

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

Overall, the Joint Office is regarded positively across several aspects of service delivery:


- Seven in ten are satisfied with the overall service provided to their organisation in relation to the UNC
 - 13% indicate that the service has improved over the last year
- Organisations are satisfied with both the provision of support (81%) and the support received when requested (77%)
- While perceptions of the Joint Office's direct services are largely positive there is room for further improvement around some areas:
 - Teleconference facilities for meetings are perceived by some as not fit for purpose
 - Information on the website is seen as not easy to find and some have difficulty understanding the information
- One in ten customers feel the service offered in relation to the UNC has got worse over the last year

Organisational 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



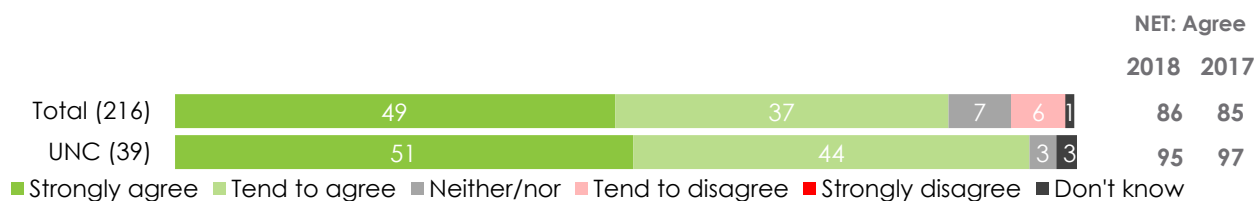
	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (216)	18%	16%	14%	47%
UNC (39)	18%	21%	13%	46%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE



	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
	Total (216)	16%	6%
UNC (39)	10%	3%	85%

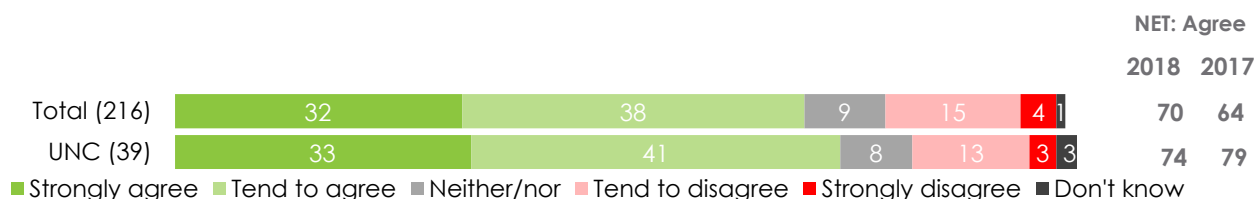
SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES



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 %)

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

ORGANISATION'S RESOURCE



Q2. And to what extent would you agree or disagree that you have enough resource within your organisation to sufficiently deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Key findings

KPIs

The survey collected 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 Joint Office of Gas Transporters relatively highly across all KPIs. There is little dissatisfaction reported across the measures and 13% say that the service has improved over the last year.

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

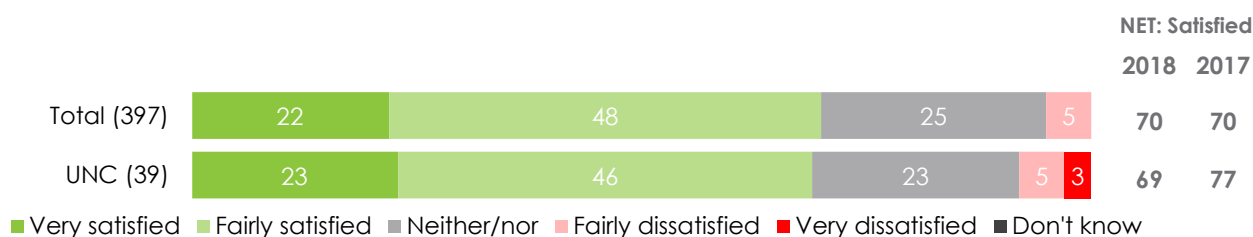
A high proportion of organisations feel the service received in relation to their code has not changed (57%). For UNC, half indicate that the service is unchanged, while 13% say it has improved. There is a small cohort of organisations (11%) who feel the service has deteriorated in the last year.



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 %)

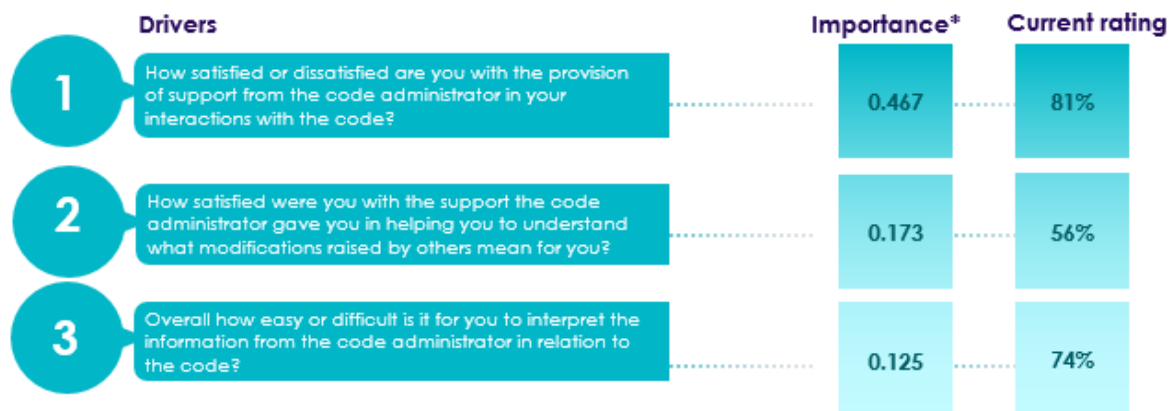
OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all code level, seven in ten say they are satisfied with the service provided by their Code Administrator. Similarly, 69% of UNC customers indicate that they are satisfied with their dealings with the Joint Office.



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.)

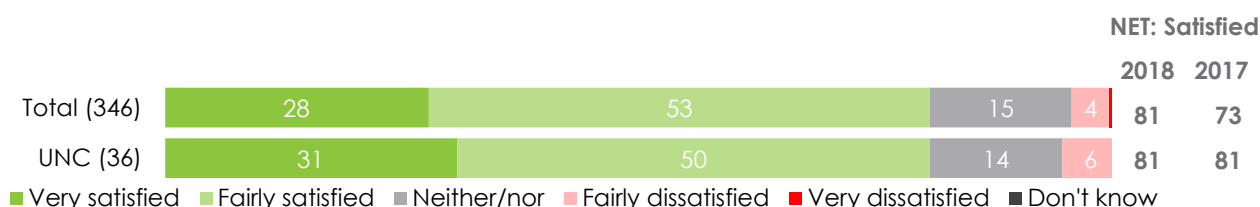
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores above are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the UNC.

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.

Joint Office customers are typically satisfied with the provision of support they receive in relation to the UNC. This view is consistent with 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 involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

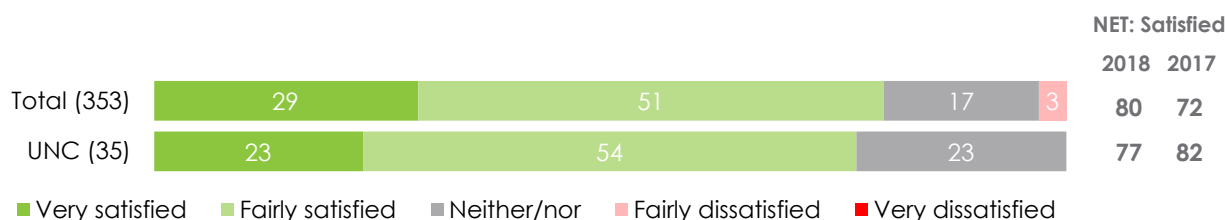
¹ KDA tests the strength of the correlation between ratings of core metrics against perceived level of satisfaction by which we can derive which factors have the greatest impact on overall attitudes – this is a subconscious measurement rather than a stated level of importance.

Some of the changes that have been implemented by the Joint Office are being acknowledged by organisations:

“We have an operational support manager that helps and a client number. The UNC has started to do that recently.”

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. Satisfaction with support received when requested from the Joint Office in relation to the UNC is perceived positively, with 77% satisfied.



Q13/Q13b. And when you request support from the code administrator in relation to the <code> how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you receive? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

While, there are no organisations that explicitly say they are dissatisfied with the support they receive when they request it, a quarter give a neutral response.

A comment from an organisation points to some issues around resourcing:

“They seem under resourced at times - this is still the case.”

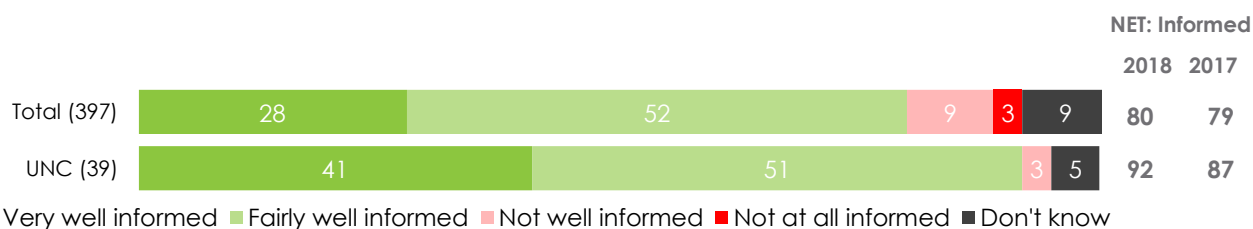
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the UNC from the Joint Office four to five times a week and for the vast majority (78%), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

At an overall level, 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.

The Joint Office performs very well in this area: over nine in ten say they feel ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ well informed about the UNC (four in ten feel ‘very well informed’).

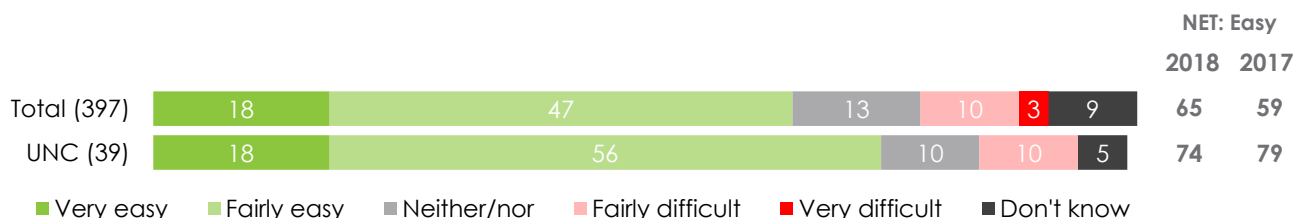


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

More generally, those with greater 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 or less.

Three quarters of organisations find it easy to interpret information about the UNC. However, one in ten indicate that they have difficulty interpreting information provided in relation to the UNC.



Q15/Q15b. Overall how easy or difficult is it for you to interpret the information from the code administrator in relation to Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Perceptions of direct services

EMAIL

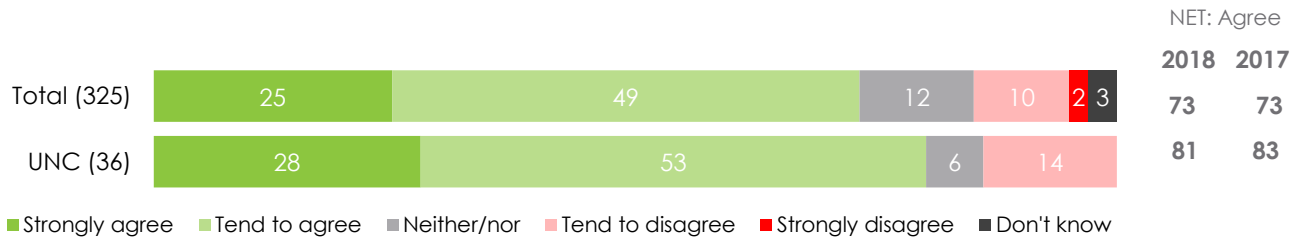
Overall, information is easily accessible via email – it is the most used both by CAs to provide information and by organisations to seek information. Communication by email means there are regular updates of information and organisations can stay on top of changes to the code. Organisations also prefer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

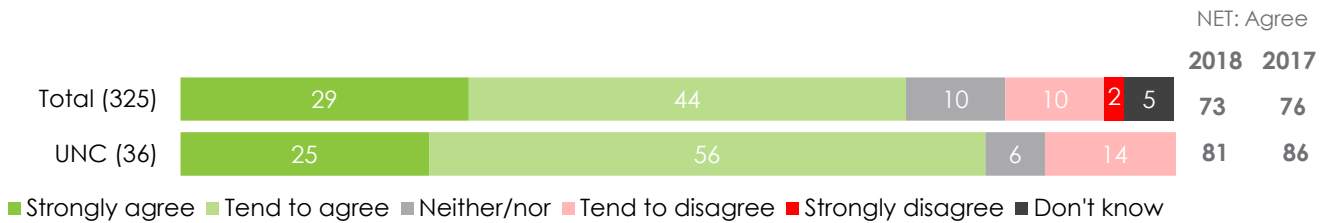
The volume of emails can make it difficult for organisations to identify which messages contain vital information, which ones need immediate action or prioritisation against those providing more general updates.

There is a high level of agreement that the Joint Office's emails in relation to the UNC are easy to understand (81%) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (81%).

'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 %)

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

"The links on the emails should be working."

"Consolidate and simplify emails - single email per day unless urgent, group the points by theme so I skip what isn't relevant easily."

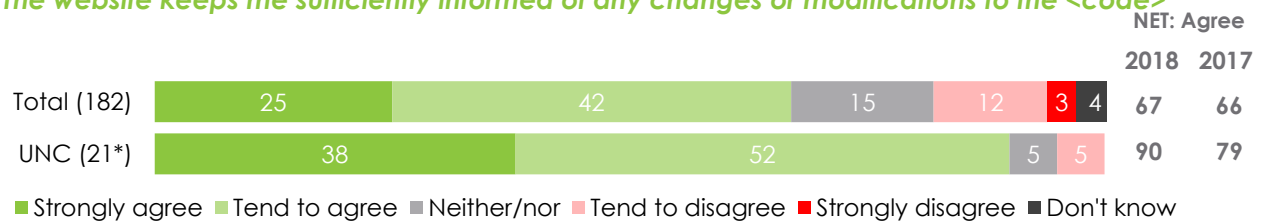
WEBSITES

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.

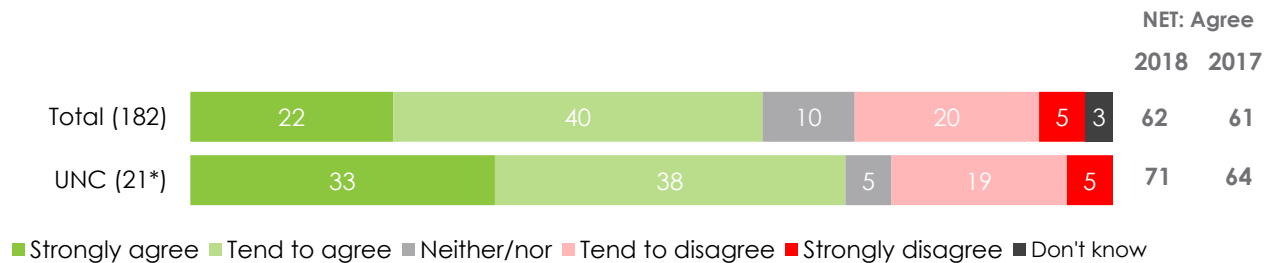
There are some highlighted concerns around the ability for customers to easily navigate websites, and limited signposting. Overall, there is a decline in the proactive use of websites (52% in 2017 vs 28% in 2018). While customers perceive websites as not fit for purpose use may decline further.

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. However, there are some issues highlighted, a quarter disagree that they are able to easily find information on the website, while a similar proportion disagree that the information on the website is easy to understand.

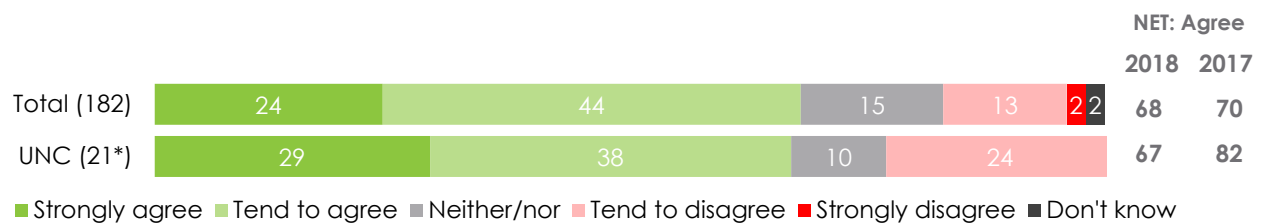
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'



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



'The information on the website is easy to understand'



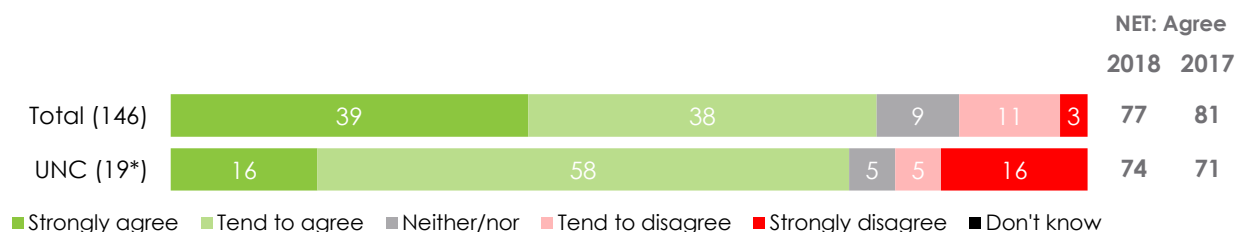
*Low base

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 %)

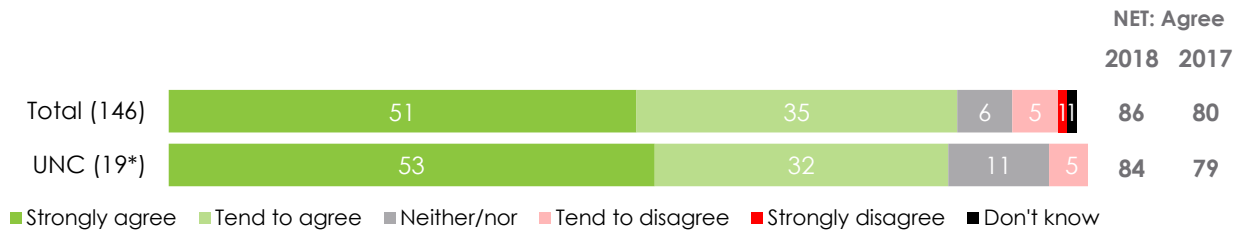
MEETINGS

Around half of organisations attended a meeting or workshop about the UNC in the last 12 months. There are aspects of meetings highlighted for attention. One in five organisations (attending meetings) feel they do not receive information in a timely manner. Similarly, 22% indicate that the materials they receive prior to meetings do not provide them with enough information about the objectives. Teleconference facilities are perceived as unfit for purpose by 37% of those who attended meetings.

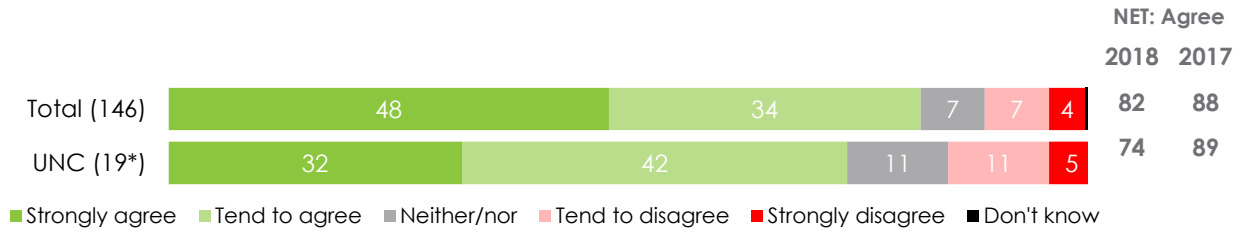
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



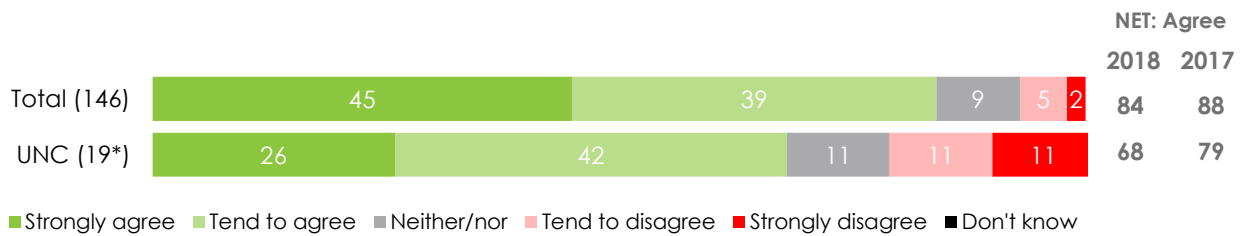
'The meeting chair acts impartially'



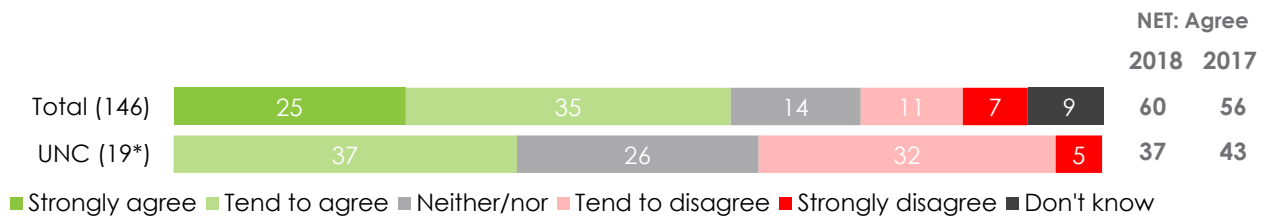
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



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



'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'



*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 %)

RAISING MODIFICATIONS

Around a fifth have raised modifications in respect of the UNC within the last 12 months. Of those raising a modification, the majority (six out of seven organisations) said the process of raising a modification was easy and five are satisfied with the support the Joint Office gave in the development of their proposal.

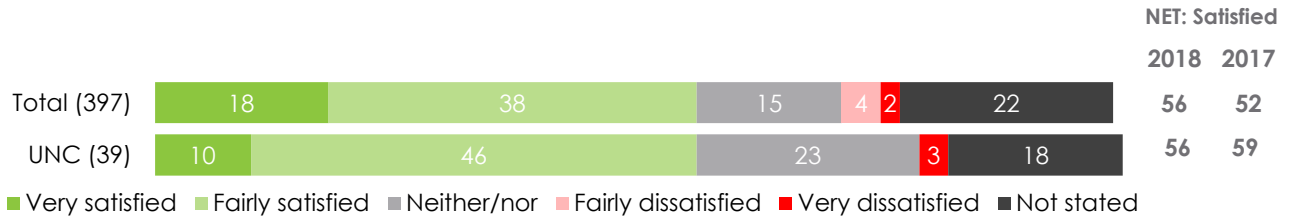
"Modifications cause the most concern. A lot come in and do various things so a lot will have no impact, some are just technical requirements we have to comply with and some will require fundamental action for the business."

"Hard to know what we need to bother about and what we don't."

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Overall, just over half of organisations are satisfied with the support their code administrator provides to help to understand what modifications raised by others mean for them.

Similarly, 56% of organisations are satisfied with the support Joint Office gives them to understand UNC modifications.



Q28. How satisfied were you with the support the code administrator gave you in helping you to understand what modifications raised by others mean for your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

“There should be clear guidance for new market entrants to sign in to the code and understand procedures/modifications of the code.”

ACCESSION PROCESS

Eleven people (28%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the UNC in the last five years. Of these, three found the process easy, three found it difficult, others found it neither easy nor difficult or had no direct involvement with the process.

XOSERVE

Three quarters (74%) of those party to the UNC interact with both the Joint Office and Xoserve. The majority did not offer any specific comments in respect to Xoserve.

Those commenting, had mixed opinions. Some mention difficulties around progress and customer service, while others praise them for being helpful.

"I would say that Xoserve has historically always been a bit of a blocker but I would say that they are showing willingness to improve it for the gas especially."

"Xoserve have no concept of customers but everyone else has the capabilities to deliver great service."

Conclusions

- The Joint Office of Gas Transporters performs well on many aspects of service provision
 - Overall satisfaction is relatively high
 - Customers are positive about the provision of support they receive
 - The majority find it easy to interpret the information about the UNC, although one in ten say they have some difficulty
- There are some aspects of service that are highlighted as in need of improvement:
 - Customers are dissatisfied with aspects of meetings, particularly teleconference facilities
 - Similarly, customers are dissatisfied with aspects of the website

"I'm not sure that the Joint Office should be considered a 'Code Administrator' they only really provide a secretarial service."