**REC Podcast Transcript – 24th Jan 2024**

**Updates on Key Change Proposals**

***Paul Rocke***

*Hello and welcome to the latest episode of the REC Podcast – the bite-sized show that brings you the latest news from the Retail Energy Code. I’m your host Paul Rocke, the Head of Communications within the Code Manager team.*

*Today I’m joined by Sam Briggs, the REC Change Delivery Manager, along with Change Analysts Caroline Freimuller and Harriet Truss. Together they’ll be providing an overview of some of the interesting changes currently in flight.*

*Welcome Sam, before we get stuck into the change details, I thought that the start of a New Year would present a good opportunity for you to provide the listeners with a quick summary of all the Change Proposals we are working on*.

**Sam Briggs**

Hi Paul, thanks for inviting me. Well, yes, we’ve certainly got a lot going on. We’ve now accepted 159 Change Proposals into the REC since we started. This includes:

* 11 Change Proposals where we are carefully assessing the impact of the Change before we proceed.
* 21 Change Proposals where the Analysts are conducting their Initial Assessments.
* And 18 Change Proposals currently at Solution Development which are being carefully managed by the Analysts.

Once the Analysts have completed their Initial Assessments, they will continue to progress these changes with the agreement and support of the proposer.

We also have four Change Proposals at Preliminary Assessment, and we have one change currently out for Consultation. That is R0154 (Performance Assurance Catalogue V5.1), and we have a Change Proposal that has just been approved by the Authority which is R0043 (Commissioning of Works using shared Meter Operator services by the Crowded Meter Room Co-ordinator (CMRC)). There’s also one Change Proposal which many of you may be familiar with which is on hold at the proposer’s request R0053 (24/7 Emergency Metering Service).

***PR***

*Well thanks Sam, it certainly seems like there’s plenty happening at the moment – are you getting the traction you want with all the Change Proposals?*

**SB**

Absolutely, we’ve published three Final Assessment reports this January already,

1. R0064 (Creating a Meter Operator Agent and MOCoP Installer),
2. R0093 (Uplift to CSS Maximum Demand Volumes during MHHS Migration Period) and
3. R0147 (Prepayment Levilisation).

And we have 7 changes currently Awaiting Implementation which are:

1. R0043 (Commissioning of Works using shared Meter Operator services by the Crowded Meter Room Co-Ordinator (CMRC))
2. R0044 (MHHS Programme Changes required to Central Switching Service),
3. R0063 (Addition of key information to all Service Now tickets),
4. R0071 (DCC access to EES and GES),
5. R0083 (Changes to Supply Number Format for MHHS),
6. R0097 (Consequential Change for CSS Smart Meter Data Retriever Appointments), and
7. R0103 (Central provision of DCC Technical Contacts for requesting test certificates).

Overall, we’ve successfully implemented 55 Change Proposals so far and the number is ever increasing. You can hear how much work is happening within the REC Change Team and everyone is working hard to progress these changes at pace without compromising our high-quality standards.

***PR***

*Those are fantastic numbers Sam, of course, our listeners can find details of all of those changes by visiting the REC Portal. What support do you need from others in the industry to continue working at this pace?*

**SB**

It’s critical that we have open and regular communication with our proposers and that we agree success criteria with them in the early stages. My team and I would always welcome a phone call to discuss a change or an issue that anyone feels needs resolving.

We made great progress in 2023 increasing engagement in a number of ways:

* Conducting technical and non-technical workshops to find solutions;
* Attending panels and committees and listening to feedback regarding changes;
* Attending the REC Issues Group to raise issues and seek clarification on aspects that are important to industry and consumers;
* And, of course, sharing Change and Release Podcasts, conducting webinars, and posting Linkedin updates.

In 2024 I’d like to encourage the industry and consumers to support me and the REC Change Team by timely completion of Impact Assessments and as well as improving the quality of the feedback by:

* Proactively engaging with our Operational Account Managers here at the REC;
* Increasing engagement when changes are out for consultation. It’s really important to understand when you’re supportive of a change and the proposed solution;
* Attending workshops and suggesting solutions where possible;
* Sharing details on both the tangible and intangible benefits of the changes we’re making; and
* Providing feedback on the lasting benefits of changes once they have been implemented.

***PR***

*Thank you for that update, Sam. It sounds like the team are working really hard and are delivering excellent results for consumers and the industry. I believe Caroline and Harriet are going to briefly cover a couple of changes that will have significant benefits for consumers?*

**SB**

Yes, Paul that’s right. Before they do, I’d just like to re-iterate that improving consumer outcomes is one of our key objectives and that whenever we receive a change one of the first things we do is to investigate the impact on the consumer. With that in mind, Caroline will now provide an example of one of the changes we’re working on which will have significant benefits for consumers with pre-payment meters who are looking to switch.

**Caroline Freimuller**

Hi, and thank you Sam.  Yes, I’m going to talk about R0037 which relates to the Prepayment Credit Balance & Debt Transfer Process, which was proposed by Andy Knowles at Utilita. This Change Proposal seeks to create an agile, efficient, and consumer-centric solution for the transfer of credit or debt balances as part of a smart prepayment Switch. I’m the lead Analyst on the change and I have been supported by Lorna Mallon, who is our Principal Regulatory Consultant. Together we have been collaborating on this change with Ofgem, the energy industry and the proposer to find a solution that will meet these consumer needs.

So, what do customers with pre-payment meters want when considering whether to switch? As with all consumers, they want to be able to access the tariff best suited to their needs and preferences. But they also want to be confident they can benefit from a switch even if they have recently topped up their meter. In particular, they want to continue to be able to access the credit on their meter without needing to top up again with their new Supplier.

Our next step during January and February will be to set up meetings with Service Providers and arrange for the Service Providers to complete the appropriate Impact Assessments.

***PR***

*Thank you, Caroline. And Harriet one of your changes, R0147, also relates to pre-payment meters.*

**Harriet Truss**

Hi Paul, yes that’s right. R0147 is a change relating to the levelisation of prepayment standing charges which will also have significant customer benefits.

This Change Proposal seeks to introduce the necessary governance and reconciliation arrangements into the Retail Energy Code. Reconciliation has been developed by Ofgem, as part of the overall Levelisation Policy to mitigate the impact on Domestic Suppliers in levelling the cost of standing charges that Domestic Consumers face depending on how they pay their energy bills, specifically for this change through prepayment meters or by direct debits. These arrangements will be know going forward as Payment Method Levelisation Reconciliation, or PML Reconciliation for short. R0147 will support the proposed licence modifications that will deliver the Levelisation Policy overall. The effective from date will be 1st April 2024 – that's subject to Authority direction on the licence modifications and R0147 itself in late February. The 1st April is the first date upon which all Domestic Suppliers must extract their portfolio data for the necessary reporting.

I have been working with RECCo, Ofgem, and the industry to progress this change at pace without compromising any of our quality standards.

This Change Proposal is an integral part of the first phase of levelisation focusing on Prepayment Meter (PPM) and Direct Debit (DD) standing charges from this April.  Ofgem expect to progress further policy development for a second phase of levelisation considering debt related costs and Standard Credit (SC) customers.  This stage would be implemented no earlier than October 2024.

***PR***

*Thank you, Harriet, it is clear that R0147 is a very important change. Before we wrap up today, Sam, any last words from you as the Change Delivery Manager?*

**SB**

We’re always looking for ways to improve, and as we would love to hear from anyone on what they’d like to see as part of future REC Change Podcasts, you can get in touch with us directly samantha.briggs@recmanager.co.uk, caroline.freimuller@recmanager.co.uk or harriet.truss@recmanager.co.uk.

***PR***

*Well thanks Sam, Caroline, and Harriet, it’s always a pleasure to speak to you about what is happening in the REC Change Team, it has been particularly helpful to have an overview of the two changes that you focused on.*

*For now, that’s all we have time for on this podcast. I hope you’ve enjoyed listening, and that it’s been useful to hear more about what is happening across the Change Team. In the next podcast Holly Law, our REC Change Release Manager will be providing an update on all the changes that are being released in February 2024 and I look forward to speaking with you then.*