

Code Administrators Performance Survey

Distribution Connection Use of System Agreement (DCUSA)

ElectraLink Ltd

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 study is now in its third year and is designed 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 is not intended to take account of the relative funding of the Code Administrators (CA), or whether they offer value for money.

In 2019, the study has been repeated to monitor performance and identify any developments. Specifically, the survey will be used 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.

Throughout the report, we will show data for 2017, 2018 and 2019 and draw comparisons as appropriate.

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- Email industrycodes@ofgem.gov.uk

We'll consider your request and aim to get back to you in 10 days.

Method

A mixed mode programme of research was conducted with organisations interacting with industry codes. The scope of the research included:

- Telephone discussions with Code Administrators prior to commencing the research programme. The conversations were designed to establish any major changes in service provision, thus allowing Future Thinking the ability to contextualise results from the 2019 survey.

- A mixed mode quantitative survey (online and telephone) with 203 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators – **36 participants answering about the DCUSA** (17 June – 12 July 2019).
- 25 follow-up in-depth interviews to get an understanding of drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (15 July – 8 August).

Throughout the report, results are shown:

At a total level (aggregated results for all codes)

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

Quotes from respondents included in the report 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 more caution and is indicative only.*

Industry context

The current structure and perceptions of the energy industry in which organisations operate are seen to have an impact on interactions and attitudes towards Code Administrators and should be taken into account when interpreting survey results.

Organisations acknowledge that the codes are necessarily complex and that the environment is challenging but believe fundamental changes in their administration could help to simplify processes and introduce greater consistency.

A key area for desired change in 2019 is reviewing CACoP with the belief that it can better serve customers by unifying Code Administrators. There is appetite among customers for CACoP:

- to have its own website
- to deliver greater guidance to CAs on uniformity of information provision
- to enforce levels of consistency around support provided through the modifications process
- to provide weekly cross-code round-ups of forthcoming changes and expected impact on organisations

While customers recognise the differences between codes, and the level of complexity associated with each, there remains a belief that simplifying and unifying operational aspects of codes would greatly assist CAs and the service delivery to customers.

There is also a preference for Ofgem to work more closely with CAs at earlier stages of modifications to avoid delays and further complications.

These wider external factors can influence how organisations perceive the service provided by individual code administrators.

Executive summary

Overall, reviews of ElectraLink have improved, recovering from the dip seen in 2018. Seventy two percent (26 respondents out of 36) say they are satisfied with all aspects of their dealings with the CA for DCUSA - an increase from 2018 levels (58%).

The majority are satisfied with the provision of support, 69% of those aware of support (22 out of 32 respondents). There is also a continued trend for improvement around support received when requested, now at its highest levels with 87% satisfaction (27 of 31 proactively seeking support).

Whilst we have seen scores recover from the dip in 2018, there are some areas where ElectraLink could make further improvements to their service:

- Helping organisations with interpreting information
- Improving the website user experience and clarity of information
- Helping organisations understand what modifications raised mean for them


Organisation profiling

The level of expertise organisations have to deal with codes remains consistent with previous years. However, availability of resource in 2019 has slightly declined.¹

More generally, in 2019, there is some evidence of larger organisations indicating that they are having some resourcing challenges.


"We are a large company but we have some challenges. A lot of our employees are not in energy, so although we are large, when it comes to engagement, it is difficult."

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S SIZE



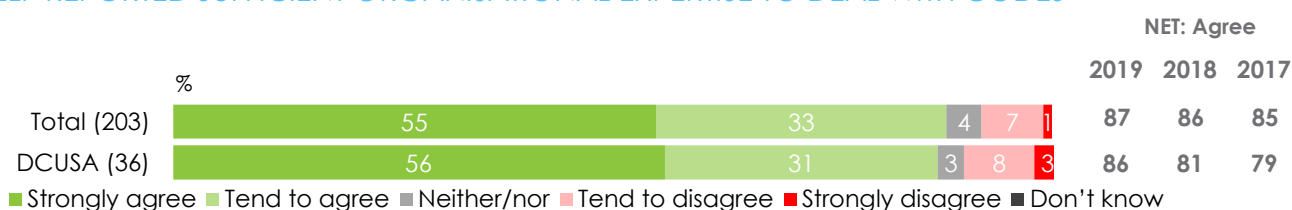
	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (203)	24%	15%	14%	45%
DCUSA (36)	22%	22%	11%	44%

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE



	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
	Total (203)	15%	7%
DCUSA (36)	17%	3%	78%

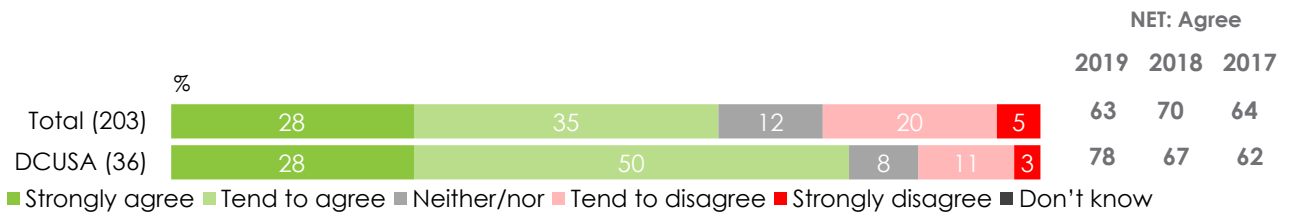
SELF-REPORTED SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES



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 responses shown in brackets).

¹ There is a weak correlation between an organisation's self-reported level of resource and overall satisfaction with Code Administrators. However, this does not imply causation.

SELF-REPORTED 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 responses shown in brackets).

Challenges around availability of resource impact both small and large organisations; any support therefore has to reflect the organisation's individual circumstance rather than size.

Key findings

KPIs

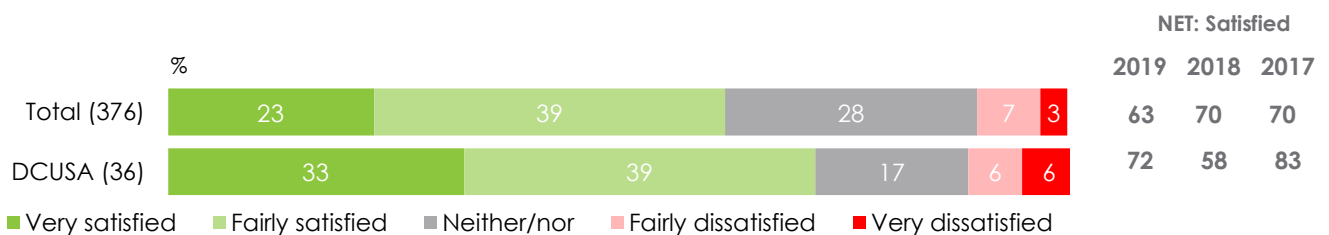
The survey collected four wide measures of satisfaction:

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

Organisations are generally positive about the service offered by ElectraLink in relation to DCUSA with relatively low levels of reported dissatisfaction.

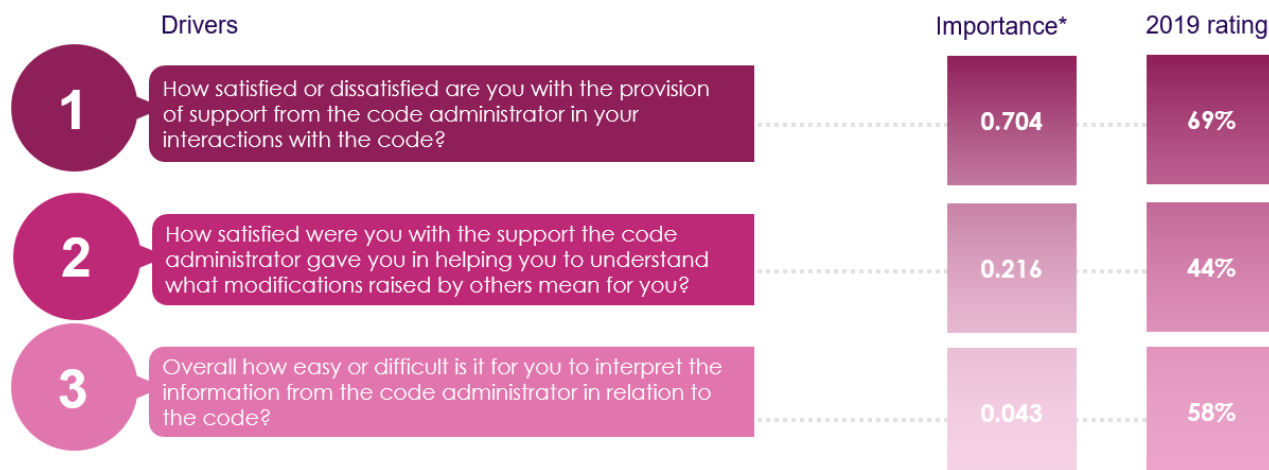
OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all organisational level, we see a shift in reported overall satisfaction, from 70% in 2018 to 63% in 2019. In contrast, satisfaction with the overall DCUSA service has recovered somewhat from the dip seen in 2018, now at 72% (26 respondents).



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 responses shown in brackets).

To understand the aspects of service delivery that most impact overall satisfaction, key driver analysis (KDA) was conducted.² The aspects of service that have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction are:



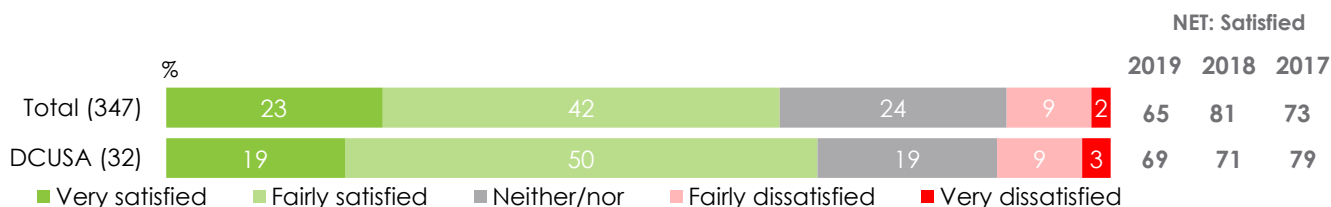
* The importance value will always have a value between -1 and +1, where, a large positive correlation means two ratings 'move together' and a negative correlation means the ratings move in the opposite direction. A correlation of 1 means an exact linear relationship (i.e. everyone gives the same rating 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 in the chart above are therefore based on the combined total for all codes and the 2019 current rating is specific to the DCUSA.

At an overall level, the three key drivers of satisfaction continue to be around support and information. While provision of support is still the most important driver for satisfaction, it has become even more important (rising from 0.467 to 0.704 in 2019). It is however striking that the reported satisfaction around these key areas has dropped significantly at a total level but more marginally for the DCUSA. There are opportunities to improve service around all the three key drivers of satisfaction. With service improvements to these core areas, it is likely that 2020 may see a positive lift in reported overall satisfaction.

SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION OF SUPPORT

After the strong uplift seen in 2018, 2019 sees a significant decline in reported satisfaction with provision of support from Code Administrators, and now stands at 65% (from 81% in 2018). In relation to support for DCUSA, 69% (22 respondents of the 32 aware of support) are satisfied, similar to levels in 2018 but a general trend of decline since 2017.



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 aware of support (number of responses shown in brackets).

Some organisation found that ElectraLink could improve their introductory process:

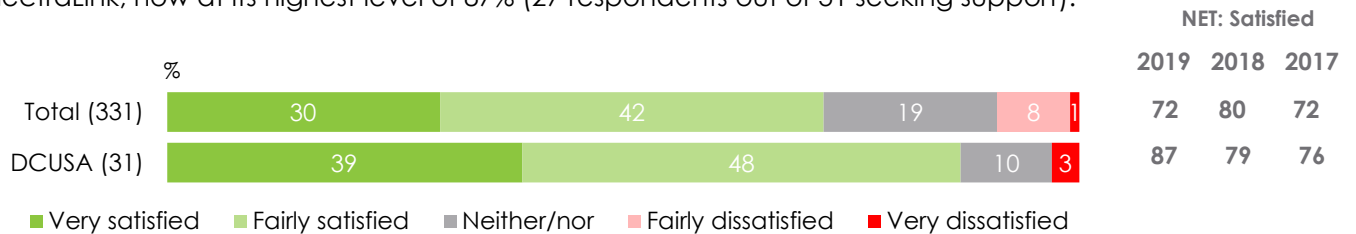
“With DCUSA we didn't know they existed until we had to deal with them. I think there could be other ways to manage introductions to the code.”

² 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.

“We didn’t get a proper introduction and didn’t know they existed. They should spell out requirements, and tell us what we need to do for each area.”

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

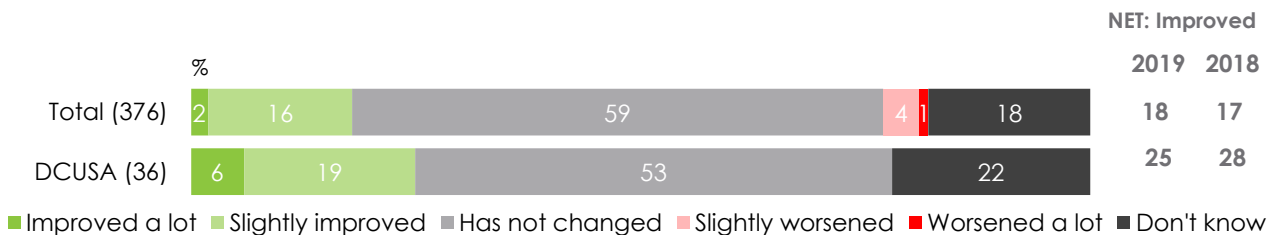
For the industry as a whole, we see a decline in satisfaction with support received when organisations request it. Overall, satisfaction is back to the 2017 level and stands at 72%. DCUSA is bucking this trend, with an increase in satisfaction over time with the support received from ElectraLink, now at its highest level of 87% (27 respondents out of 31 seeking support).



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 proactively seeking support (number of responses shown in brackets).

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

At an overall level, organisations tend to believe that the service they receive has not changed over the last year. For DCUSA, 53% (19 respondents) say the service has not changed over the last year and 25% (nine respondents) that the service has improved, similar to opinion in 2018 with none stating it has worsened.



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? All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

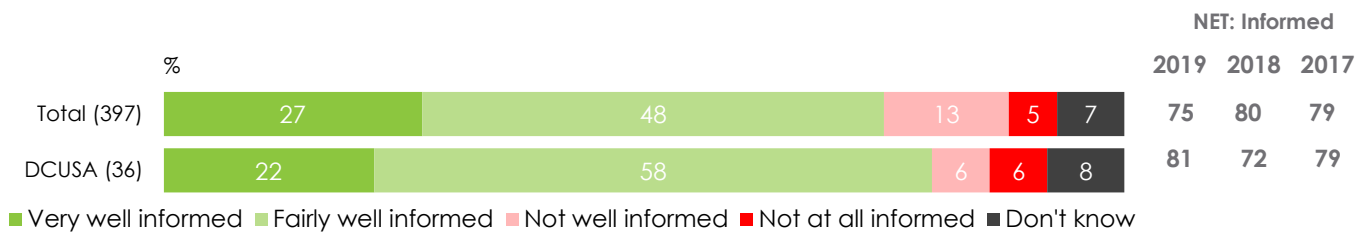
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations claim to receive information about the DCUSA from ElectraLink 1-2 times a week and 90% (27 respondents) say this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

Typically, organisations believe that Code Administrators keep them well informed about the codes; we however see a very slight decline in those feeling very or fairly informed (from 80% in 2018 to 75% in 2019).

ElectraLink performs well in this area: 81% (29 respondents) say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the DCUSA, recovering from a dip in 2018. There is however a small cohort who do not feel well informed (12%, 4 respondents).

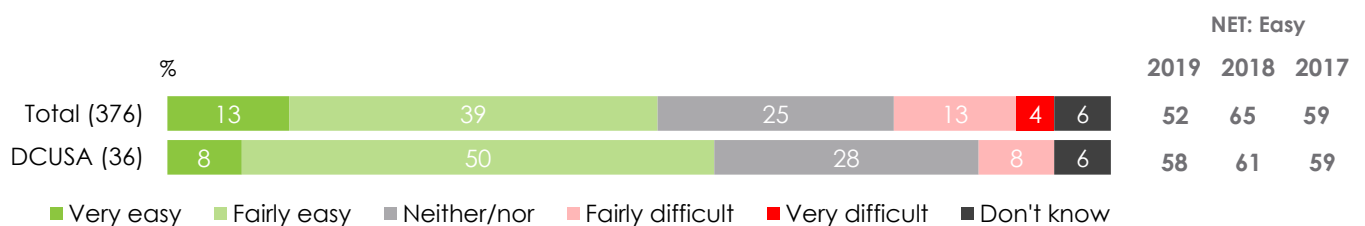


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

After the positive uplift seen in 2018, reported ease of interpreting information has declined. Overall, around half of organisations feel it is easy to interpret information from Code Administrators in relation to their codes.

Fifty eight percent (21 respondents) say information from ElectraLink is easy to interpret and this has remained relatively stable across the 3 years. At an overall level, those with more experience of industry codes find it easier to interpret related information. Eight percent (three respondents) find it difficult to interpret information in relation to DCUSA, although stating it is *fairly* difficult rather than very difficult to interpret.



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 responses shown in brackets).

Some organisations found the difficult terminology used to be a barrier to understanding:

"It is more difficult to understand the way they work. Perhaps they could issue a 'dummy guide', concise, straight-forward language."

Perceptions of direct services

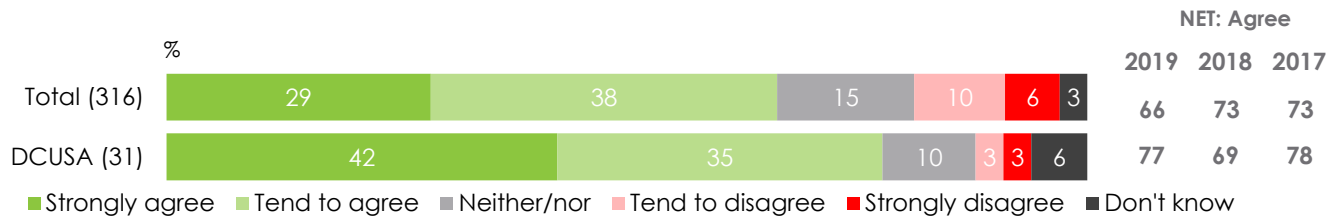
EMAIL

Organisations continue to be reliant on receiving information via email. It is generally perceived as accessible and provides a traceable audit trail. While organisations highlight some innovations that have made email communications from Code Administrators more manageable, there is a view that more can be done to streamline information sent via email.

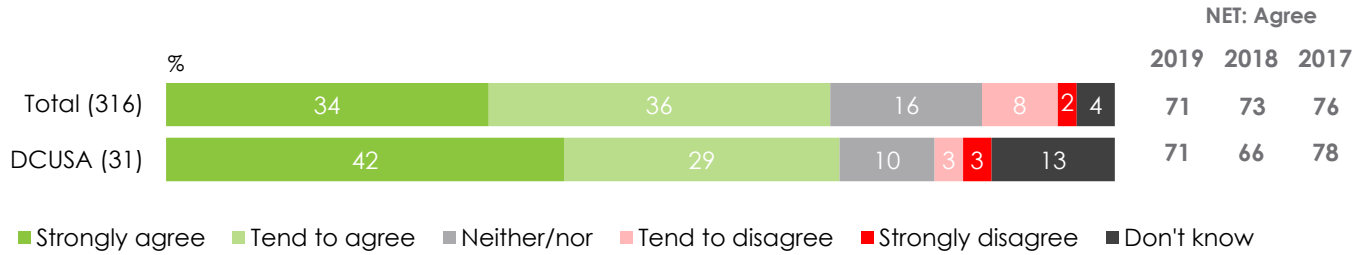
Organisations value email communications that are succinct, clear and give direction on the action (if any) that they may need to take as a result. Some organisations called for more dynamic provision of information; with email used to provide topline information and complementing digital platforms used as repositories for more detailed information.

There is a relatively high level of agreement that ElectraLink's emails in relation to DCUSA are easy to understand (77%, 24 respondents), with levels back up to those seen in 2017. The majority also agree that the emails they receive make it clear when action needs to be taken (71%, 22 respondents). For both aspects, there are however some organisations who highlight a need for some improvements.

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'



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



* Low base

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 responses shown in brackets).

Some organisations feel overburdened by the number of emails they receive:

'I receive too many emails from the DCUSA, I don't have time to look through it all. They need to keep it concise.'

"They sends too many emails and they need to be more concise in communication."

WEBSITES

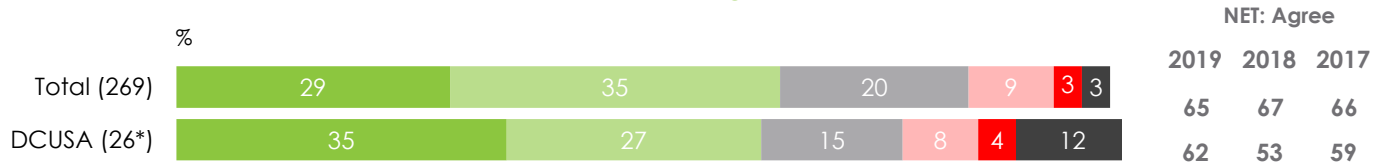
Websites remain important for most organisations. They are seen as a vital resource for keeping up to date with various code changes and general information related to the code. Information included on websites can be insightful, providing businesses with the depth of understanding they require to navigate codes.

Customers feel it is critical that information that is on websites is kept up to date and is also easy to find. This continues to be an area that most Code Administrators need to work on; at an overall level, 61% indicate they are able to easily find information on the website.

There is some dissatisfaction expressed with ElectraLink's website in relation to DCUSA; 12% (three respondents out of 26 using the website) disagree that it keeps them sufficiently informed about any changes or modifications and 16% (four respondents) that the information on the website is easy to understand and easy to find. Positive agreement on all three measures has however improved since 2018, gaining slightly or being equal to agreement seen in 2017.

Improving website accessibility could help those less familiar with the code to navigate it to find the information they are looking for more easily.

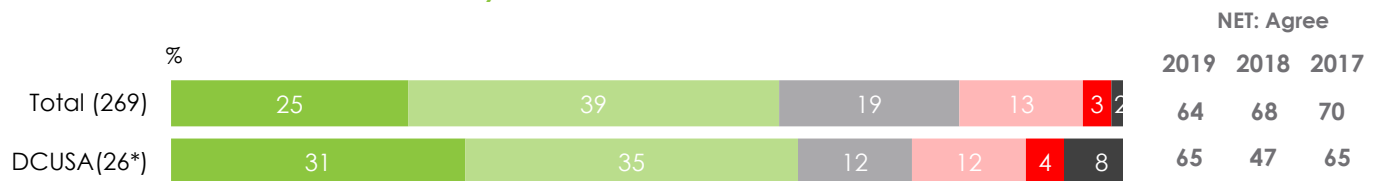
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the DCUSA'



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



'The information on the website is easy to understand'



* Low base

■ 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 responses shown in brackets).

Organisations agree that there have been improvements to the website. However, the presentation of information could still be improved to aid understanding:

"Improved recently."

"Improved, used to be very difficult to get around but they relaunched recently (12-18 months ago)."

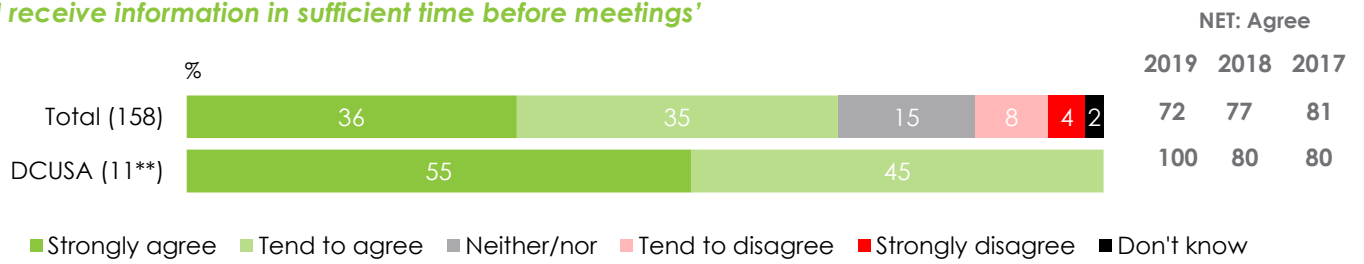
"Could use diagrams, charts, graphs like Elexon to make it easier to understand."

MEETINGS

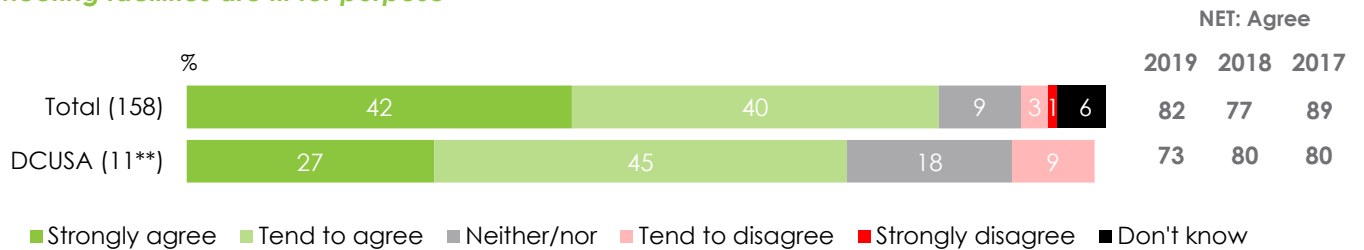
At an overall level, 42% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. For DCUSA, 31% (11 respondents) had attended a meeting or workshop in the last 12 months.

All those attending DCUSA meetings agree that they receive information related to DCUSA in sufficient time before meetings and that it is easy to actively participate in the discussion. Ninety one percent (10 respondents) also agree that the materials they receive prior to meetings have enough information about objectives. Generally, meeting facilities are fit for purpose.

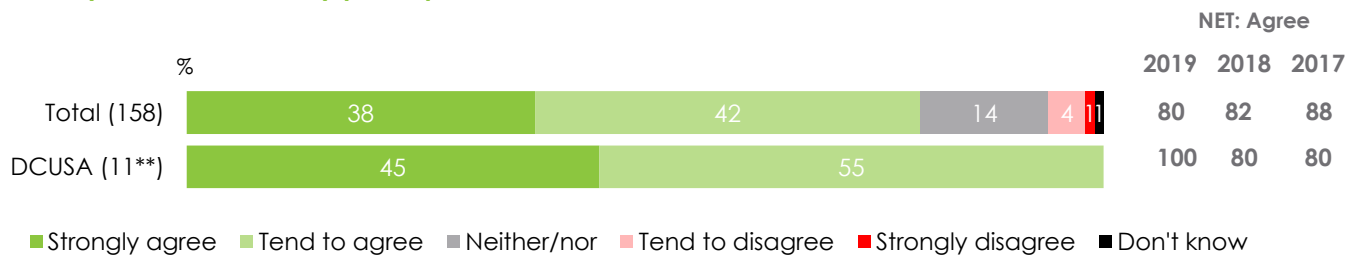
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



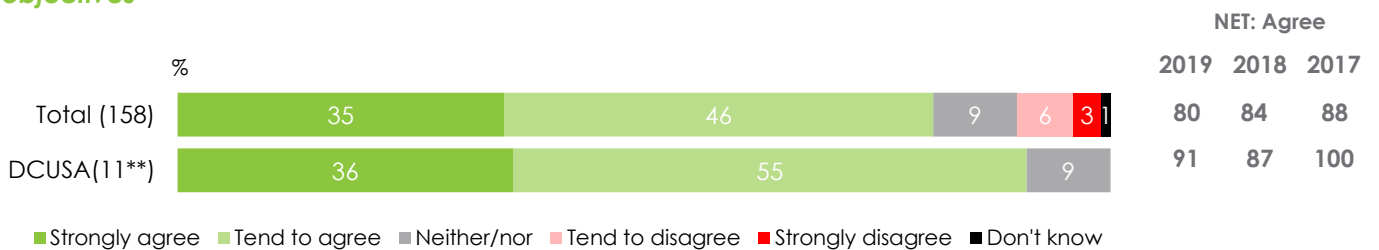
'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'



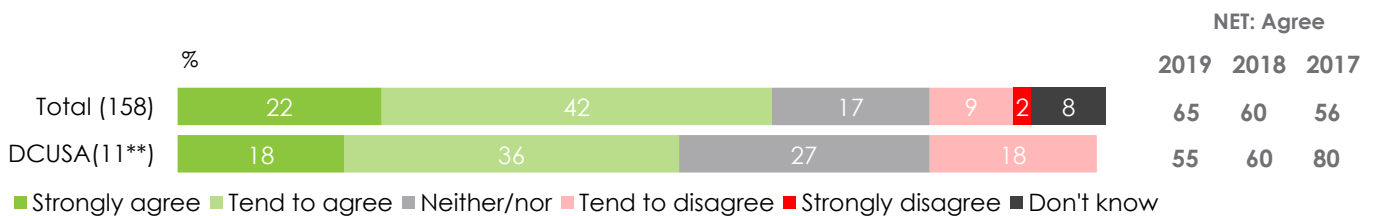
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



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



'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'



** Very low base

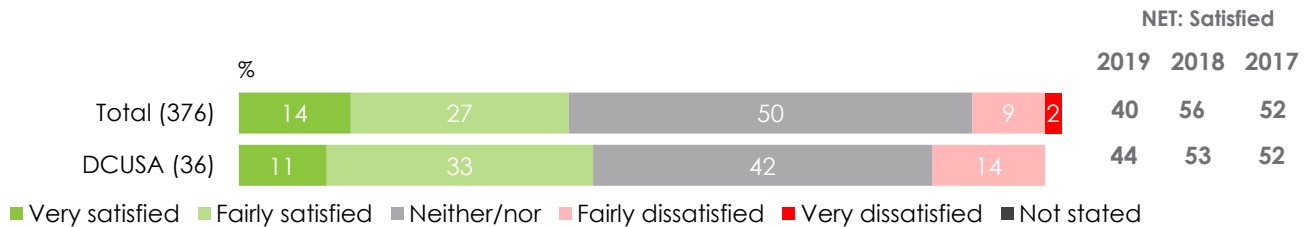
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those attending meetings (number of responses shown in brackets).

RAISING AND UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Three participants (8%) have raised modifications in respect of the DCUSA within the last 12 months. Two of the three participants found the process of raising a modification easy.

Overall, we see a decline in organisations saying they are satisfied with the support their Code Administrator gives them to understand what modifications mean for them.

Forty four percent (16 respondents) are satisfied with the support ElectraLink gives them in understanding modifications and this has declined since 2018.



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 responses shown in brackets).

When new modifications happen, there are concerns around how clear and transparent ElectraLink is:

"They need to make it clearer, who it impacts when communicating that to us."

"Not great transparency."

"There are a lot of modifications and it's not clear what the impact might be. It's not in clear English. [...] what they could do to have higher impact & feedback proposal: more clear & better articulated so people understand"

ACCESSION PROCESS

Seven participants (19%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to, the DCUSA in the last five years. Those involved in the accession process are either neutral about the process or have found it easy.

Conclusions

ElectraLink's overall performance in relation to DCUSA has gained some ground from the dip seen in 2018, with service delivery on some aspects being very high.

- A quarter feel that the service provided in relation to DCUSA has improved over the last year
- Provision of information is generally very good
- An area of strong performance is the support received when requested, now at its highest level.

There is still scope to improve some aspects of service

- Interpreting of information is highlighted as an issue by some organisations
- Greater clarity on whether emails sent to organisations need to be actioned
- Improving website navigation and clarity of information on the website.