Code Administrators Performance Survey

Uniform Network Code (UNC)

The Joint Office of Gas Transporters

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 – **35 participants answering about the UNC** (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 UNC (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 – UNC

The Joint Office of Gas Transporters performs on a par with the average on many aspects of service provision however while overall satisfaction with the UNC is relatively high and stable since 2018, there have been some notable declines in 2019 for:

- Provision of support by the Code Administrator
- Information provided
- Direct services (emails, website and meetings)

There are some aspects of service that are highlighted as in need of specific improvement:

- Information sent in sufficient time before a meeting

- The website remains an area of strong performance, however fewer agree that the website keeps them sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the UNC code

Organisational 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 – although this does not appear to be the case for UNC.[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."

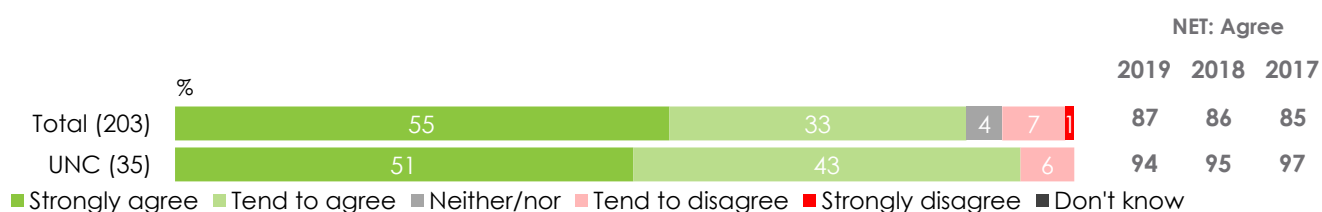### SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	**50-249**	**250-999**	**1,000+**
Total (203)	24%	15%	14%	45%
UNC (35)	26%	9%	14%	51%

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	**6-9 years**	**10+ years**
Total (203)	15%	7%	78%
UNC (35)	6%	3%	91%

SELF-REPORTED SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES

NET: Agree

		2019	2018	2017
Total (203)	55 / 33 / 4 / 7 / 1	87	86	85
UNC (35)	51 / 43 / 6	94	95	97

■ 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 responses shown in brackets).

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[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

					NET: Agree		
%					**2019**	**2018**	**2017**
Total (203)	28	35	12	20	5	**63**	**70**	**64**
UNC (35)	23	51	9	17		**74**	**74**	**79**

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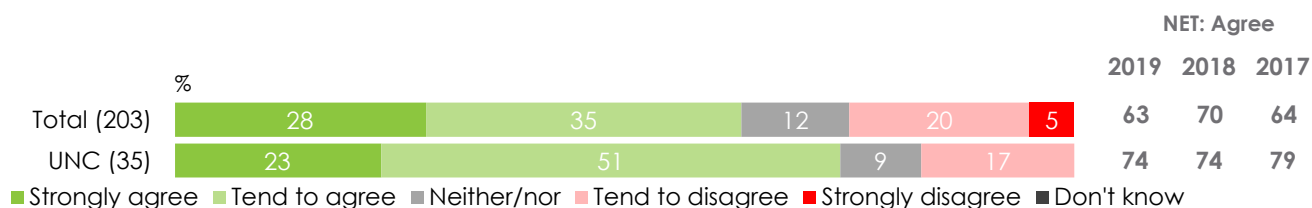
Q2. And to what extent would you agree or disagree that you have enough resource within your organisation to sufficiently deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

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.
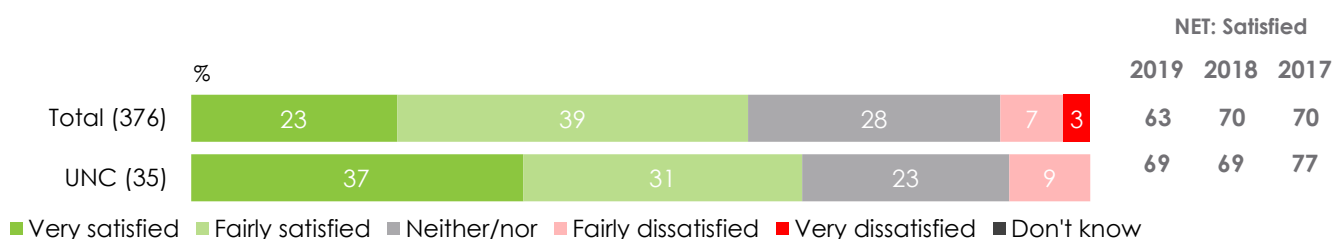
Key findings

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 rate The Joint Office of Gas Transporters relatively highly across all KPIs. However, we see a decline in in reported satisfaction with provision of support from Code Administrators and support received when requested.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all organisational level, we see a shift in reported overall satisfaction, down from 70% in 2018 to 63% in 2019. However, 69% of UNC customers (24 respondents) indicate that they are satisfied with their dealings with the Joint Office, the same score as 2018 and above the overall score of 63%.

						NET: Satisfied		
%						**2019**	**2018**	**2017**
Total (376)	23	39	28	7	3	**63**	**70**	**70**
UNC (35)	37	31	23	9		**69**	**69**	**77**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Don't know

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:

Drivers		Importance*	2019 rating
1	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the code?	0.704	70%
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?	0.216	37%
3	Overall how easy or difficult is it for you to interpret the information from the code administrator in relation to the code?	0.043	51%

* 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 UNC.

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 as well as for the UNC. 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). Jo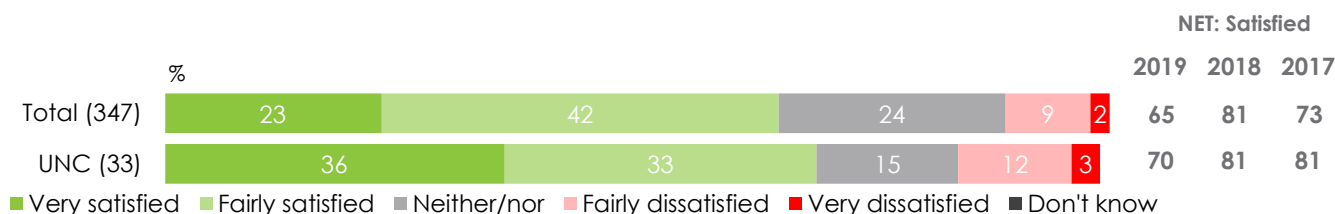int Office customers are slightly more satisfied than average with the provision of support they receive in relation to the UNC, however a significant decline is also reported – from 81% in 2018 to 70% in 2019 (23 respondents).

						NET: Satisfied		
%						**2019**	**2018**	**2017**
Total (347)	23	42	24	9	2	**65**	**81**	**73**
UNC (33)	36	33	15	12	3	**70**	**81**	**81**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Don't know

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).

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[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.
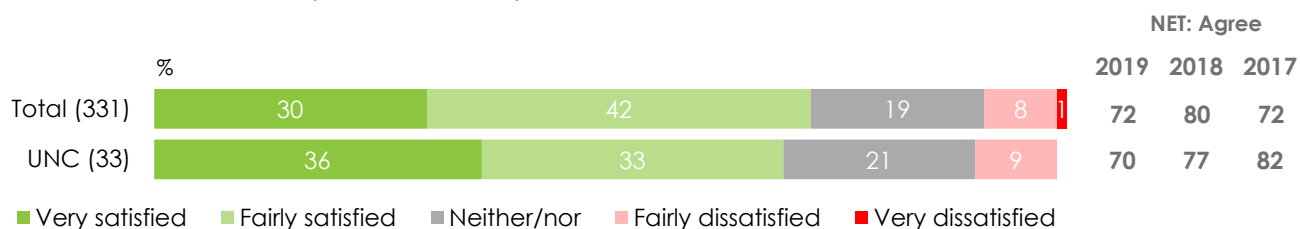
The issues of underresourcing and the lack of clarity about what support is on offer were brought up by organisations:

> *"It has never been entirely clear to me about what support the UNC is meant to provide – that could be better communicated to proposers e.g. a few years ago I was told that they would do the drafting of the proposal, but then when I went to start it, I found out that they don't do the drafting – there has obviously been a change over time that was either not communicated, or had a chair that did things differently."*

> *"The UNC is slightly under resourced. Big changes come through but some meetings get pushed back."*

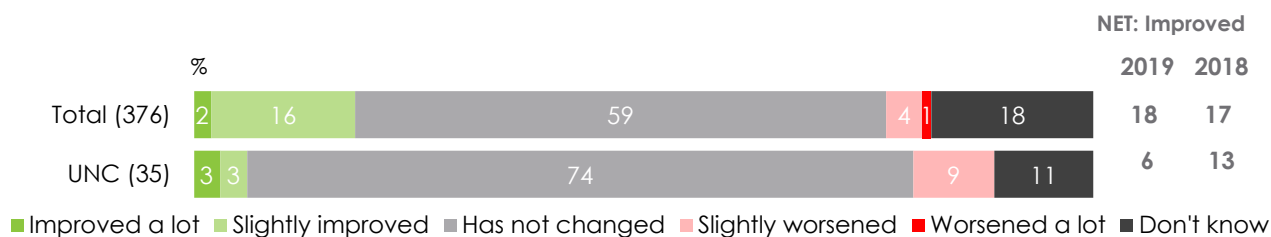## SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

Again, 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%. Satisfaction with support received when requested from the Joint Office in relation to the UNC remains positive but shows a similar pattern of decline, with 70% satisfied (23 respondents) compared to 77% in 2018.

						NET: Agree		
%						2019	2018	2017
Total (331)	30	42	19	8	1	72	80	72
UNC (33)	36	33	21	9		70	77	82

■ 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 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 UNC, 74% (26 respondents) indicate that the service is unchanged. Whilst 6% say it has improved (two respondents), 9% (three respondents) feel the service has deteriorated in the last year.

							NET: Improved	
%							2019	2018
Total (376)	2	16	59	4	1	18	18	17
UNC (35)	3	3	74	9		11	6	13

■ 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? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).
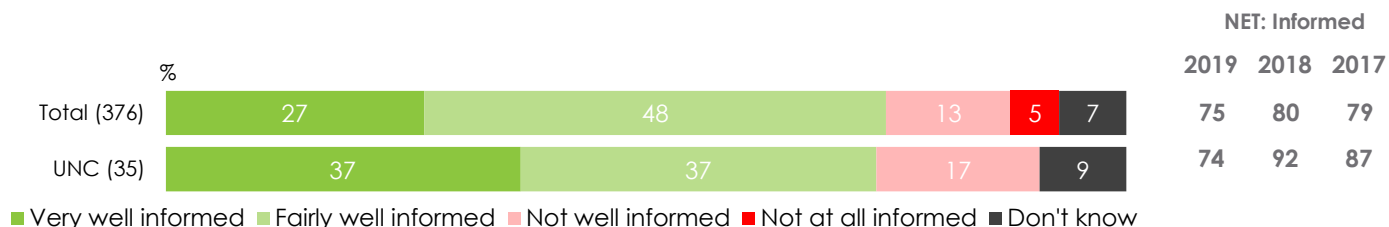
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations claim to receive information about the UNC from the Joint Office three to four times a week and for 84% (27 respondents), 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).

The decline is more significant for the Joint Office with a decrease from 92% stating they felt fairly or very well informed about UNC in 2018 to only 74% (26 respondents) in 2019.

NET: Informed

	Very well informed	Fairly well informed	Not well informed	Not at all informed	Don't know	2019	2018	2017
Total (376)	27	48	13	5	7	75	80	79
UNC (35)	37	37	17		9	74	92	87

■ Very well informed ■ Fairly well informed ■ Not well informed ■ Not at all informed ■ Don't know
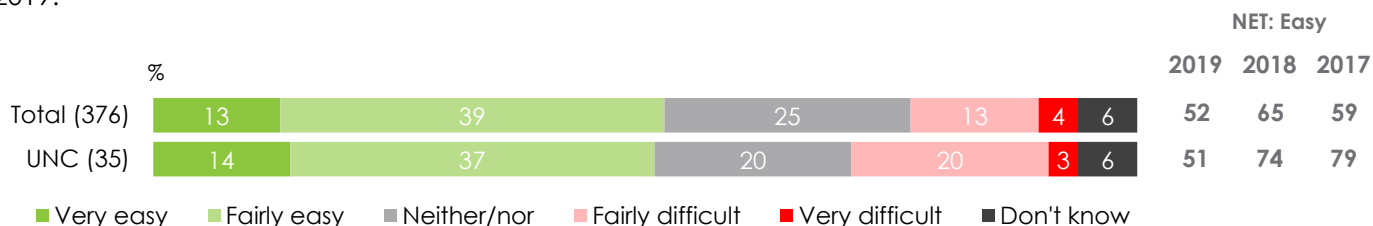
Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

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.

A similar number (51%, 18 respondents) feel it is easy to interpret information relating to UNC, however, this highlights a significant downward trend for UNC, decreasing from 74% in 2018 to 51% in 2019.

NET: Easy

	Very easy	Fairly easy	Neither/nor	Fairly difficult	Very difficult	Don't know	2019	2018	2017
Total (376)	13	39	25	13	4	6	52	65	59
UNC (35)	14	37	20	20	3	6	51	74	79

■ 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 responses shown in brackets).

Some organisations reported that the information is not easy to interpret, especially for those with less experience with the UNC:

"The provision of information could be more user friendly, clear and easy to follow for newer less experienced people e.g. more summary documents e.g. review on changing meters – don't want detailed minutes – rather one pager explaining the issues, where we are and what is next – I know they have a newsletter but I haven't seen it that much – could be an opportunity to share and digest this information"

"I am having to hire consultants to find out what it means to me. The people who are the custodians should be able to tell us what it means for us."

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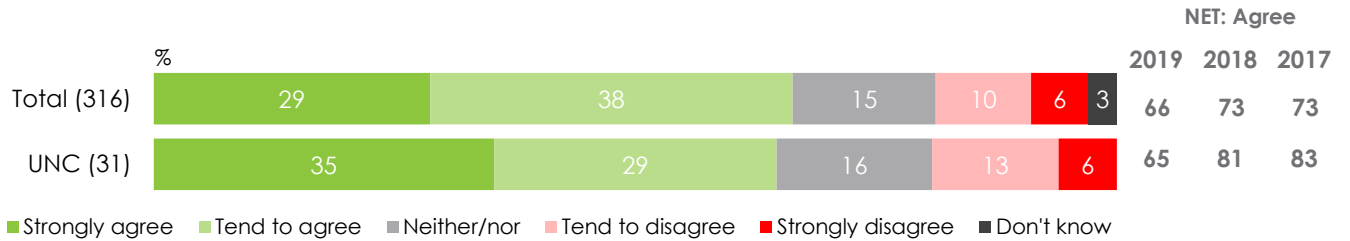
Organisations value email communications that are succinct, clear and give direction on the action (if any) that they may need to take as a result. Some organisations called for more dynamic
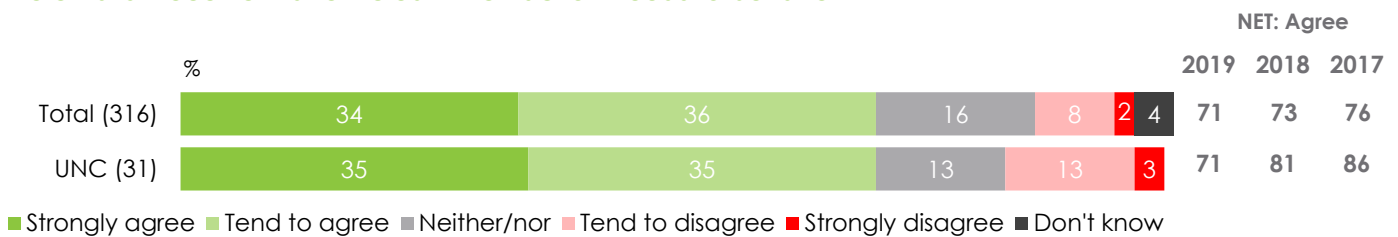
provision of information; with email used to provide topline information and complementing digital platforms used as repositories for more detailed information.

There is a high level of agreement that the Joint Office's emails in relation to the UNC are easy to understand (65% agree, 20 respondents) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (71% agree, 22 respondents); however, both scores are in decline since 2017.

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'

NET: Agree

	%						2019	2018	2017
Total (316)	29	38	15	10	6	3	66	73	73
UNC (31)	35	29	16	13	6		65	81	83

■ 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

	%						2019	2018	2017
Total (316)	34	36	16	8	2	4	71	73	76
UNC (31)	35	35	13	13	3		71	81	86

■ 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 responses shown in brackets).

Although there are positive aspects of the email service, there are still some areas of improvement:

"We get responses within 24 hours, they are very timely. The management of communication is very good."

"There are certain points of the month where they send everything. Instead of having one email that tells me everything I have several emails for each update. I get what I am given I have no choice."
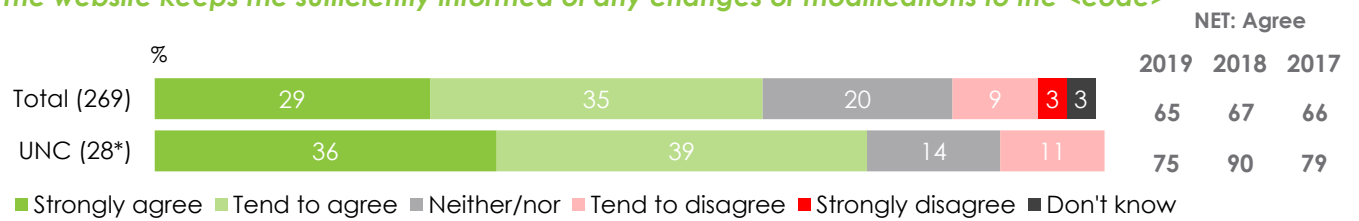
WEBSITES

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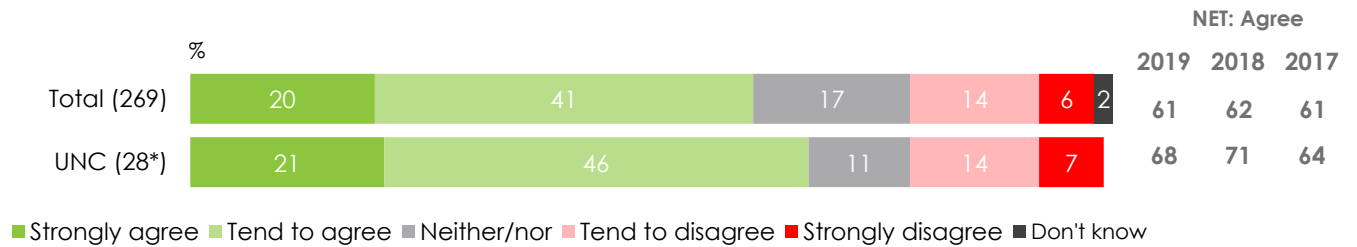
Customers feel it is critical that information that is on websites is kept up to date and is also easy to find. This continues to be an area that most Code Administrators need to work on; at an overall level, 61% indicate they are able to easily find information on the website.

Some aspects of the Joint Office's website are well regarded, a large majority agree that the website keeps them sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code, although scores are down from 90% in 2018 to 75% (21 respondents) in 2019. Some issues are highlighted, as 21% disagree that they are able to easily find information on the website (six respondents), while 11% disagree that the information on the website is easy to understand (three respondents).
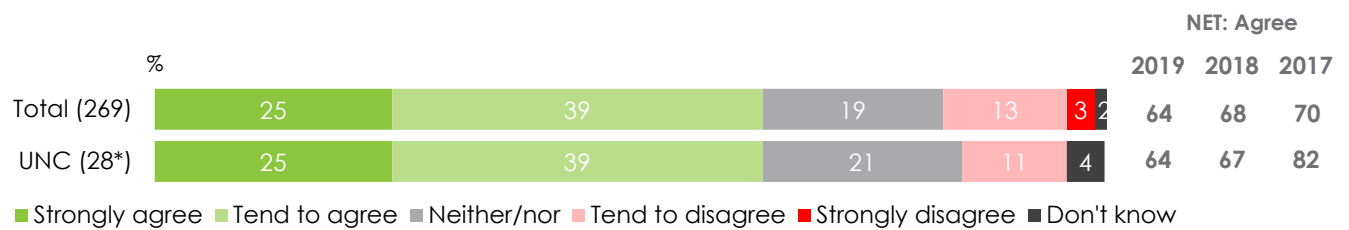
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'

	NET: Agree		
	2019	**2018**	**2017**
Total (269)	**65**	**67**	**66**
UNC (28*)	**75**	**90**	**79**

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

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

	NET: Agree		
	2019	**2018**	**2017**
Total (269)	**61**	**62**	**61**
UNC (28*)	**68**	**71**	**64**

■ 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		
	2019	**2018**	**2017**
Total (269)	**64**	**68**	**70**
UNC (28*)	**64**	**67**	**82**

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

*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 responses shown in brackets).

There was mixed feedback about how functional the website is:

"It's not easy, you need to scroll down to find what you want."

"It's easy to find what I need."

"When it comes to navigating consultations or live modifications - have to search by code of the review so unless you know the number it's a nightmare trying to find it – it's not arranged by topic or theme/title of review....so it goes back to the basic principle that you would have to be heavily engaged to know the code."

"The website is ok, it's reasonably easy to go through. I find it reasonable to use, the information is generally up to date."
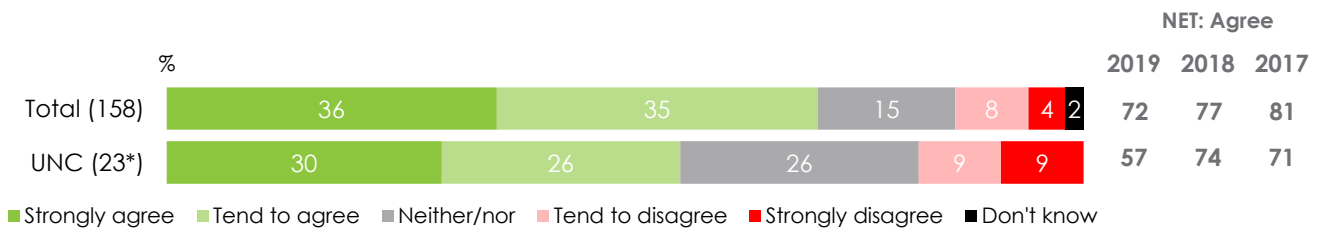
MEETINGS

At an overall level, 42% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. Sixty six percent (23 respondents) of organisations attended a meeting or workshop about the UNC in the last 12 months. There are aspects of meetings which respondents believe require attention.
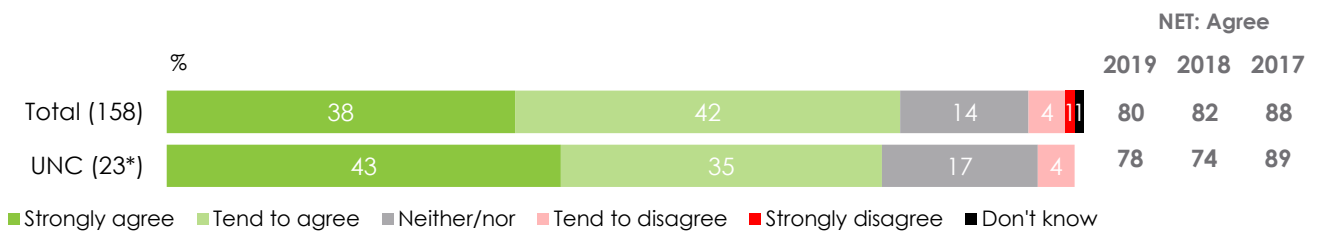
Eighteen percent of organisations (four respondents attending meetings) feel they do not receive information in a timely manner. Similarly, 17% (four respondents) indicate that the materials they receive prior to meetings do not provide them with enough information about the objectives.

Teleconference facilities are perceived as fit for purpose by 70% of those who attended meetings (16 respondents).
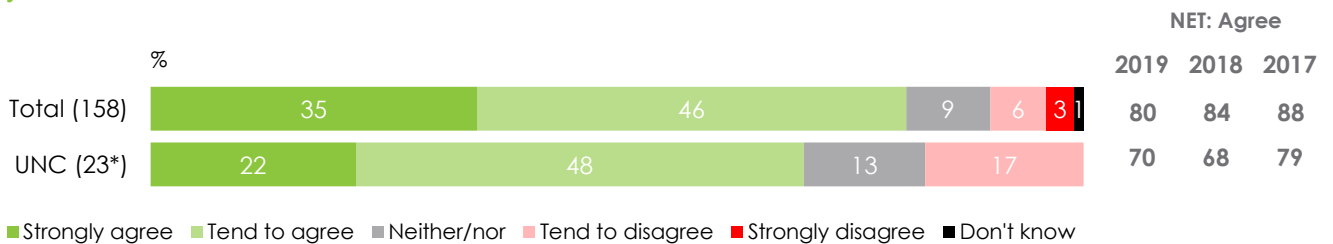
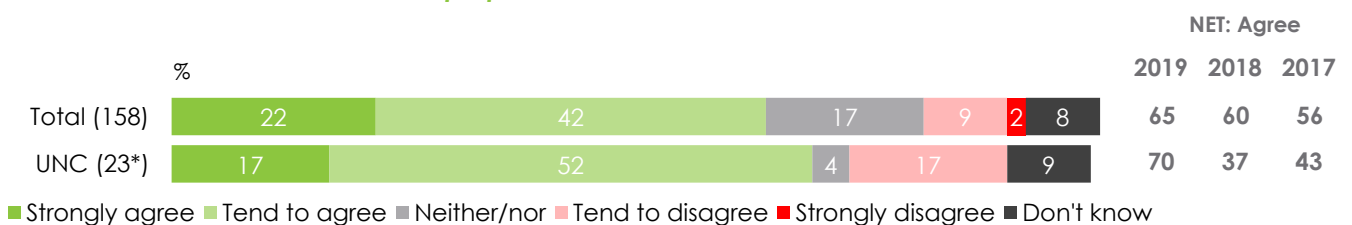## *'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'*

		NET: Agree		
	%	2019	2018	2017
Total (158)	36 / 35 / 15 / 8 / 4 / 2	72	77	81
UNC (23*)	30 / 26 / 26 / 9 / 9	57	74	71

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

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

		NET: Agree		
	%	2019	2018	2017
Total (158)	38 / 42 / 14 / 4 / 1 / 1	80	82	88
UNC (23*)	43 / 35 / 17 / 4	78	74	89

■ 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		
	%	2019	2018	2017
Total (158)	35 / 46 / 9 / 6 / 3 / 1	80	84	88
UNC (23*)	22 / 48 / 13 / 17	70	68	79

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

'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'

		NET: Agree		
	%	2019	2018	2017
Total (158)	22 / 42 / 17 / 9 / 2 / 8	65	60	56
UNC (23*)	17 / 52 / 4 / 17 / 9	70	37	43

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

*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).

Organisations raised a variety of concerns about meetings, however there was some positive feedback:

"Meetings not run in a productive way at all in my opinion, conversations are allowed to unfold which have already happened and there doesn't always seem to be enough progress in the meetings."

"In the meetings I find a lot of time is wasted….go around the room and asking are they going to change certain aspects of their mods. The purpose of the meetings should be to facilitate discussions and create solutions rather than going on and on about administration."

"Timetables for the meetings, how regular they are, management side of different workgroups they do a good job of. Manage a broad spectrum of topics really well in meetings."

RAISING AND UDNERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Eight organisations (23%) raised modifications in respect of the UNC within the last 12 months. While four out of eight organisations found the process easy, others found it difficult which indicates a need for greater support with the modification process. The concerns raised by organisations support the sentiment that greater support is needed:

"More support in raising proposals – current set up is that you have to be very experienced in understanding how to raise a proposal or modification. If you are a new entrant to the market or a company that has just acquired a gas assets – I don't think there is enough support for these people."
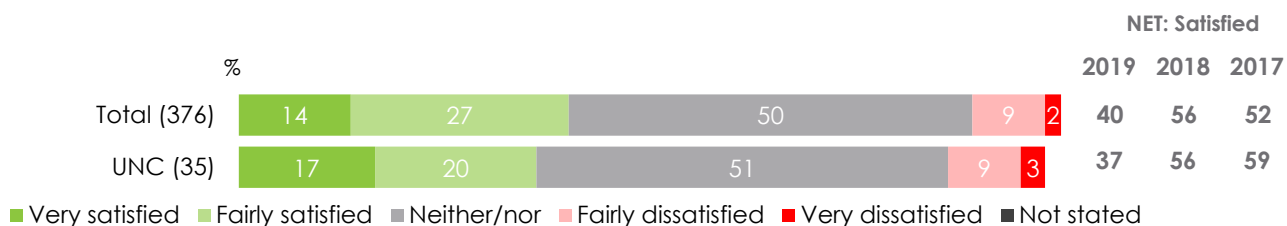
"In the beginning of raising a proposal, the deadlines were not clearly laid out and it wasn't clear when they wanted amendments. I was being asked to make iterations, then working discussion, then another iteration. It would have been better to have more planning."

"There should be better communication ahead of the proposal process. Take them through the steps and make sure they understand them."

"Not necessarily clear how panels process works and elections for both CUSC and UNC seem to be a little bit mysterious in terms of different roles of different panel members process – there will be terminology dropped in such as "user representative" and it's not clear if this is someone who uses the system or somebody who is the end user of gas and the definition is hard to find."

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.

Similarly, 37% of organisations (13 respondents) are satisfied with the support Joint Office gives them to understand UNC modifications, a decline from 56% last year.

	%						NET: Satisfied		
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Total (376)	14	27	50	9	2		40	56	52
UNC (35)	17	20	51	9	3		37	56	59

■ 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 responses shown in brackets).

ACCESSION PROCESS

Five people (14%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the UNC in the last five years. All those who were personally involved in the process managed by Xoserve, found the accession process difficult.

XOSERVE

Seventy one percent (25 respondents) of those party to the UNC interact with both the Joint Office and Xoserve (the UNC system delivery body).

Conclusions

The Joint Office of Gas Transporters largely performs in line with the industry average on many aspects of service provision. Despite overall satisfaction remaining at the same level as 2018, downward movement is evident for other key areas of the UNC service in 2019:

- Ratings for support KPIs have declined since 2018
- Information provision KPIs have gone down
- Direct services (emails, website and meetings) in decline since 2018

Areas for improvement include:

- Clarity within emails
- Organisation and preparation of meetings