Code Administrators Performance Survey

Grid Code

National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO)

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 – **37 participants answering about the Grid Code** (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 Grid Code (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 and ultimately how they rate service performance.

Executive summary

Overall perceptions of NGESO in relation to the Grid Code have generally decreased in 2019:

- 46% (17 respondents out of 37) are now satisfied with the overall service provided to their organisation in relation to the Grid Code (vs 66% in 2018, 23 respondents).

- 50% (17 respondents) of those aware of support are satisfied with the provision of support in their interaction with the Grid Code (down from 73%, 24 respondents).

- Only 5% (two respondents) believe that the service provided in relation to the Grid Code has improved from the previous year, compared to 20% (7 respondents) in 2018.

- Looking further into specific aspects of interaction and communication with NGESO regarding the Grid Code, there are a number of areas to address, most urgently these being:
  - Ease of interpreting the information received about the Grid Code (only 35% cite it as easy).

- o Ease of understanding the emails requires improvement, with 45% agreeing they are easy to understand.
- o The support provided by their Code Administrator to understand what modifications mean for them (with just 32% satisfied).

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."

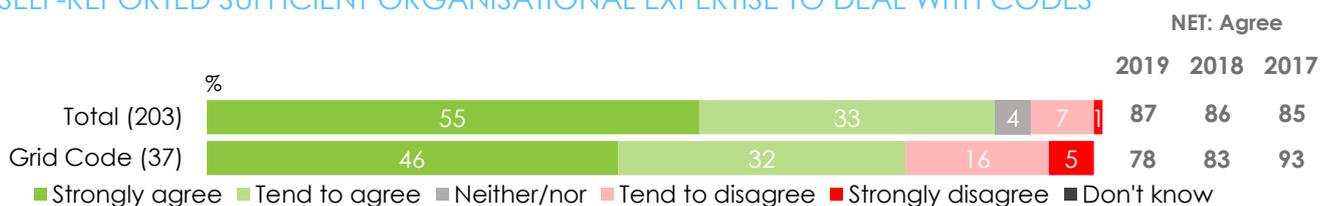### SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION' SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	**50-249**	**250-999**	**1,000+**
Total (203)	24%	15%	14%	45%
Grid Code (37)	35%	16%	11%	35%

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	**6-9 years**	**10+ years**
Total (203)	15%	7%	78%
Grid Code (37)	11%	14%	76%

SELF-REPORTED SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES

NET: Agree

	%					2019	2018	2017
Total (203)	55	33	4	7	1	87	86	85
Grid Code (37)	46	32		16	5	78	83	93

■ 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)	63	70	64
Grid Code (37)	51	71	67

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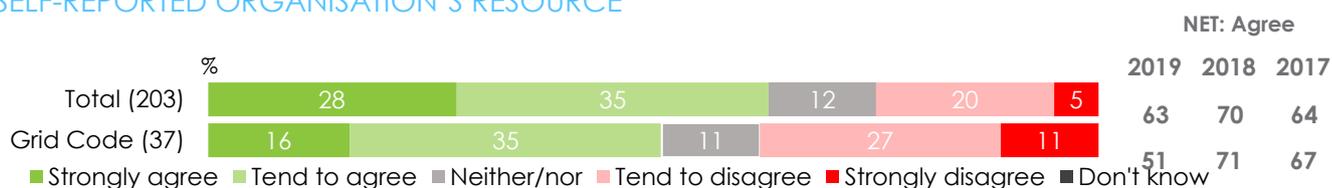
Q2. And to what extent would you agree or disagree that you have enough resource within your organisation to sufficiently deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

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.
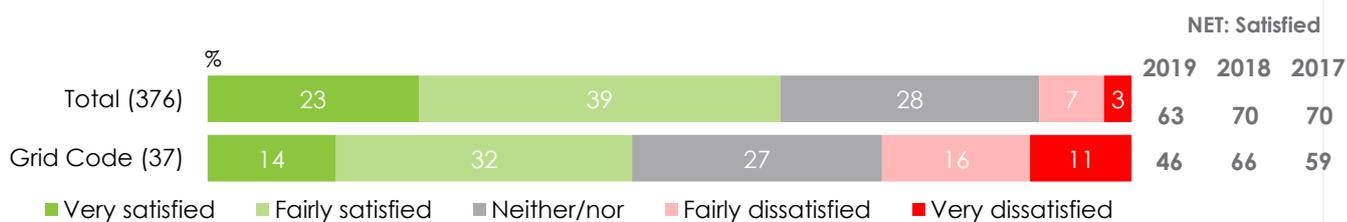
Key findings

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).

While in 2018 NGESO was rated relatively well in relation to the Grid Code, 2019 shows a decline in opinion; with an increasing proportion claiming dissatisfaction with the provision of support from NGESO in respect of their interactions with the Grid Code.
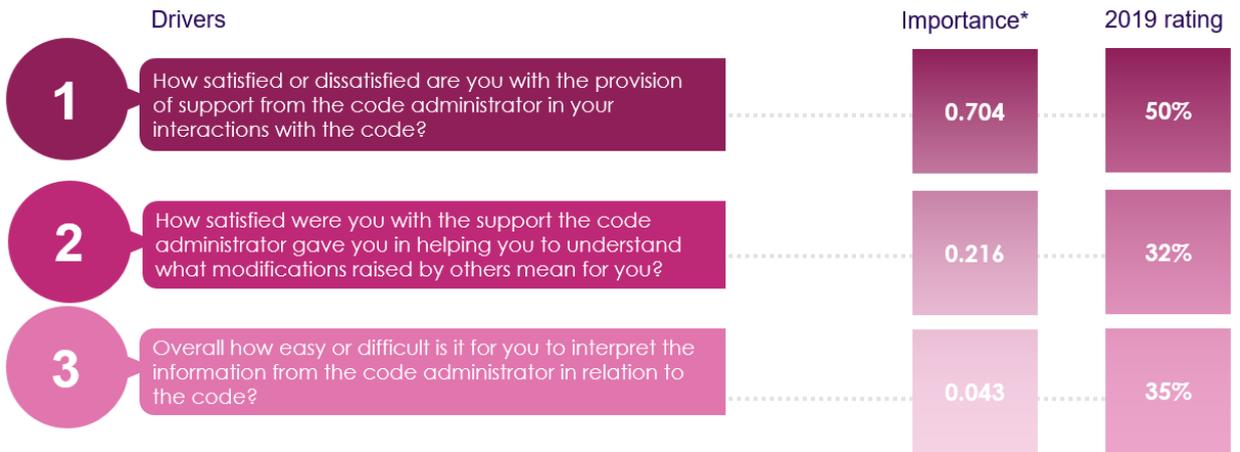
OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all organisational level, we see a shift in reported overall satisfaction, down from 70% in 2018 to 63% in 2019. This pattern is also apparent for the Grid Code, with satisfaction now at 46% overall (17 respondents). Levels of dissatisfaction have also increased from 6% to 27% (10 respondents).

	NET: Satisfied		
	2019	2018	2017
Total (376)	63	70	70
Grid Code (37)	46	66	59

Legend: ■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very 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 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:

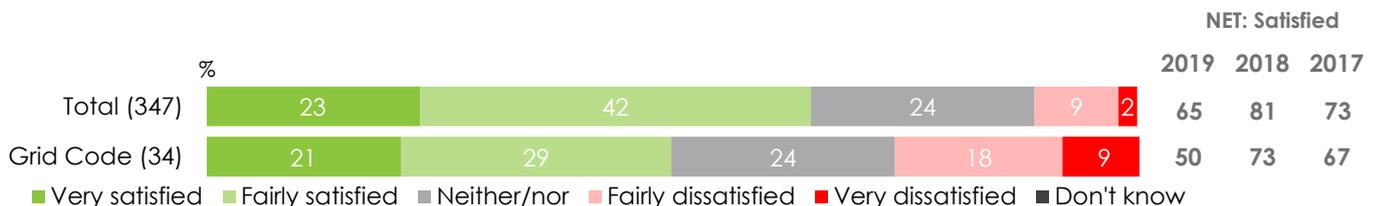| Drivers		Importance*	2019 rating
1	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the code?	0.704	50%
2	How satisfied were you with the support the code administrator gave you in helping you to understand what modifications raised by others mean for you?	0.216	32%
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	35%

* 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 Grid Code.

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 Grid Code. 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). The same pattern is apparent for NGESO customers, with 46% of those aware of support (17 respondents) satisfied with the provision of support in relation to their interaction with the Grid Code (down from 73%).

						NET: Satisfied		
%						2019	2018	2017
Total (347)	23	42	24	9	2	65	81	73
Grid Code (34)	21	29	24	18	9	50	73	67

■ 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.

Organisations acknowledge that there have been some improvements, however their implementation could have been better managed:
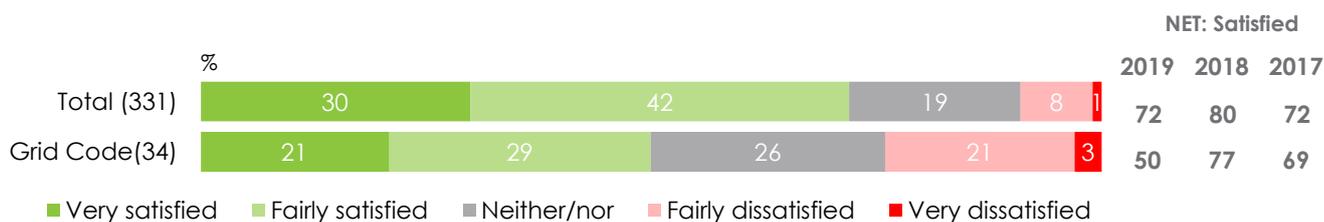
"Made changes to the documentation: it's like a guide, this is helpful but would have been good to ask parties to contribute just to not lead to misinterpretation."

Additionally, concerns have been raised that the loss of staff has adversely impacted the provision of support:

"Seem to have lost lots of experienced staff."

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%. Considering the support received when requested from NGESO in relation to the Grid Code, organisations also show reduced advocacy in 2019, now with just 50% of those requesting support being satisfied (17 respondents).

				NET: Satisfied		
				2019	**2018**	**2017**
Total (331)	Very satisfied 30	Fairly satisfied 42	Neither/nor 19	Fairly dissatisfied 8	Very dissatisfied 1	**72** **80** **72**
Grid Code(34)	21	29	26	21	3	**50** **77** **69**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied
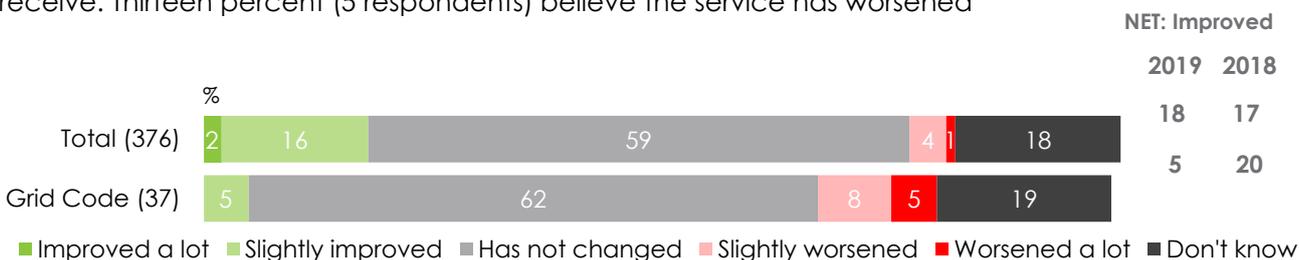
Q13/Q13b. And when you request support from the code administrator in relation to the <code> how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you receive? Base: All responses for those proactively seeking support (number of responses shown in brackets).

Organisations are positive around some of the support services provided:

"There is someone technical I can call if I have any questions."

"Direct contact is good (mostly involved). Good relationship with them."

"Helpful when confused by things."

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

At an overall level, organisations tend to believe that the service they receive has not changed over the last year. However, for the Grid Code, while a similar amount perceive no change (as per 2018), the level of improvement has notably reduced, with only 5% (two respondents), rather than 20% of respondents last year indicating that there have been improvements in the service they receive. Thirteen percent (5 respondents) believe the service has worsened

				NET: Improved	
				2019	**2018**
				18	**17**
Total (376)	Improved a lot 2 Slightly improved 16	Has not changed 59	Slightly worsened 4 Worsened a lot 1 Don't know 18	**5**	**20**
Grid Code (37)	5	62	8	5	19

■ Improved a lot ■ Slightly improved ■ Has not changed ■ Slightly worsened ■ Worsened a lot ■ Don't know
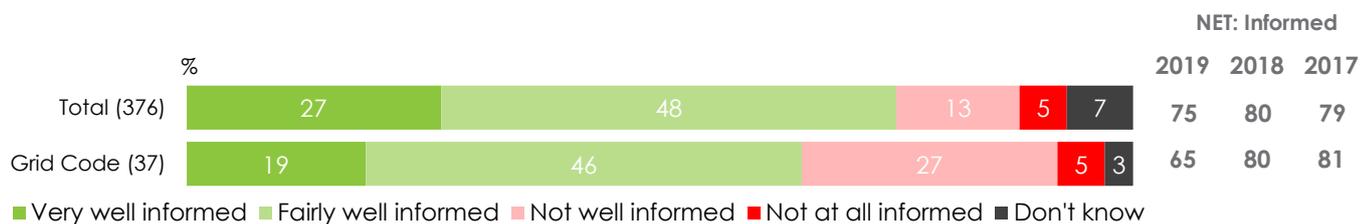
Q29b. Thinking about the service that you have received in relation to the <code> in the last year, would you say it has improved, remained the same or got worse? All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations claim to receive information about the Grid Code once a week and for 61% (20 out of 33 respondents receiving information) this frequency is about right. However, for 24% of respondents (eight respondents) information is not received often enough.
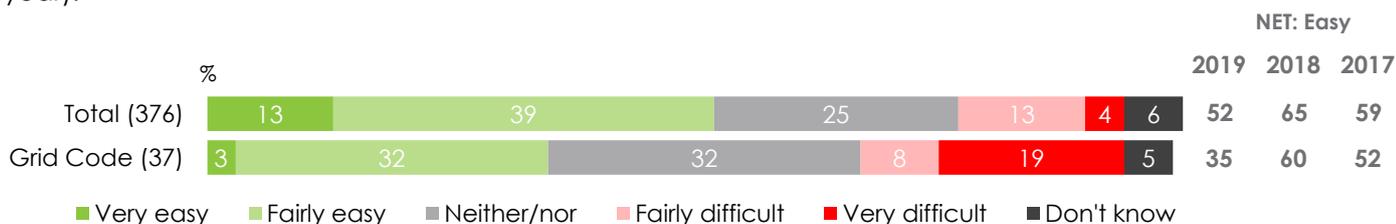
KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

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). NGESO's performance in this area, which has historically been very good, shows a decline in 2019, with 65% (24 respondents) feeling informed (vs 80% in 2018).

						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
Grid Code (37)	19	46	27	5	3	65	80	81

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, though more striking, decrease is seen among organisations rating NGESO, with only 35% (13 respondents) finding Grid Code information easy to understand, and an increasing and sizeable minority 27% (10 respondents) disagreeing (almost twice as many as last year).

							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
Grid Code (37)	3	32	32	8	19	5	35	60	52

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).
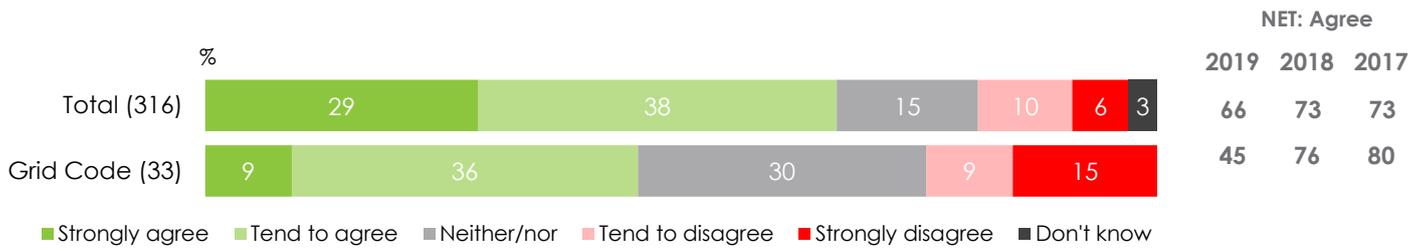
Perceptions of direct services

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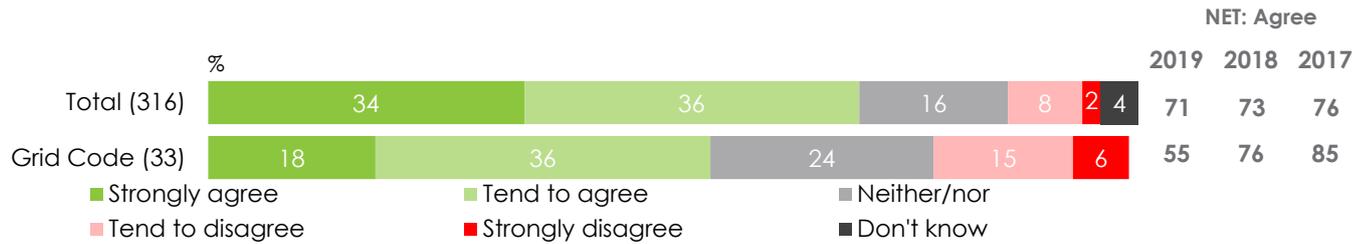
Organisations value email communications that are succinct, clear and give direction on the action (if any) that they may need to take as a result. Some organisations called for more dynamic provision of information; with email used to provide topline information and complementing digital platforms used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

Forty five percent agree that NGESO's emails for the Grid Code are easy to understand (15 respondents) and are clear when action needs to be taken (55%, 18 respondents). This a notable (and continuing) decrease from 2018. Furthermore, 24% do not believe emails are easy to understand and 21% that it is not clear when action needs to be taken (eight and seven respondents respectively).

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'

NET: Agree

	2019	2018	2017
Total (316)	66	73	73
Grid Code (33)	45	76	80

%

Total (316): 29 | 38 | 15 | 10 | 6 | 3

Grid Code (33): 9 | 36 | 30 | 9 | 15

■ 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)	71	73	76
Grid Code (33)	55	76	85

%

Total (316): 34 | 36 | 16 | 8 | 2 | 4

Grid Code (33): 18 | 36 | 24 | 15 | 6

■ 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).

There was specific concern around emails being inconsistent before meetings:

"If it's on the web – you need to know it's there. So rely on email prompts. But sometimes you don't get the information before the meeting – it is just not consistent. "
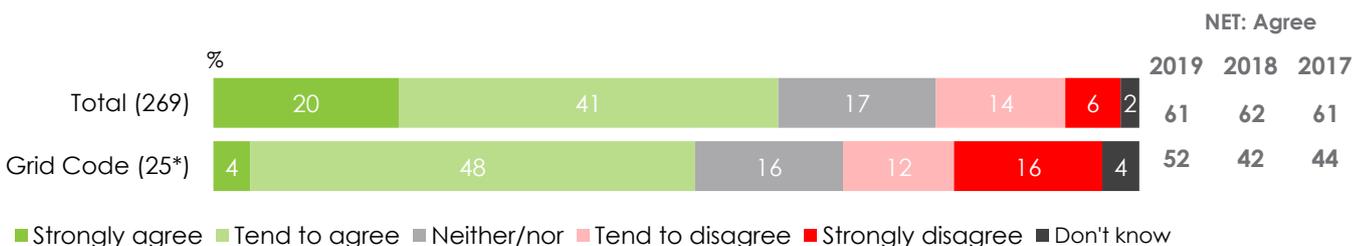
WEBSITES

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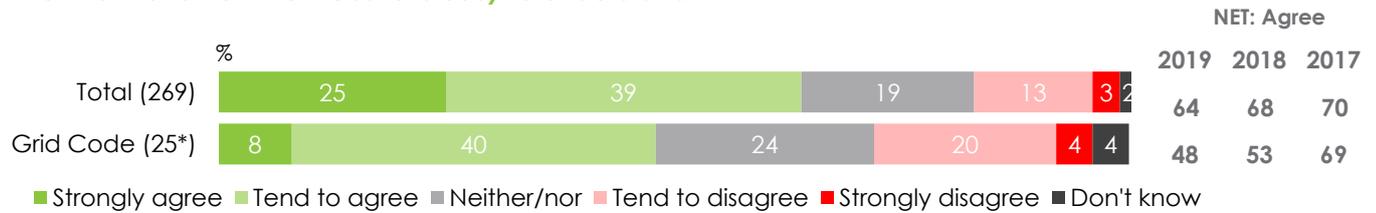
Customers feel it is critical that information that is on websites is kept up to date and is also easy to find. This continues to be an area that most Code Administrators need to work on; at an overall level, 61% indicate they are able to easily find information on the website.

In relation to the NGESO website specifically, more organisations feel that the information is easy to find in 2019 than seen previously (with a corresponding decrease in those disagreeing). Agreement with ease of understanding has again decreased slightly, now 48% (12 out of 25 accessing website).

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

NET: Agree

	2019	2018	2017
Total (269)	61	62	61
Grid Code (25*)	52	42	44

%

Total (269): 20 | 41 | 17 | 14 | 6 | 2

Grid Code (25*): 4 | 48 | 16 | 12 | 16 | 4

■ 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**
Grid Code (25*)			**48**	**53**	**69**

■ 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 is a perception that the website is not always up to date:

"Main access to documents is through the website – it's just not up to date sometimes – either not there or more than one working group page & calendar page – one links to the other but they don't always align."
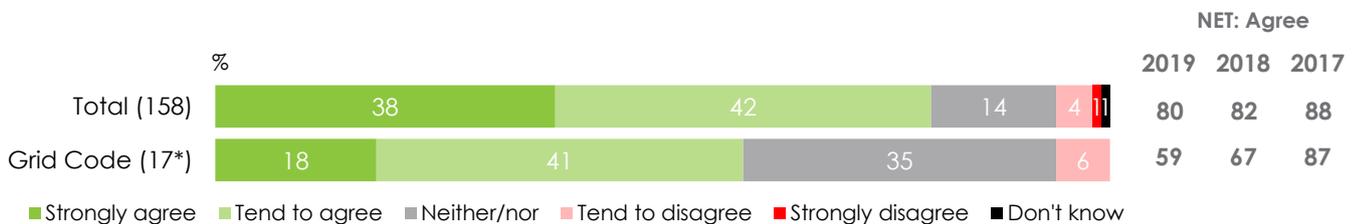
MEETINGS

At an overall level, 42% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. Forty six percent of Grid Code respondents (17 respondents) had attended a meeting or workshop in the last 12 months.
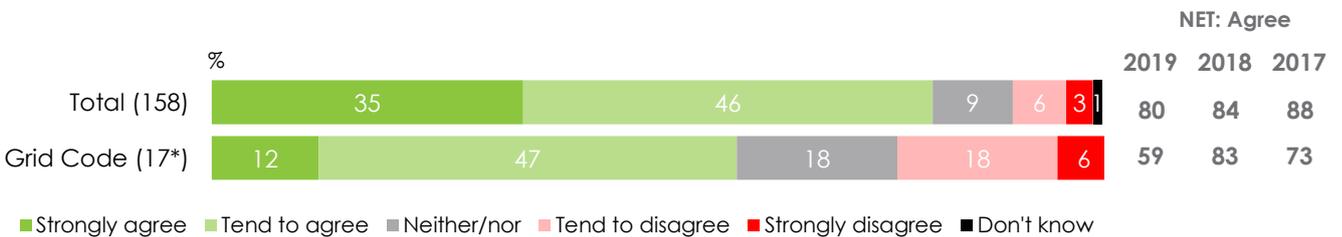
Among those who have attended meetings, 59% (10 of 17 attending) feel it is easy to participate in the discussion, with the same proportion believing the materials they receive for the Grid Code meetings are sufficiently detailed; however, the latter has decreased notably, down from 83% in 2018.

Their reaction around teleconference facilities has improved slightly, with 59% agreeing they are fit for purpose.
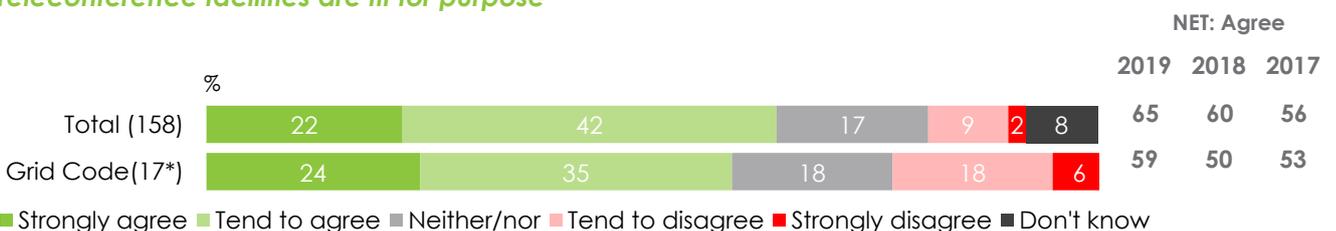
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'

			NET: Agree		
			2019	**2018**	**2017**
Total (158)			**80**	**82**	**88**
Grid Code (17*)			**59**	**67**	**87**

■ 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)			**80**	**84**	**88**
Grid Code (17*)			**59**	**83**	**73**

■ 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)			**65**	**60**	**56**
Grid Code (17*)			**59**	**50**	**53**

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

Low base

Organisations highlight aspects of meetings and teleconferences that could be improved upon:

"You would expect that papers would be out 5 working days before the meeting. They don't always achieve this and it is hit and miss. It wasn't bad a year ago, then it got a lot worse. In the last 2-3 months it got better again, following the coming and going of staff."

"Management of meetings is not bad but depends on how good the chairman is."
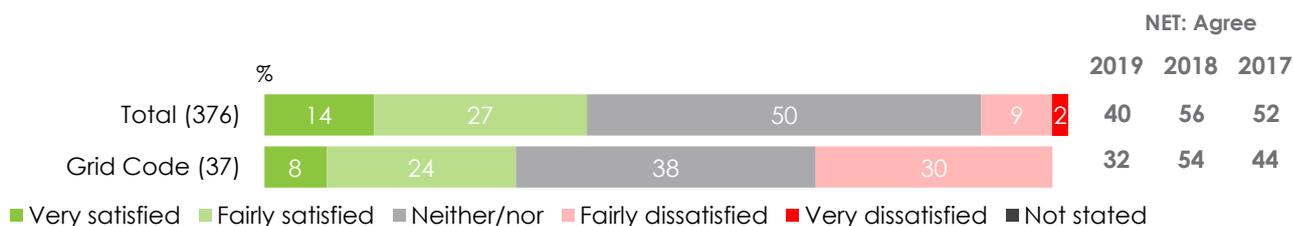
"Teleconferences are hit and miss. The audibility is too quiet with background noise/echoes. It depends on the hosting room."

RAISING AND UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Eleven percent (four organisations) have raised Grid Code modifications within the last 12 months. Three of the four organisations found the process of raising a modification easy.

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

This decline is also apparent among Grid Code customers, with only 32% (12 respondents) satisfied with the support NGESO give them to help them understand modifications in relation to the Grid Code, and a similar proportion (30%, 11 respondents) fairly dissatisfied.

						NET: Agree		
%						2019	2018	2017
Total (376)	14	27	50	9	2	40	56	52
Grid Code (37)	8	24	38	30		32	54	44

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Not stated

An organisation put forward a specific suggestion around modifications:

"Some mods have dozens of documents. You could make it easier by zipping files rather than clicking on 20 separate links. I've raised this with them for 5 years – for a month they will start doing it and then stop doing it."

"Publishing of information on modifications is most important to me. Maintain really good records of all docs involved but they are not as good as they should be."

ACCESSION PROCESS

Organisations do not accede to the Grid Code, and so no findings are presented here.

Conclusions

Perceptions of NGESO in relation to the Grid Code have tended to show poorer performance compared to previous years, with organisations now less satisfied with the support provision.

However, positively, there has been an improvement in perceptions of the website (an issue raised last year), with more organisations now agreeing that it is easy to find the information they need. Additionally, the teleconference facilities are also more likely now seen as fit for purpose.

More specifically, areas to focus on going forward would be:

- Ease of interpreting the information provided about the Grid Code
- Ease of understanding the emails that are received by the organisations (and information on the website)
- The support provided to understand what modifications mean for them

Furthermore, as well as prioritising clarity of communications, considering action-oriented materials, i.e. the level of information provided prior to meetings and when action needs to be taken from emails, are of key secondary focus, as these have both notably decreased in 2019.

"They're not awful but they're not perfect either."

A number of comments have been made relating to there being a conflict of interest with the National Grid holding more than one role. It is not clear, however, exactly what these concerns relate to or whether they are concerns about the split between the Transmission Owner and System Operation roles (which are now legally separated) or about the split between the NGESO's role as both the code administrator and a signatory to the code it administers. As such no conclusions have been drawn from these comments but we do recommend further investigation into the concerns about the conflict of interest.

"The conflict of interest that National Grid has is becoming more apparent whereby they are commenting on things and from a perspective they shouldn't be."