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 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.

What to do if you can't access parts of this document?

If you are unable to access some of the information in this document and need it in a different format:

- 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 – **37 participants answering about the SPAA** (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 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 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 – SPAA

Satisfaction ratings awarded to ElectraLink across numerous measures have tended to fluctuate over the last 3 years.

Ratings of service in relation to the SPAA closely follow the industry average. Satisfaction is lower than in the previous two years at 65% (24 respondents out of 37) however 24% (nine respondents) say service has improved and none that it has got worse.

Areas of improvement since 2018 include:

- information on the website being easy to understand.
- pre-meeting materials giving sufficient information about objectives.
- information being provided in sufficient time before a meeting.

There are some areas where some improvements could be made including:

- general provision of support from ElectraLink for SPAA.
- information being easy to interpret.
- website aspects such as inclusion of sufficient information on code modifications and how easy it is to find relevant information.

- support in understanding modifications raised by others.

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."

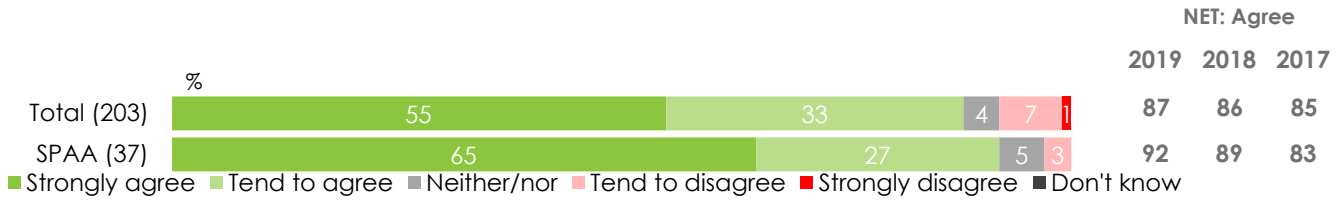
SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	**50-249**	**250-999**	**1,000+**
Total (203)	24%	15%	14%	45%
SPAA (37)	8%	22%	19%	51%

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Total (203)	15%	7%	78%
SPAA (37)	8%	5%	86%

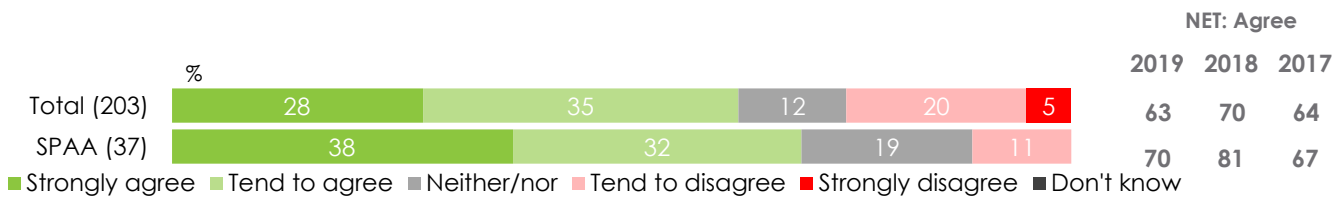
SELF-REPORTED SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES



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:

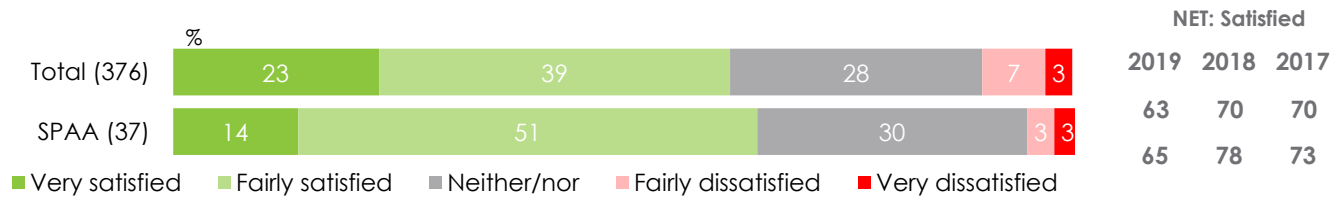
1. Overall satisfaction with the service provided to their organisation.
2. Satisfaction with the provision of support.
3. Satisfaction with support received when requested.
4. Perceived improvements from service received in the last year (introduced in 2018).

ElectraLink perform in line with the industry average across key areas of the SPAA code and there are indications of a decline in attitudes towards these.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all organisational level, we see a shift in reported overall satisfaction, down from 70% in 2018 to 63% in 2019.

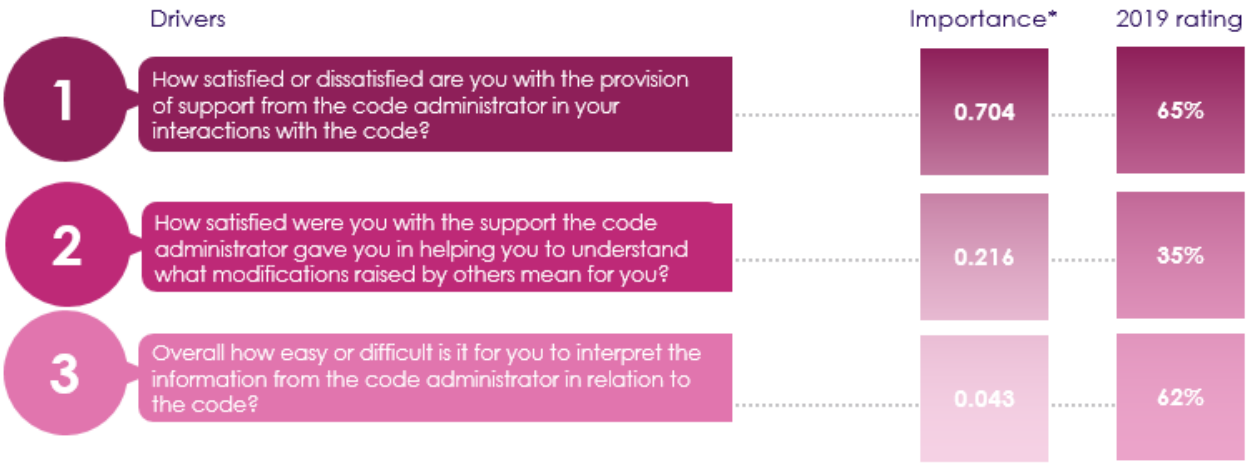
Sixty five percent rate ElectraLink's performance in relation to the SPAA positively (24 respondents out of 37) but this is the lowest achieved in three years.



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:

[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 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.)

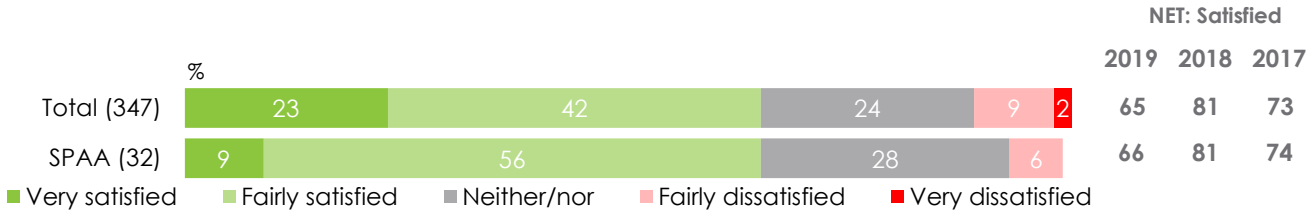
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores in the chart above are therefore based on the combined total for all codes and the 2019 current rating is specific to the SPAA.

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 SPAA. 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).

Sixty six per cent are satisfied with the provision of support for the SPAA code (21 respondents out of 32 aware of support) and this is a three year low. Six percent (two respondents) say they are dissatisfied.

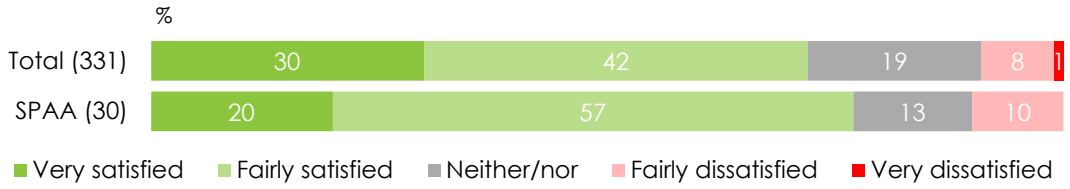


Q11a/Q11c. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved aware of support (number of responses shown in brackets).

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%. A similar rating to 2018 is apparent for the support given on the SPAA code by ElectraLink when requested; 77% (23 respondents out of 30 seeking support) are positive. Three respondents (10%) show dissatisfaction in regards to this aspect.

NET: Satisfied		
2019	2018	2017
72	80	72
77	78	60



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 respondents in brackets) (results in %)

An explanation for neutrality and dissatisfaction for support provided when sought were drawn out within interviews and largely centred on perceptions that staff lack the required expertise:

"We tend to get more junior staff but when looking for expertise - it is not really helpful."

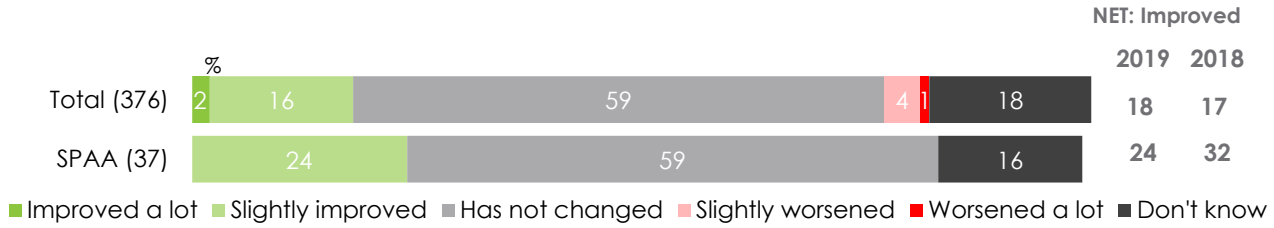
"Lack of expertise."

"They have a high turnover of staff - they are not fully handing over to people. So when new people start they are not clear of the journey that we have gone through so I have to start from scratch which can be frustrating."

"With the SEC and SPAA, the person we are often dealing with is not really knowledgeable, they wouldn't be able to answer my questions, so I don't really use them as much as I wish to."

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

At an overall level, organisations tend to believe that the service they receive has not changed over the last year. The SPAA Code mirrors this finding with 59% (22 respondents) also saying service remains the same; 24% (nine respondents) say it has improved but none that 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? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

There were reports that the service has improved, however in some areas necessary change is not happening:

"It has improved over the last few years. For example, transparency - previously someone could raise a change but if I was on holiday I could miss it, whereas now it is on the panel metrics."

"SPAA slightly less efficient, they make mistakes and they are moving towards the direction of having a code manager. Although that is helpful, that change has been going on for the last 3-4 years."

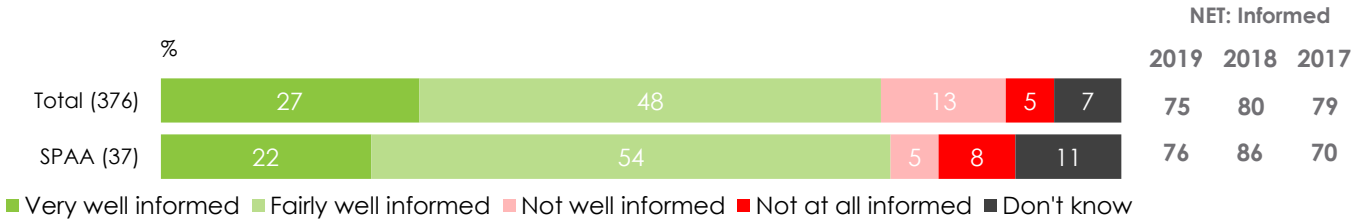
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations claim to receive information about the SPAA from ElectraLink 1 - 2 times a week and for 85% (22 out of 26 receiving information), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

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

Seventy six percent (28 respondents) state ElectraLink keeps them informed about the SPAA code; this is a decline from 2018 but not to 2017 levels. Thirteen percent (five respondents) say they do not feel 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 responses shown in brackets).

There was negative feedback around how well ElectraLink are doing in keeping organisations informed and updated:

"SPAA don't keep documents up to date e.g. template for the smart roll out."

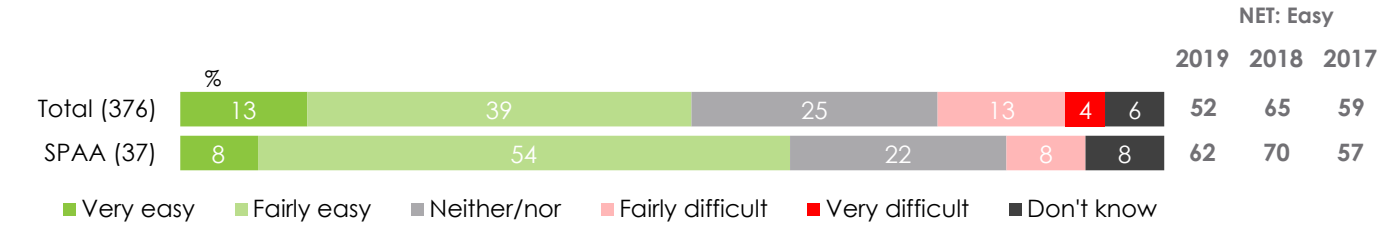
"Working relationships are good - I get on with them but I find that sometimes they are not proactive and there have been many times when updates have not been uploaded correctly."

"There are times when info has not been up to date and I have had to email them to make the updates. I feel that the suppliers pay them to do the admin and there are too many times when we have had to hand hold them."

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.

Again attitudes towards ElectraLink follow a similar pattern to the industry average with fluctuating ratings and 62% now saying information was easy to interpret (23 respondents) compared with 70% in 2018 and 57% 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 responses shown in brackets).

Perceptions of direct services

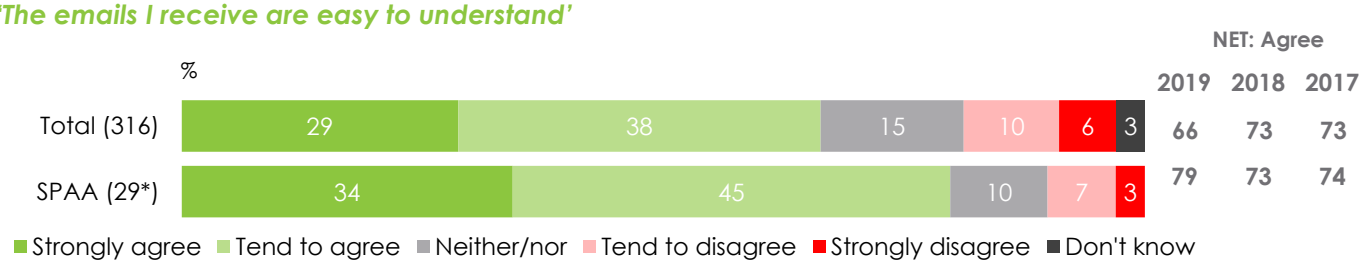
EMAIL

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.

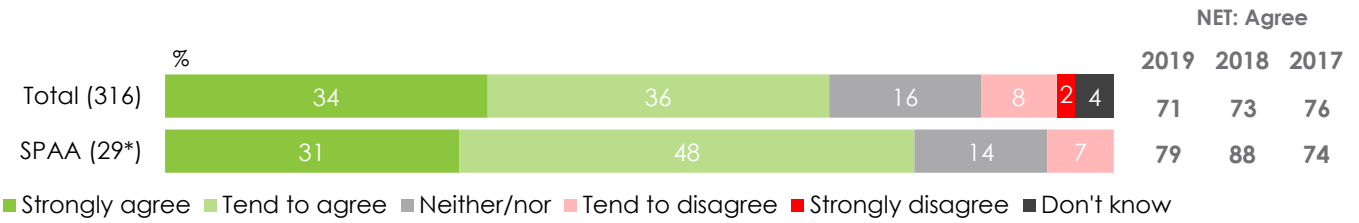
Organisations value email communications that are succinct, clear and give direction on the action (if any) that they may need to take as a result. Some organisations called for more dynamic provision of information; with email used to provide topline information and complementing digital platforms used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

ElectraLink's emails remain easy to understand (79% stating this, 23 out of 29 receiving such communications), and the same number also agree that it's clear when actions need to be taken.

'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 responses shown in brackets).

WEBSITES

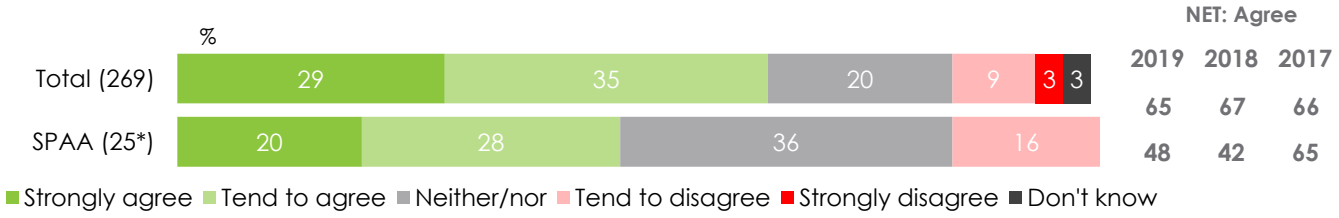
Websites remain important for most organisations. They are seen as a vital resource for keeping up to date with various code changes and general information related to the code. Information included on websites can be insightful, providing businesses with the depth of understanding they require to navigate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

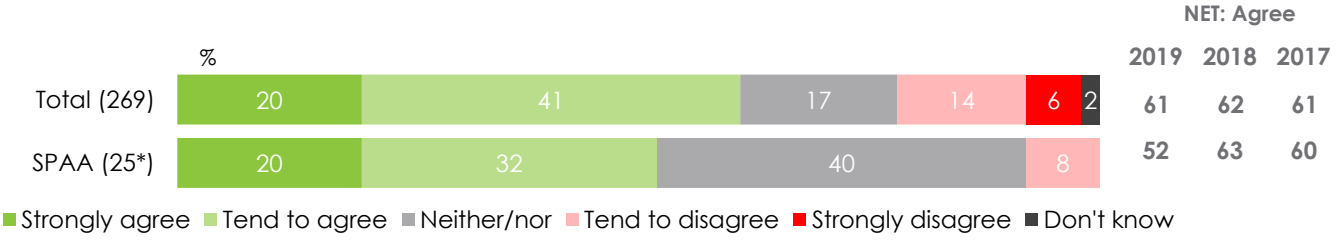
An improvement in the ease of understanding website content is evident for ElectraLink's SPAA site 76% agreeing with this (19 out of 25 respondents using the website) compared with 63% in 2018.

However being 'sufficiently informed of code modifications' and 'ease of finding information on the website' are not rated so positively, with noticeable proportions rating 'neither/ nor' for these measures.

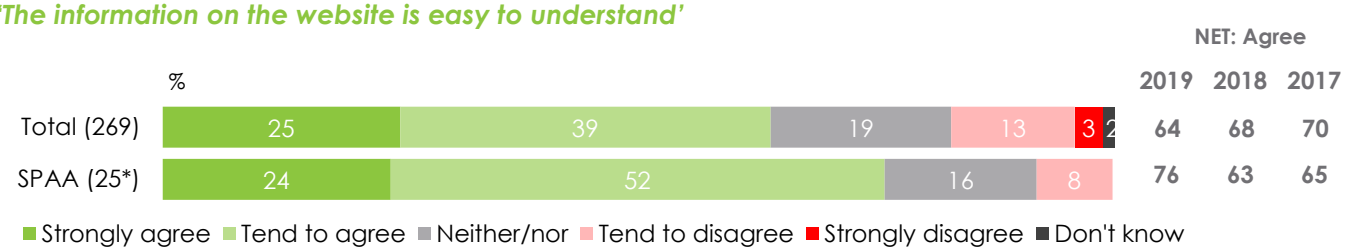
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'



'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 responses shown in brackets).

There were positive and negative comments regarding the website:

"If you want to look at a particular change, you can see people's change into it."

"I like the website it's user friendly and I know where to find information. I think its fine at the moment."

"SPAA have been trying to change this website for a long time now, it is frustrating. What's not working: change tracker is not up to date, search functionality don't bring up the specific changes you are looking for, so have to click through everything."

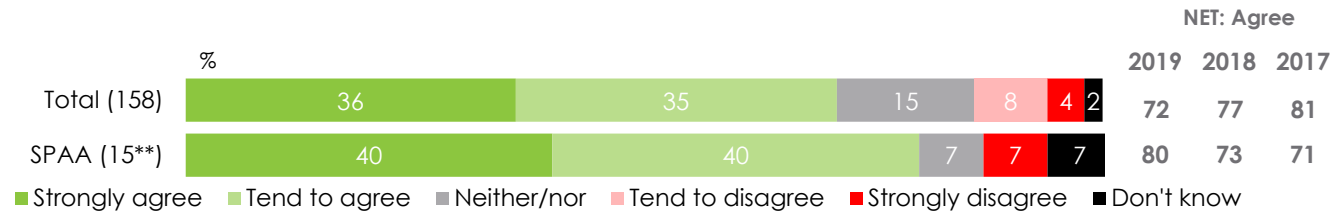
MEETINGS

At an overall level, 42% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. Similarly, 41% (15 respondents) had attended an ElectraLink meeting or workshop in relation to the SPAA.

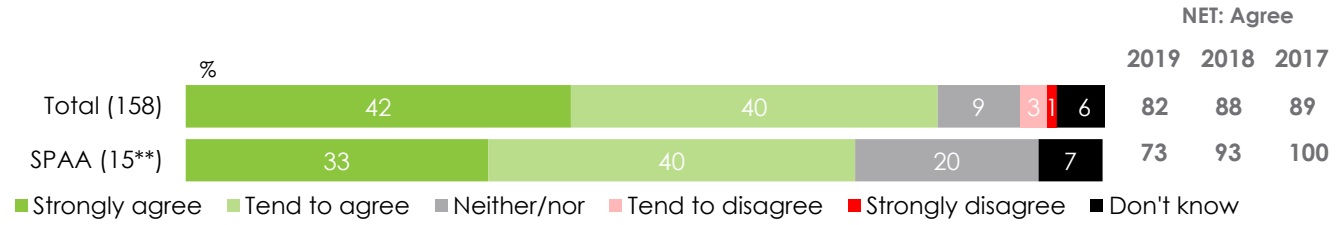
Results for the SPAA code are indicative only (with just 15 respondents attending) but it appears that there is continued decline in positively rating meeting facilities, being able to participate in discussions and teleconference facilities.

However, aspects such as pre-meeting materials giving sufficient information about objectives and ElectraLink providing information within sufficient time prior to a meeting are seeing indicative improvement.

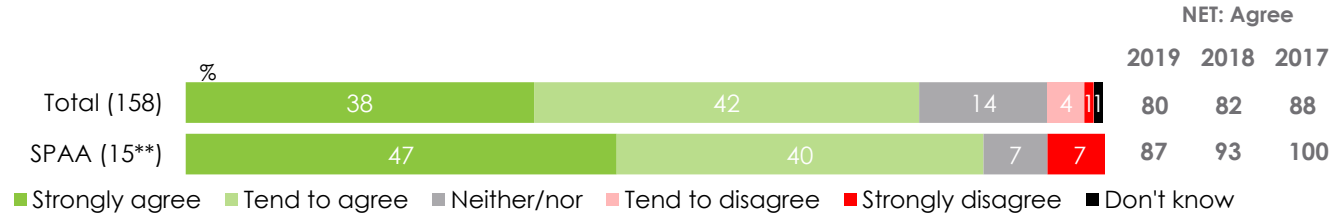
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



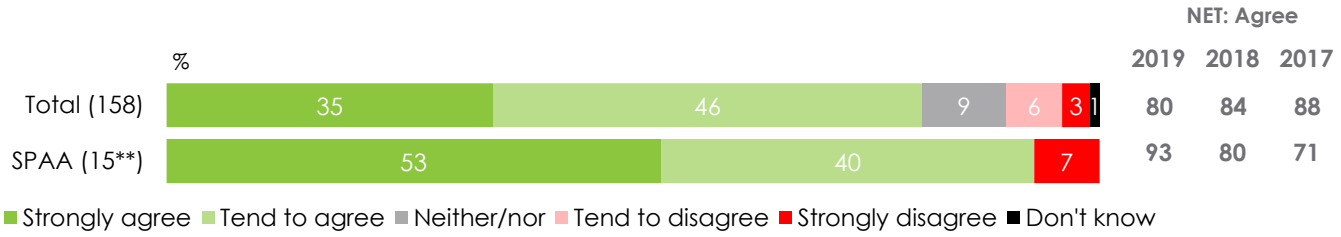
'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'



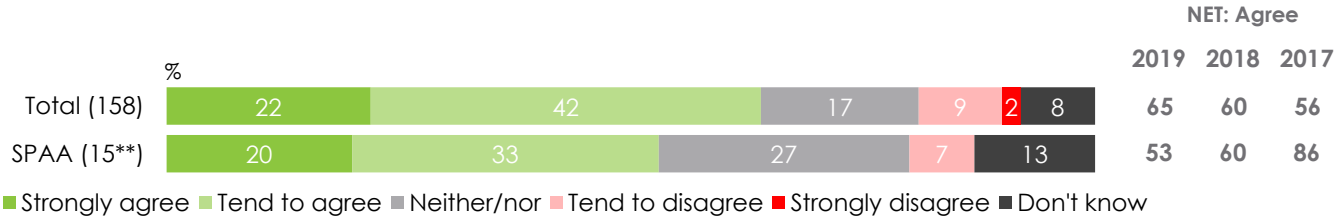
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



'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

Five organisations (14%) surveyed raised modifications in respect of the SPAA within the last 12 months.

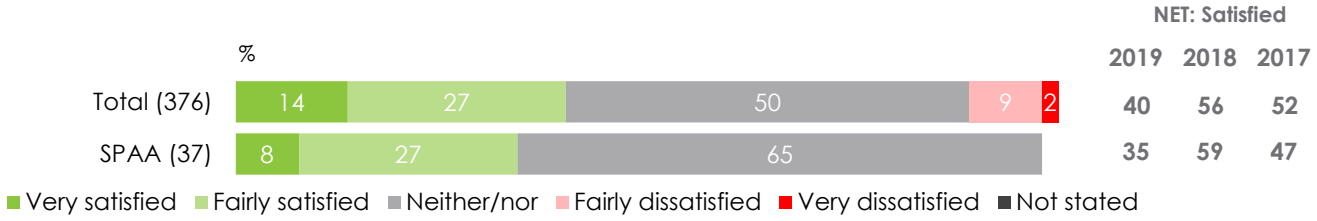
All the organisations involved are satisfied with the support ElectraLink gave in the development of their proposal. Organisations report positively about raising modifications, however a concern was raised that ElectraLink is not consistent in executing the changes:

"The best in the industry. It takes them less time to travel through change process and they are easy to engage."

"I am comfortable going to them to ask them to correct things but we should not have to go through that process. It is their role to make changes correctly, each time I ask for a change I have to go and check that it has been done correctly and in nearly all cases there are errors."

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.

Sixty five percent of organisations say they are neutral in regards to ElectraLink supporting them to understand code modifications raised by others. No-one reports dissatisfaction with this aspect and 35% (13 respondents) rate it positively.



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

Nine participants (24%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the SPAA in the last five years. Those involved in the accession process mostly found the process easy.

Conclusions

In line with averages across the industry, ratings of ElectraLink's service in regards to the SPAA code, have fluctuated since 2017. While satisfaction has declined with the SPAA, improvements to service are reported while no-one cites any decline.

While some areas of service receive positive feedback areas identified for improvement include:

- Ensuring information on the website is fit for purpose.
- Delivery of support for organisations on the code.
- Specific support on understanding modifications raised by others.