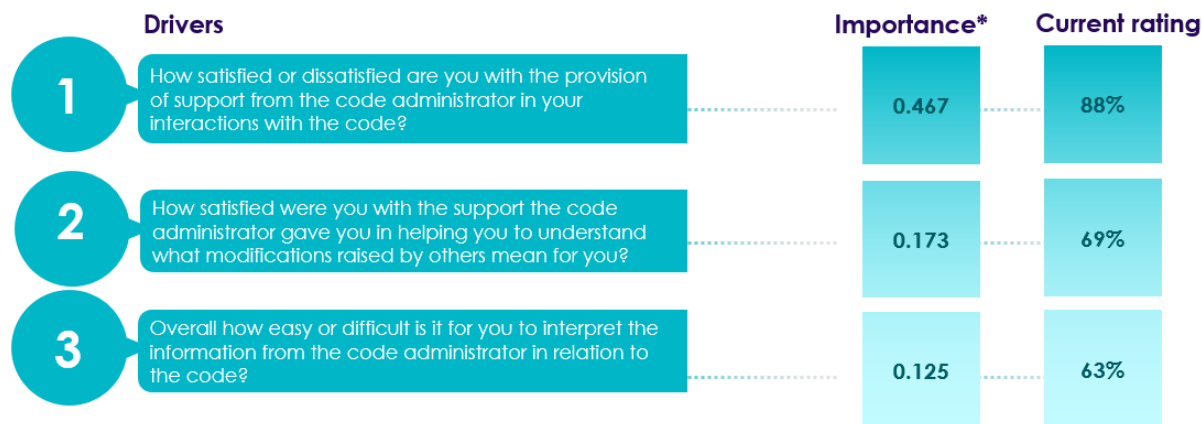
OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all code level, seven in ten say they are satisfied with the service provided by their code administrator. Three-quarters of organisations are satisfied with ENA's service provision in relation to the DCode and very few (3%) are dissatisfied, similar levels to the scores seen in 2017.

	NET: Satisfied	
	2018	**2017**
Total (397) 22 | 48 | 25 | 5	**70**	**70**
DCode (35) 31 | 43 | 23 | 3	**74**	**77**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

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 %)

"I'm quite happy with it as it is."

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

	Drivers	Importance*	Current rating
1	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the code?	0.467	88%
2	How satisfied were you with the support the code administrator gave you in helping you to understand what modifications raised by others mean for you?	0.173	69%
3	Overall how easy or difficult is it for you to interpret the information from the code administrator in relation to the code?	0.125	63%

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* 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.)
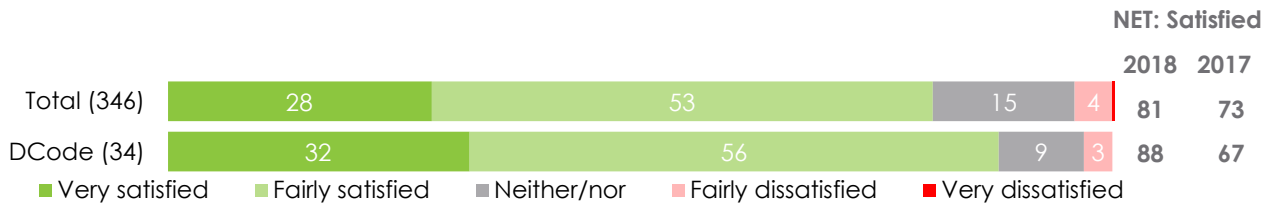
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the DCode.

At an overall level, the three key drivers of satisfaction continue to be around support and information. There are opportunities to improve service around two of the three key drivers. With service improvements to these core areas, it is likely that there will be a positive lift in reported overall satisfaction

SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION OF SUPPORT

More generally, Code Administrators are perceived as having improved the provision of support to small businesses from the previous year. There is a significant increase in reported satisfaction from 2017; smaller organisations tended to be less satisfied than larger organisations. It is however worth noting that although the gain for the smaller organisations is highly significant, larger organisations still report greater satisfaction.

A large majority (88%) of ENA customers are satisfied with the provision of support in relation to the DCode with very few dissatisfied (3%).

					NET: Satisfied	
					2018	2017
Total (346)	28	53	15	4	81	73
DCode (34)	32	56	9	3	88	67

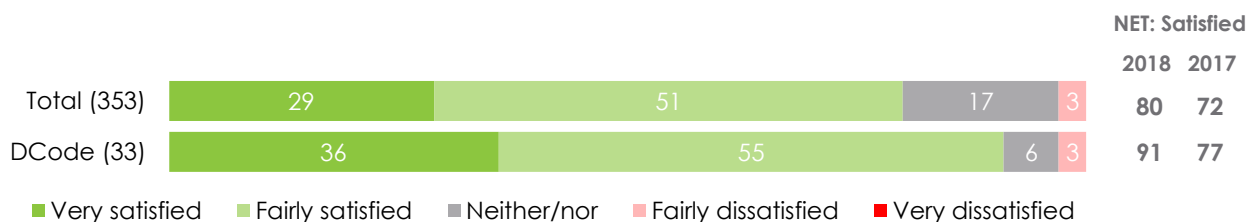■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

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 %)

"Very proactive and transparent in my experience."

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[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

Experience of the code plays the greatest part in influencing perceptions of support received when directly requesting it from Code Administrators. Nearly all organisations (91%) are satisfied with the support they request from ENA in relation to the DCode. This is a gain from 2017, where 77% were satisfied.

NET: Satisfied

	2018	2017
Total (353)	**80**	**72**
DCode (33)	**91**	**77**

Total (353): Very satisfied 29 | Fairly satisfied 51 | Neither/nor 17 | Fairly dissatisfied 3

DCode (33): Very satisfied 36 | Fairly satisfied 55 | Neither/nor 6 | Fairly dissatisfied 3

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

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 %)
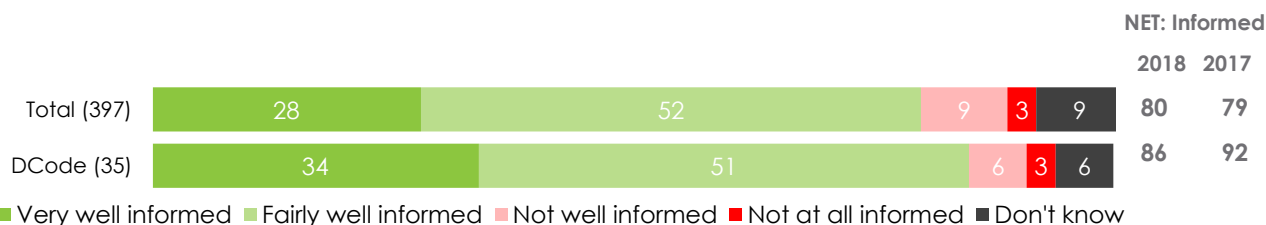
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the DCode from ENA 1-2 times a month and for the majority (76%), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

Although customers agree that they are kept informed, there are some concerns around CA resourcing and the view that some CA teams are stretched. As we observed last year, there is still a view that those who are less familiar with the codes struggle to interpret the information received. So while the obligation to provide information is being met, there is a need to continue to simplify and to target communications.

ENA scores highly in this area: over eight in ten say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the DCode.

NET: Informed

	2018	2017
Total (397)	**80**	**79**
DCode (35)	**86**	**92**

Total (397): Very well informed 28 | Fairly well informed 52 | Not well informed 9 | Not at all informed 3 | Don't know 9

DCode (35): Very well informed 34 | Fairly well informed 51 | Not well informed 6 | Not at all informed 3 | Don't know 6

■ Very well informed ■ Fairly well informed ■ Not well informed ■ Not at all informed ■ Don't know

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 %)

However, two individuals felt they weren't receiving enough information and that it was not always relevant.
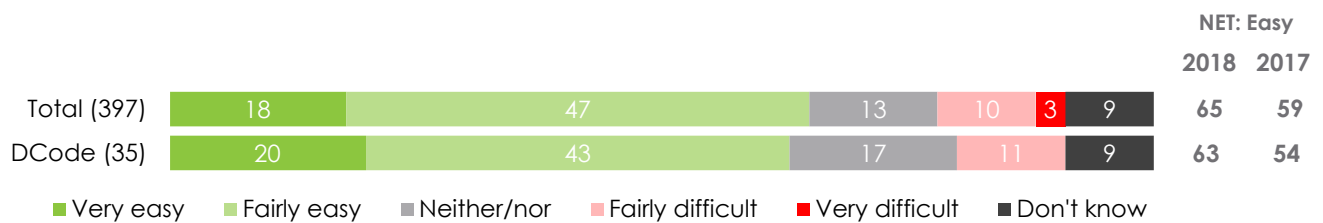
"Provide more information."

"The information they do provide us with needs to be more relevant."

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

More generally, those with more personal experience of codes and in organisations with 250+ employees are more likely to find interpreting information easier. However, encouragingly, there has been a positive uplift in reported ease among those within smaller organisations and those in the energy market for 5 years of less.

Nearly two thirds (63%) of organisations say it's easy to interpret information about the DCode. Again this is an uplift from 2017 (54%). Although there are some improvements, it is worth noting that one in ten feel it is difficult to interpret information and 17% are neutral about this aspect of service.

							NET: Easy	
							2018	2017
Total (397)	18	47	13	10	3	9	65	59
DCode (35)	20	43	17	11		9	63	54

■ Very easy ■ Fairly easy ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly difficult ■ Very difficult ■ Don't know

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 %)
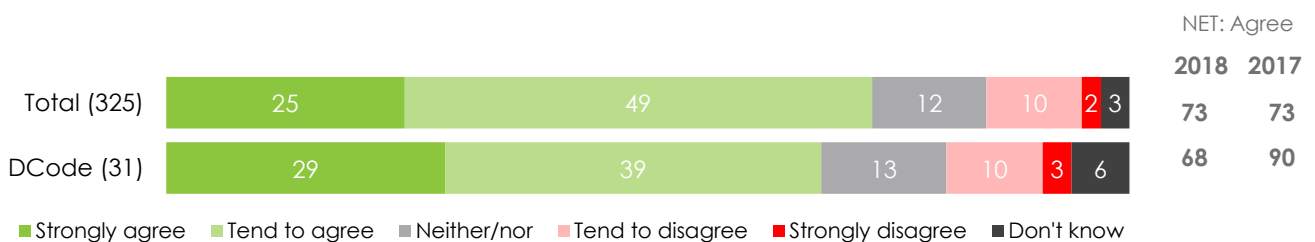
Perceptions of direct services

EMAIL

Overall, information is easily accessible via email – it is the most used both by CAs to provide information and by organisations to seek information. Communication by email means there are regular updates of information and organisations can stay on top of changes to the code. Organisations also prefer using email as it ensures there is an audit trail.

Email can however be overwhelming as CA communications are only one of many; this is especially so when several emails related to a code are sent in a single day. Furthermore, when emails do not include the key take outs, core messages can get lost.
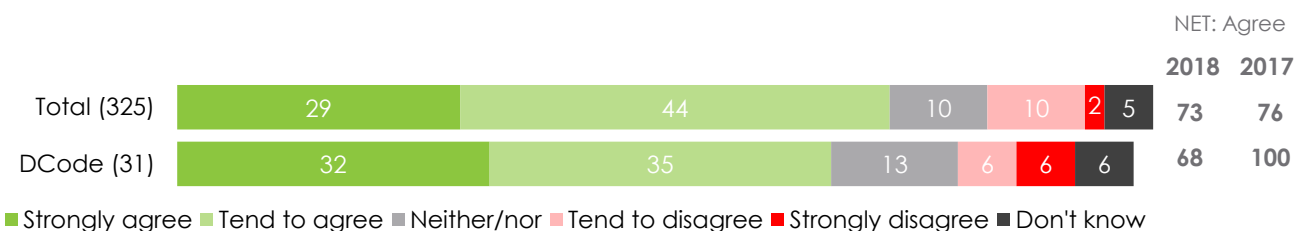
The volume of emails can make it difficult for organisations to identify which messages contain vital information, which ones need immediate action or prioritisation against those providing more general updates.

There are high levels of agreement that ENA's emails are easy to understand (68%) and the same proportion of customers say the emails received make it clear when action needs to be taken. On both aspects, there are some customers who indicate that there is some room for improvement.

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'

							NET: Agree	
							2018	2017
Total (325)	25	49	12	10	2	3	73	73
DCode (31)	29	39	13	10	3	6	68	90

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

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

							NET: Agree	
							2018	2017
Total (325)	29	44	10	10	2	5	73	76
DCode (31)	32	35	13	6	6	6	68	100

■ 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 %)
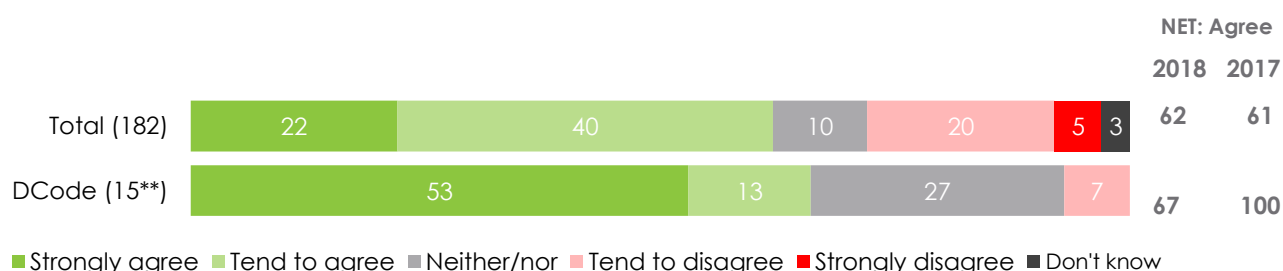
WEBSITES

Generally, customers value having information on websites, they use them to keep up to date with various code changes. Information included on websites can be insightful, providing businesses with the depth of understanding they require to navigate codes.
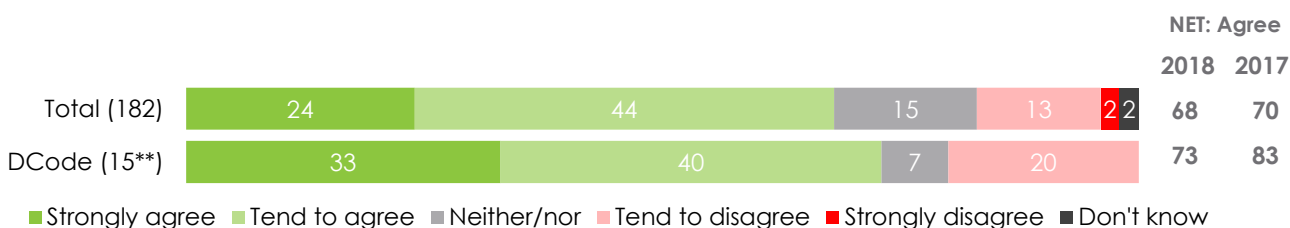
There are some highlighted concerns around the ability for customers to easily navigate websites, and limited signposting. Overall, there is a decline in the proactive use of websites (52% in 2017 vs 28% in 2018). While customers perceive websites as not fit for purpose use may decline further.

Of the 15 customers who have used the ENA's website, most are positive. Two thirds indicate that they are able to easily find information on the website and seven in ten say the information on the website is easy to understand. One in five indicate that it is not easy to understand information on the website.

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

	NET: Agree	
	2018	2017
Total (182)	62	61
DCode (15**)	67	100

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

'The information on the website is easy to understand'

	NET: Agree	
	2018	2017
Total (182)	68	70
DCode (15**)	73	83

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

**Very low base

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 %)

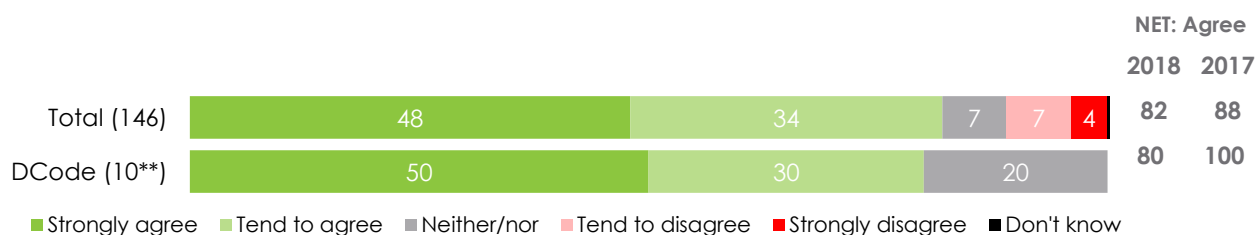Organisations acknowledge the website change, however some are unsure if it is for the better.

"Noticed a change, but because code is so complex they change, and when they change they become more complex requiring more change, it's a natural cycle."
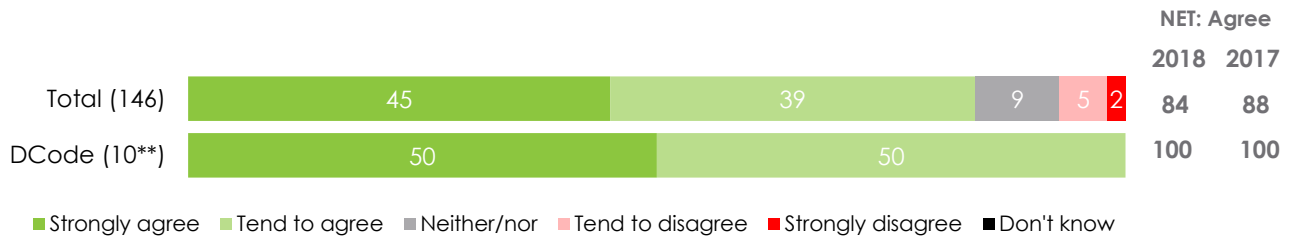
MEETINGS

At an overall level, 37% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. Three in ten (29%) organisations had attended a DCode meeting or workshop the last 12 months.

Most were generally very positive about the different aspects of the meetings and workshops, with no reported dissatisfaction.

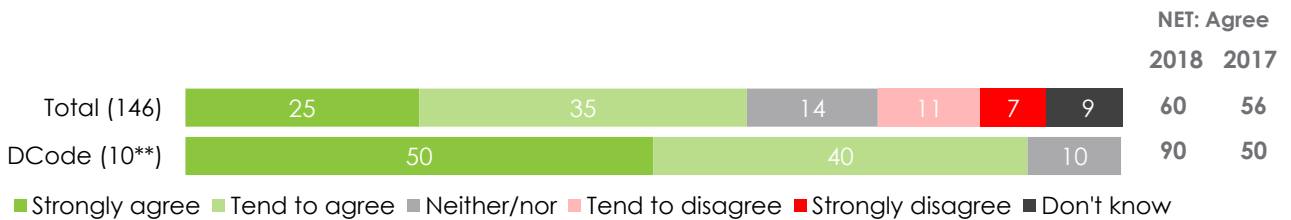### 'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'

	NET: Agree	
	2018	2017
Total (146)	82	88
DCode (10**)	80	100

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

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

		NET: Agree	
		2018	**2017**
Total (146)	45 / 39 / 9 / 5 / 2	**84**	**88**
DCode (10**)	50 / 50	**100**	**100**

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

'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'

		NET: Agree	
		2018	**2017**
Total (146)	25 / 35 / 14 / 11 / 7 / 9	**60**	**56**
DCode (10**)	50 / 40 / 10	**90**	**50**

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

**Very low base

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 %)

Generally, comments around meetings and workshops were positive.

"They are good at sending out updates and setting up workshops with the relevant people. Workshops provide excellent clarity on what is happening."

"I think they are doing a good job."
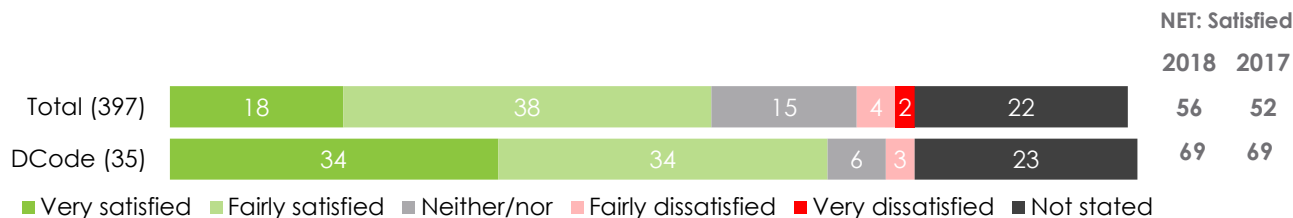
RAISING MODIFICATIONS

Of the people interviewed, only two person had raised modifications in respect of the DCode within the last 12 months.

"It's a straightforward process, there's no way for the CAs to improve it"

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Overall, just over half (56%) of organisations are satisfied with the support their Code Administrator provides to help to understand what modifications raised by others mean for them, a similar level to the previous year.

Seven in ten are satisfied with the support ENA provides to help them understand what DCode modifications raised by others mean for them, a similar level to the previous year.

							NET: Satisfied	
							2018	**2017**
Total (397)	18	38	15	4	2	22	**56**	**52**
DCode (35)	34	34	6	3		23	**69**	**69**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Not stated

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 %)

ACCESSION PROCESS

Organisations do not accede to the DCode, and so no findings are presented here.

Conclusions

ENA is performing well on most aspects of service provision with only a few areas identified as in need of some improvements.

- The ease of interpreting information for organisation is an area with scope for improvement, this also applies to information made available on the website and via email

- There is scope for emails to make it clearer when action needs to be takes

"Overall they are doing a good job, they just need to keep doing it in the coming years"