

Code administrators performance survey

Supply Point Administrator Agreement (SPAA)

ElectraLink Ltd

Introduction

As part of its 2016 Code Governance Review Final Proposals (Phase 3) (CGR3), it was 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 depth interviews to inform questionnaire design (14-20 Feb 2018)
- A core survey with 216 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators – **37 participants answering about the SPAA** (27 Mar – 11 May)
- 25 follow-up 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 SPAA (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 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 – SPAA

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


- Nearly four in five are satisfied with the service provided
- Similarly, eight in ten are satisfied with the provision of support
- One in three believe that service provision has improved from last year, with just 3% stating it has got worse
- While results are on balance positive, there are a few areas where ElectraLink could further improve the service provided in relation to the SPAA:
 - Improving the website user experience, especially the ability to easily find information
 - Keeping customers sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code

Organisation profiling

The level of expertise organisations have to deal with codes remains consistent with 2017. It is encouraging that there is a 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



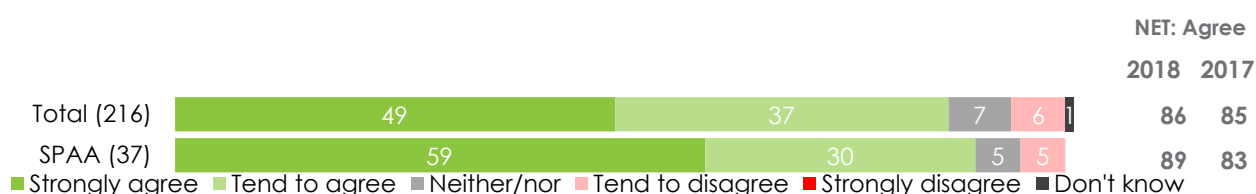
	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (N=216)	18%	16%	14%	47%
SPAA (N=37)	11%	22%	27%	32%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE



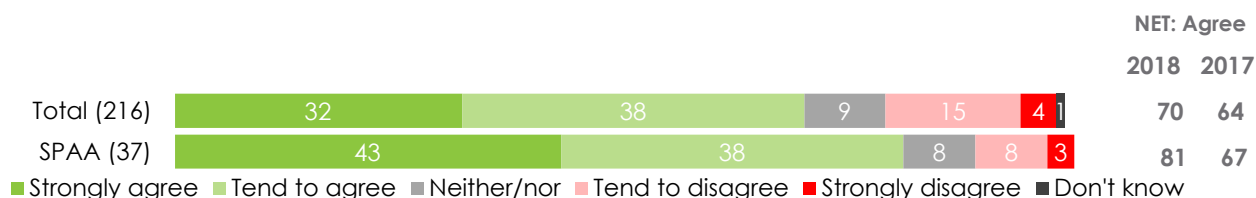
	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Total (N=216)	16%	6%	76%
SPAA (N=37)	19%	11%	70%

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 %)

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

Key findings

KPIs

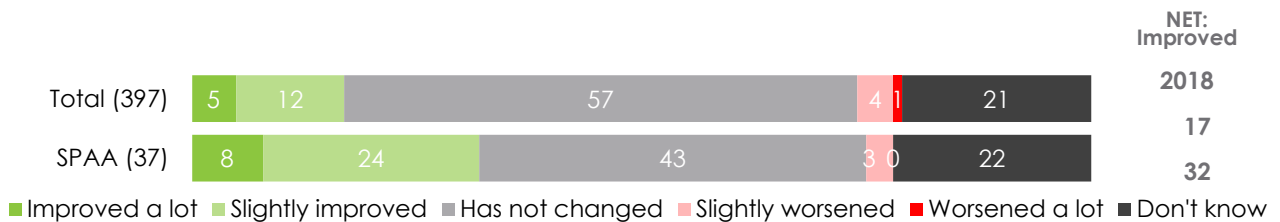
The survey collected four wide measures of satisfaction:

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 the service Electralink offer in relation to the SPAA relatively highly. There is little dissatisfaction reported across the measures, and encouragingly a third indicate that the service has improved in the last year.

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

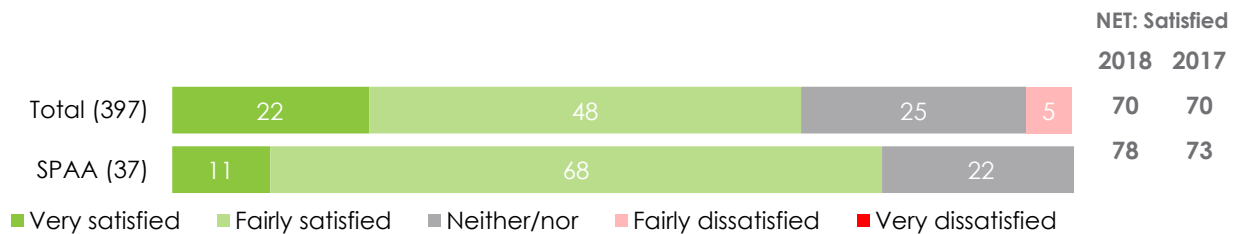
Just over half of organisations feel the service received in relation to their code has not changed (57%). For SPAA, four in ten indicate that the service is unchanged. Positively, a third say they have seen improvements in the service provision for SPAA over the last year.



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 %)

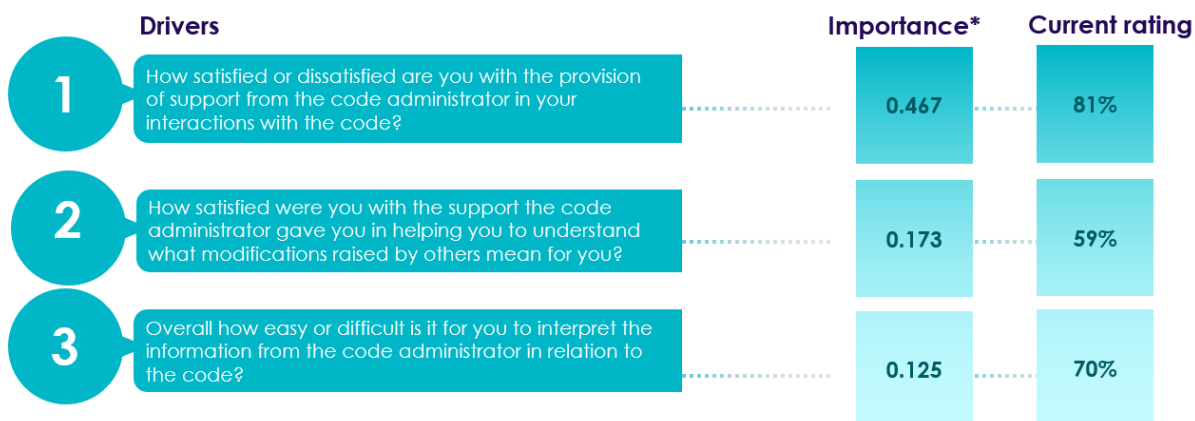
OVERALL SATISFACTION

Nearly eight in ten (78%) organisations are satisfied with ElectraLink's overall services with regards to the SPAA. While 22% are neutral about the overall service provided, no customers are 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 %)

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



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

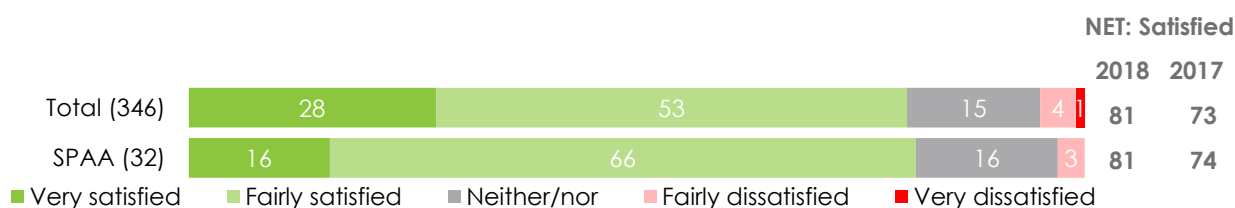
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the SPAA.

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.

Eight in ten (81%) ElectraLink customers are satisfied with the provision of support offered in relation to the SPAA.



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 %)

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.

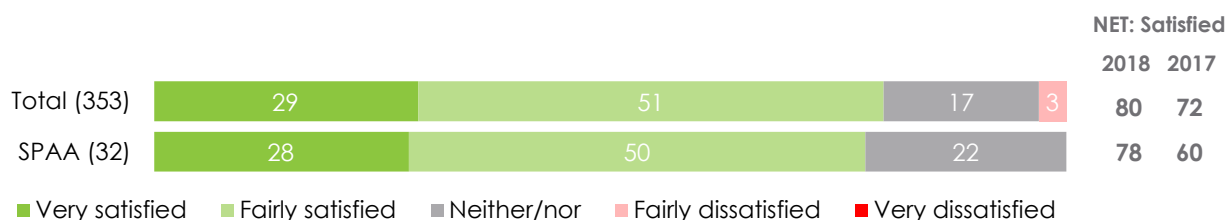
Positive statements around the level of support from Electralink include:

"The good thing about SPAA is that they are always willing to listen to ideas about change. They will listen to people's concerns about structure and they will try and take those on board. So if parties think that a different format would be better to discuss an issue they would listen to that."

"They have really showed a willingness in getting a grip at solving issues, getting quite complex information outside of scheduled meetings and that has been really useful."

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. Four in five are satisfied with the support received when requested from ElectraLink, an increase of 28%pts from 2017.



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 %)

There are however some concerns around cross selling which Electralink may need to be mindful of:

"The most frustrating thing I find is that they are always looking for opportunities to sell more products but from a code governance perspective, actually they just have to get on and do things."

"It is almost as if they try to do things bad enough so they get paid to do additional work. They are pushing back at what's actually at their core role. I don't participate too much in the forum but they used to make issues bigger than they are so that they can make more money."

"Making sure the core service meets standards before trying to sell/expand services."

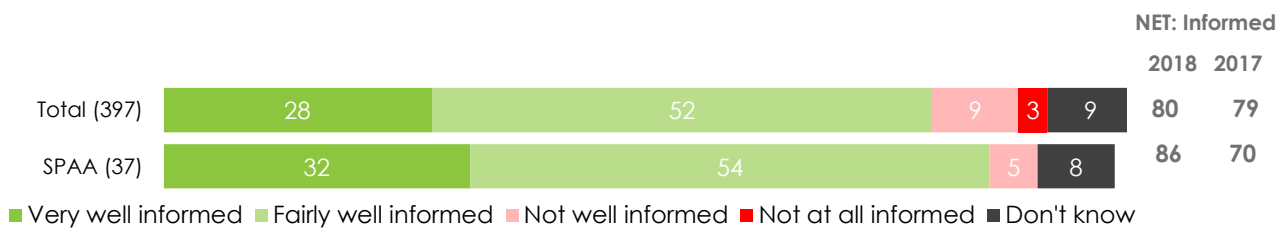
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the SPAA from ElectraLink 1 - 2 times a week and for the majority (71%), this frequency is about right. There is a near even split between those that believe it is too often (16%) and not often enough (10%).

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.

ElectraLink perform very well in this area: nearly nine in ten say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the SPAA, a significant increase from last year where seven in ten felt informed.

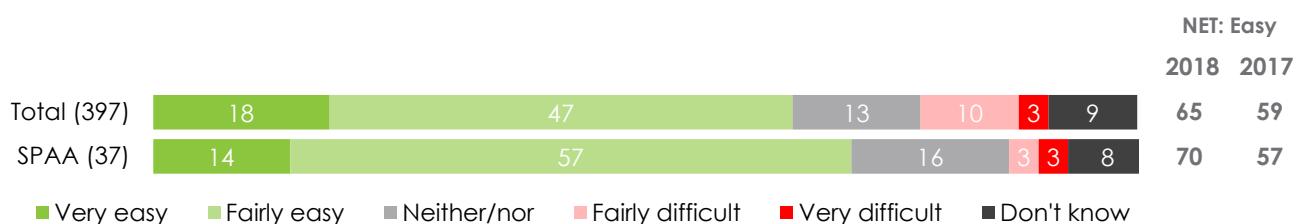


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

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.

Seven in ten say it is easy to interpret information about the SPAA, an increase from the 57% seen in 2017.



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 %)

"They should have more knowledge about the code and use it better."

Perceptions of direct services

EMAIL

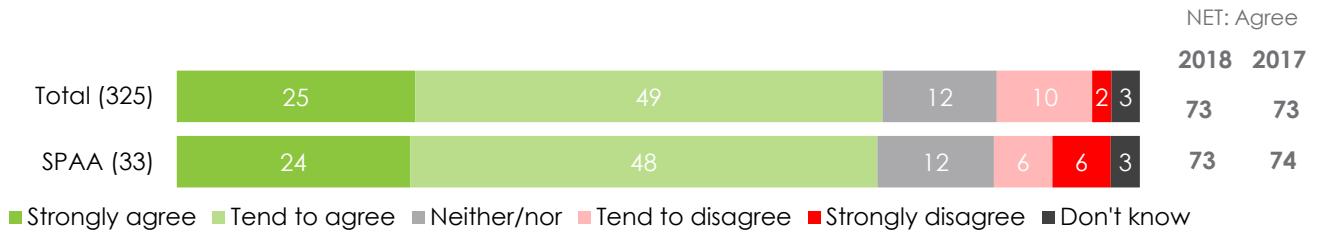
Overall, information is easily accessible via email – it is the most used both by CAs to provide information and by organisations to seek information. Communication by email means there are regular updates of information and organisations can stay on top of changes to the code. Organisations also prefer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

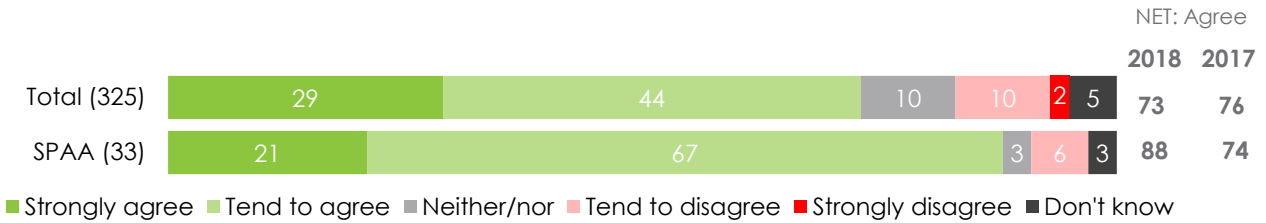
The volume of emails can make it difficult for organisations to identify which messages contain vital information, which ones need immediate action or prioritisation against those providing more general updates.

There is a relatively high level of agreement that ElectraLink's emails are easy to understand (73%), and a majority agree it's clear when actions need to be taken (88%).

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'



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



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 %)

There were split opinions on the emails sent by Electralink:

"Electralink send us the right amount of information."

"Send less emails, as sometimes things are pointed out many times but they should keep all the information up to date."

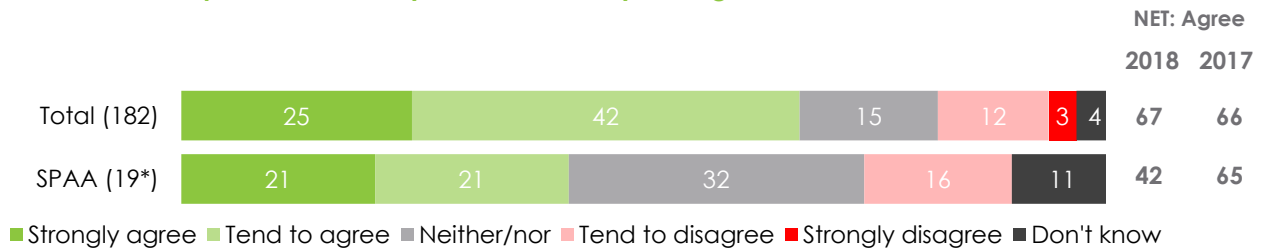
WEBSITES

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.

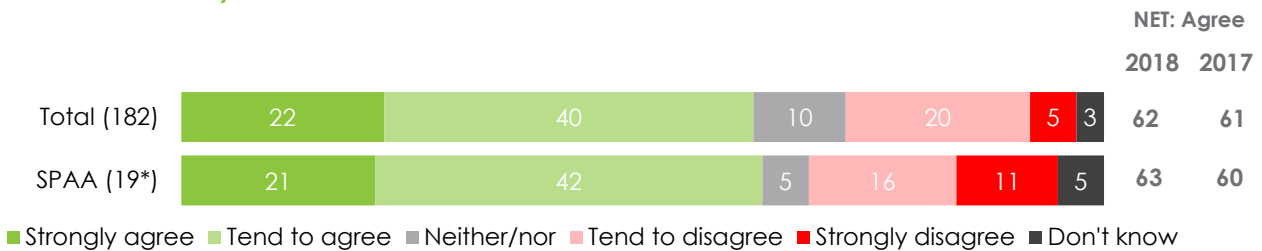
There are some highlighted concerns around the ability for customers to easily navigate websites, and limited signposting. Overall, there is a decline in the proactive use of websites (52% in 2017 vs 28% in 2018). While customers perceive websites as not fit for purpose use may decline further.

There is some dissatisfaction expressed with ElectraLink's website in relation to the SPAA: sixteen percent disagree that the website keeps them sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code with a further one in four disagreeing they can easily find information on the website.

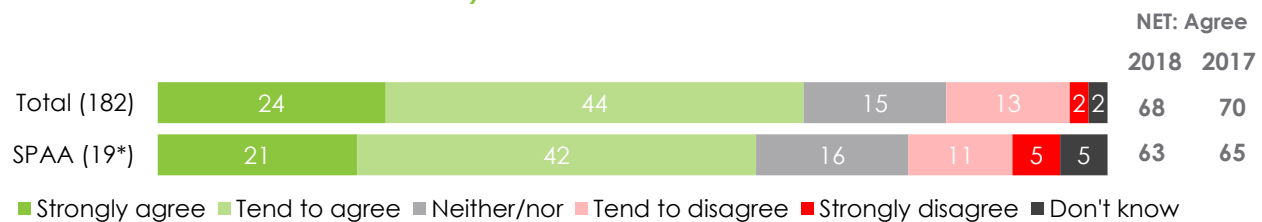
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'



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



'The information on the website is easy to understand'



*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 %)

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

"The SPAA website is difficult to use. I can't find anything on it. That's because of the layout."

"I would like the change proposal status to be up to date on the SPAA website."

"Improve navigation of website."

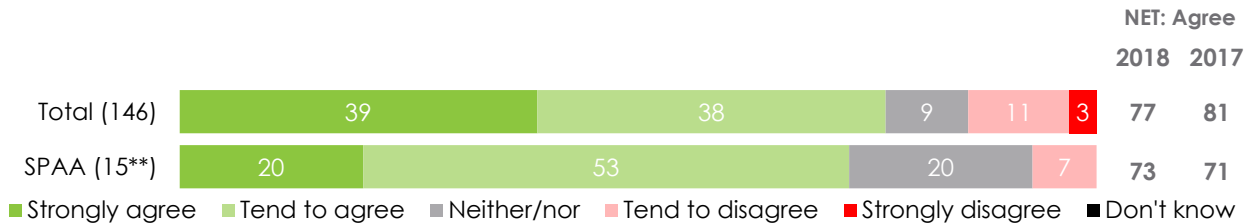
"Putting all the information relating to a change with the change on the change proposals page. Currently you have to look at the documents for change board meetings to get all the documents relevant for a particular change which is fine for those in the know but difficult for those who want to find out about a change proposal and who have are not closely engaged with the change process."

MEETINGS

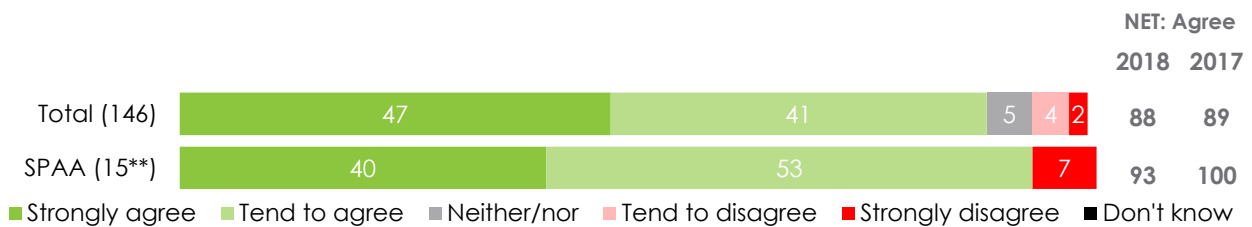
Four in ten organisations have attended a meeting or workshop about the SPAA in the last 12 months. At an overall level, 37% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with.

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

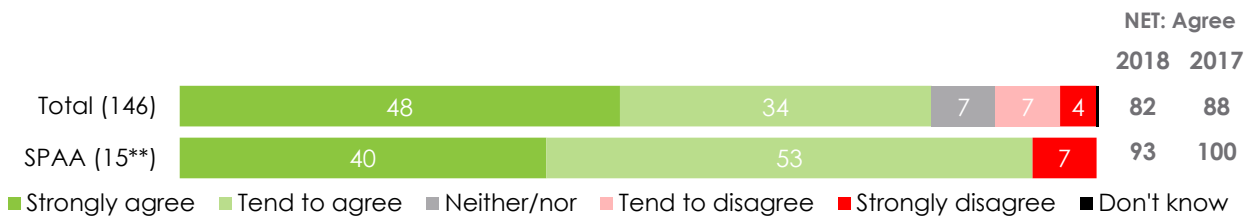
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



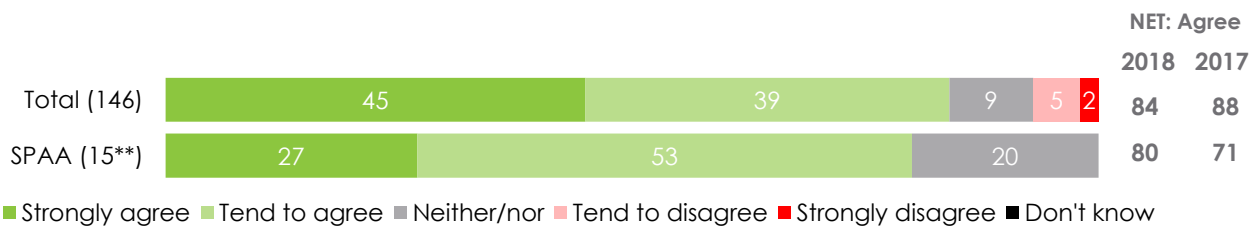
'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'



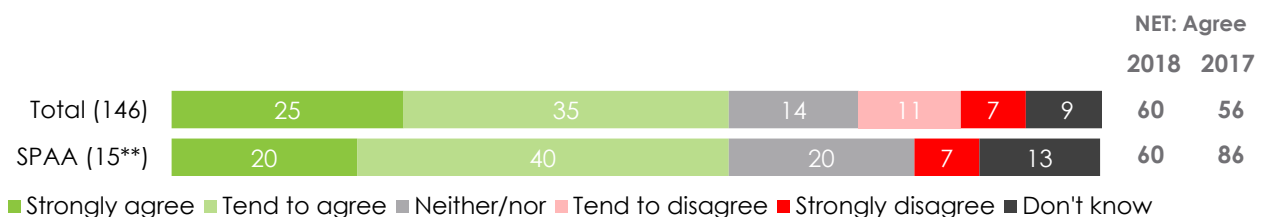
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



'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 respondents in brackets) (results in %)

There are some specific improvement suggested for meetings:

"Better communication regarding conferences and changes."

RAISING MODIFICATIONS

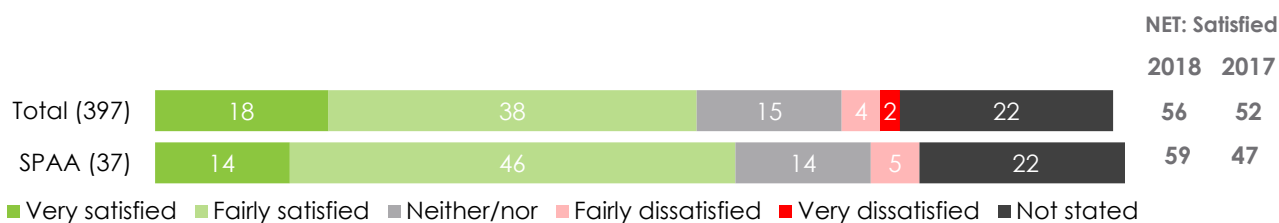
Six organisations (16%) surveyed raised modifications in respect to the SPAA within the last 12 months.

Satisfaction levels are high amongst these organisations, most (five) are satisfied with the support ElectraLink gave in the development of their proposal.

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.

Six in ten (59%) are satisfied with how ElectraLink helps them to understand SPAA 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 %)

An organisation highlighted a specific issue around the naming convention of documents:

"The labelling of those documents isn't precise so you don't know what you are looking at before actually opening that document so that it is given to the right person within the organisation and of course that would also save a lot of time."

ACCESSION PROCESS

Just five individuals (14%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the SPAA in the last five years. Of these, three found the process easy, while one found the process difficult.

Conclusions

- ElectraLink are performing well on most aspects of service provision in relation to the SPAA
 - A notable proportion of organisations indicate that the service has improved from last year
 - Organisations are generally satisfied with the provision of information
- Organisations highlight some room for improvement around the website:
 - Organisations indicate that they are not always able to easily find information on the website
 - Some organisations also indicate that aspects of cross-selling from Electralink can impede on the service delivered