Change & Release Management Related Obligations

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# Introduction

This document forms part of the Service Management Standard and describes a number of obligations placed on the Supplier with regard to change management and release and deployment management.

The document has two parts:

Part A - Change Assurance: This describes the assurance obligations applicable to Changes proposed by the Supplier to a Catalogue Solution under clause 22 of the Catalogue Agreement and applies to both Type 1 and Type 2 Catalogue Solutions.

Part B – Change deployment approval: This describes the live deployment approval process and obligations applicable to Changes proposed by the Supplier to a Catalogue Solution under clause 22 of the Catalogue Agreement and applies to only Type 1 Catalogue Solutions.

The Catalogue Authority reserves the right to change, update and re-issue this document to suppliers by following the mechanisms referred to in clause 21 of the Catalogue Agreement.

Unless defined herein, any capitalised terms used in this document shall have the meanings ascribed to them in ITILV4 or a successor, the Catalogue Agreement or Service Management Standard in that order of precedence.

# PART A – CHANGE ASSURANCE

## Change assurance obligations

Where the Supplier is intending to make changes to a Catalogue Solution in accordance with clause 22 of the Catalogue Agreement the obligations set out in this Part A apply (to both Type 1 and Type 2 Catalogue Solutions) with regard to the required assurance activity.

The Supplier must submit Changes to a Catalogue Solution initiated by the Supplier under clause 22 of the Catalogue Agreement to additional Capability assessment and/or Compliance Testing (as applicable) in the manner set out in the Catalogue Onboarding Process ancillary document where:

1. the Change necessitates (on the basis of a reasonable and balanced determination) a variation to the evidence previously provided under the Catalogue assurance and/or compliance testing regime for that Catalogue Solution; or
2. the testing of the Change requires the involvement of the Catalogue Authority in accordance with one or more of the Standards or a Model Interface Licence applicable to that Catalogue Solution.

Where additional Capability assessment and/or Compliance Testing (as applicable) is required for a Change in accordance with paragraph above, the Supplier must submit a Release Scope Definition to the Service Management Agent setting out:

1. a high-level description of the proposed Change;
2. the drivers for the proposed Change;
3. a high-level description of any changes required to the evidence previously provided under the Catalogue assurance and/or compliance testing regime for that Catalogue Solution required as a result of the Change in question;
4. a description of the capability assessment and/or compliance testing activity required for the changes set out under item c);
5. a high-level description of the activation / deployment and back out approaches and timescales;
6. any key deployment related risks;
7. a target assurance and activation / deployment timeline; and
8. any other relevant information.

Once drafted, the Supplier shall issue the Release Scope Definition by email to [gpitservicemgnt@nhs.net](mailto:gpitservicemgnt@nhs.net) or upload to a secure portal for review.

The Supplier:

* accepts that the live deployment of a Change covered by this Part A must not occur until the relevant assurance and compliance testing has been successfully completed; and
* shall issue the Release Scope Definition for review and approval at the earliest appropriate opportunity and shall ensure that, in planning the live deployment date, a reasonable time is allocated to (a) the review and approval of the Release Scope Definition and (b) the execution of the anticipated assurance and compliance testing required for the Change.

As part of the review of the Release Scope Definition the parties will agree the assurance and/or support to be provided by the Catalogue Authority and the timetable associated with that activity (and each party will use its reasonable efforts to comply with the same).

Following approval of the Release Scope Definition by the Catalogue Authority, the parties shall collaborate to execute their responsibilities as set out in the Release Scope Definition.

A failure to attain compliance approval from the Catalogue Authority for a Change (where such approval is required in accordance with this Part A) prior to the deployment of such Change into the live environment will be deemed to be a breach of the Catalogue Agreement and the status of the Catalogue Solution in question will be deemed non-compliant until the Catalogue Authority determines that the Change is compliant.

# PART B – CHANGE DEPLOYMENT APPROVAL

## Requirements for Supplier RFC Submission

The Supplier must submit changes associated with Type 1 Catalogue Solutions for activation / deployment approval by the Service Management Agent in accordance with this Part B.

Where a Change to a Type 1 Catalogue Solution meets one or more of the criteria listed in the table below the Supplier must submit a Request for Change to the Service Management Agent for approval to deploy the same in accordance with the remainder of this Part B.

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| **Classification** | **Criteria** |
| Clinical risk | Any Change which has a material potential to result in a clinical risk arising where the clinical risk assessment (taking into account a combination of the severity of harm to a patient and the likelihood of occurrence of that harm) results in a hazard risk score of =>4 (unacceptable level of risk) as per DCB0129 Implementation Guidance (section 4.4). |
| Information governance, including Information security, risk | Any Change which has a material potential to result in: (i) a material breach of the information governance obligations; and/or (ii) a material data security breach. |
| Interoperability | Any Change which has a material potential to result in a loss of availability and/or reduced responsiveness and/or loss of function in respect of any Interface within the scope of the Catalogue Solution (which are as set out in the Interoperability Standard) which has been activated by any given Consumer Supplier. |
| National Services | Any Change which has a material potential to result in a material disruption to the National Services (and/or their replacements and/or any new national services introduced via the Standards Roadmap (as specified in the Interoperability Standard)). |
| BCDR | Any Change which has a material potential to (i) result in loss of availability of the Catalogue Solution and/or (ii) materially disrupt planned BCDR testing activities and/or (iii) a material adaptation of the Supplier’s BCDR plans being required. |

In considering whether, or not, a Change has a ’material potential’ to result in any of the scenarios outlined above the Supplier shall act reasonably and shall consider both the likelihood of the relevant event occurring as well as its potential impact.

## RFC Timescales

### Normal Change – (3 Working Days)

All Normal Changes meeting the criteria set out in section 3 must be submitted to the Service Management Agent at least 3 Working Days ahead of the scheduled date and time of the planned deployment of the Change. This is to allow the Service Management Agent an adequate amount of time to review and impact assess the RFC.

The deployment date must be a minimum of 3 Working Days after the final version of the RFC is submitted to, and receipt has been acknowledged by, the Service Management Agent.

### **Emergency Change – (eCAB ASAP)**

Where a Change meeting the criteria set out in section 3 is deemed to be necessary to address an HSSI and this has been discussed at an ECAB (this incorporates a NHS England Service Bridge led call) it is deemed to be an Emergency Change within this document. The RFC for an Emergency Change must be provided to the Service Management Agent within 24 hours of the implementation of the Change. Retrospective Change – (24 Hours)

Where a Change meeting the criteria set out in section 3 has been implemented by a Supplier without notification to the Service Management Agent it is deemed to be a Retrospective Change within this document. The RFC for a Retrospective Change must be presented to the Service Management Agent at the earliest opportunity. Service Management Agent RFC Decision

Where a deployment RFC requires approval by the Service Management Agent, the Service Management Agent shall provide an Accept/Reject decision (as appropriate) to the Supplier by no later than 17:00 on the Working Day before the proposed implementation start date within the RFC (provided that at least 3 Working Days’ notice has been given by the Supplier when sending the RFC).

This is intended to allow the Supplier sufficient time to secure any required resources or to send, in respect of the relevant Change, the appropriate communications to the relevant Service Recipients and/or other suppliers as appropriate.

Emergency changes must be submitted within 24 hours of any change being made.

## Guidance for RFC Completion

The Supplier must submit all RFCs using the Customer Portal ensuring all mandatory fields are complete with detail plans, the link for this is below:

[Customer Service Portal - Customer Support (service-now.com)](https://nhsdigitallive.service-now.com/csm)

## RFC Process

Following receipt of an RFC:

1. The Service Management Agent’s Change Management Team will promptly send an email of acknowledgement to the Supplier when the RFC has been received.
2. Internal stakeholders within the Service Management Agent will review the RFC according to their areas of expertise. This may include, but is not limited to - Security, Technical Architects, Clinical Safety, Solution Assurance, Subject Matter Experts and Service Owners.
3. The perceived risk and potential impact of the RFC will be assessed taking into consideration other national systems and HSSI’s that are ongoing.
4. A CAB Quorum may be convened if there is deemed to be an impact to clinical safety, the RFC is time constrained, complex or requires further discussion and understanding. The Supplier will be required to provide appropriate representation (including, where relevant, technical and clinical staff) on these calls.
5. Following the review cycle an approval or rejection will be sent to the Supplier.
6. Once approval is issued, the Supplier is authorised to proceed according to the approved implementation plan and during the agreed implementation window stated.
7. Any slippage to the implementation plan must be agreed with the Service Management Agent (such agreement not to be unreasonably withheld).

If any such slippages occur (and are not notified to, and agreed with, the Service Management Agent), and as a result the RFC no longer adheres to the approved implementation plan, or the Change is deployed outside of the approved implementation window, or the Change does not adhere to the other requirements detailed in this document, then the Service Management Agent will classify the Change as being unauthorised and will notify the Supplier accordingly.

## Change Freezes

The Service Management Agent may periodically implement ‘Change Freeze’ periods during exceptionally busy periods for the wider NHS, usually during Winter pressures and Christmas periods. This process implements enhanced scrutiny and approval for any changes assessed by the Supplier as requiring approval (i.e. those requiring RFC approval for deployment as described in section 3 of this document) and is directed by organisational policy.

This requires consideration when planning changes for all services ensuring that the necessary resource to support these activities are available, and there is an operational need to make the change at this time, restricting non-essential significant change activity that could risk the availability of the services provided.

Any Changes requiring assessment and approval by the Service Management Agent during this period will be deemed an Emergency Change and will be subject to enhanced levels of approval.

Where a Change Freeze is required by the Service Management Agent and the Supplier can demonstrate to the Service Management Agent’s reasonable satisfaction that the Change Freeze will result in a loss of the Compliant Status of one or more Catalogue Solutions or it will result in a material negative impact on the Supplier (which it cannot, using its reasonable endeavours, mitigate against), then the parties shall collaborate with the objective of addressing such consequences.

## Planned Downtime

Planned Downtime is subject to the requirements and obligations set out in Appendix 2 to the Service Management Standard.

## Release and Maintenance Plan (RAMP)

The Release and Maintenance Plan will be produced by the Service Management Agent and will contain a forward-looking schedule of all planned Changes across the services within the remit of the Service Management Agent for the following 12 months. This plan is intended to aid the Service Management Agent with managing clashes between complex and high-risk Changes, or those that would impact each other as well as with resource planning.

The Supplier must maintain a RAMP spreadsheet and enter all relevant Changes that it is aware of that are associated with Type 1 Catalogue Solutions (i.e. those Changes which meet one or more of the five criteria as described in section 3 above such that they require RFC approval for deployment as described in section 3) for the following 12 months. Each entry must have a date, but these can be proposed target dates for Changes that are further into the future.

Suppliers must submit an up to date copy of their RAMP spreadsheet, weekly, and by midday every Wednesday (or confirm no changes have been made to their RAMP) to [liveservices.central-changemgmt@nhs.net](mailto:liveservices.central-changemgmt@nhs.net) using the template below or alternatively by providing access to an online and up to date dashboard that holds the same fields as the spreadsheet below.

