

**ICL Pathway**

**PATHWAY RELEASE POLICY**

Ref: PA/STR/0003  
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**Document Title:** Pathway Release Policy

**Document Type:** Strategy Document

**Abstract:** This document defines the Pathway policy for the identification and planning of new Releases of Software and Data.

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**Author:** Jim Morley, updated by John Hunt

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# 1. DOCUMENT CONTROL

## 1.1 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Reason
0.1	20/10/96	First Draft for Pathway internal use only
0.2	30/10/96	Second draft following application of Pathway comments.
0.3	30/10/96	Draft for issue to the PDA.
0.4	12/11/96	Updated following PDA comments through Michael Purchase.
0.5	17/11/96	Updated following PDA & Sponsor comments received through Michael Purchase.
0.6	18/11/96	Further comments applied from Pathway and PDA.
0.7	24/11/96	Further comments applied from PDA.
1.0	26/11/96	Further comments applied from POCL.
1.1	27/11/96	Further comments applied from PDA, BA and POCL
1.2	28/11/96	Incorporates revisions following review by Pathway, PDA, POCL and BA
1.3	1/5/98	Brought up to date to recognise differences between infrastructure and new product releases
2.0	29/03/99	Applied comments and approved ready for issue

## 1.2 CHANGES FORECAST

None.

## 1.3 ABBREVIATIONS USED

The terms and abbreviations used in this document are those defined in the Authorities' Agreement (Schedule A01).

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## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 PURPOSE

This document describes Pathway's policy for identifying and planning the development of new Releases of Software and data. Pathway aims to do this in a manner that is responsive to the business needs of the Authorities and of Pathway, and which also conforms to the provisions of the Related Agreements. Overall, it aims to:

- a) establish the principles associated with releases of Pathway Services in the context of the Related Agreements;
- a) establish the principles for regular and on-going Releases of the Pathway systems and Services; including infrastructure releases, new product releases and maintenance releases;
- a) establish the provisions to bring in changes to functionality and new POCL Clients more quickly and frequently through Reference Data provided by POCL and/or Pathway and to explain the main qualifiers for doing this;
- a) establish indicative timescales for the different types of Release in order to put these into context, while recognising that these may need review when the underlying processes have been detailed.

The Pathway Release Policy is a key element in the process of establishing business change, and provides a set of principles for the timely and efficient introduction of new or improved products and Services. It will be supported by the development of associated processes covering the qualification and prioritisation of business opportunities, the definition of release content, service management and reference data management in conjunction with the Authorities. It is important to note that the commercial incentives to introduce new products and Service improvements as soon as possible commensurate with proper quality and other process controls are shared by Pathway and the Authorities alike. The Score Card mechanism rewards Pathway for volume and functionality, so it is very much in their interests to facilitate new Release content which meets business needs.

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## 2.2 DEFINITION OF RELEASE

The Related Agreements define a Release to be “a documented collection of Software and/or data provided by the CONTRACTOR to deliver a Service”, while the Requirement 476 makes it clear that the definition also includes Reference Data. Throughout this document releases will be referred to as either Software Releases or Reference Data Releases. It is possible that both Software Releases and Reference Data Releases require the co-ordinated implementation of other Infrastructure and Supporting Services and it will be seen that this requirement leads to further subdivisions of the definition of Releases later in the document.

## 2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Releases are required to support changes of Service delivery in order to implement business change. This business change will cover a wide range of scale and complexity. For example:

- i. adjustment to POCL trading variables, such as the price of a first class stamp;
- i. changes to business rules, e.g. whether or not to print a receipt for Automated Payment Transactions;
- i. amending the format or information provided for existing transaction types;
- i. franchising an existing outlet, or creating a new outlet;
- i. implementing a new client for an existing service;
- i. introducing a new client transaction or new product ;
- i. re-engineering services within the Authorities' own operations.

The time, risk and cost of implementing such business changes will vary, depending upon the extent of:

- a) systems development;
- a) type of reference data changes;
- a) changes to Infrastructure;
- a) changes to support Services, such as Help Desk;
- a) changes to documentation;

- a) training requirements;
- a) changes to marketing collateral;
- a) network changes and telecommunications;
- a) clients process re-engineering;
- a) and so on.

All these changes must be taken into account in the process of defining new business opportunities and setting priorities.

New business opportunities that require Releases will require a study to prepare and qualify the business case for the Authorities and for Pathway. This process has yet to be defined, but Pathway wishes to participate in this work in a spirit of business partnership. It is anticipated that successful studies will result in an agreed Business Requirements Definition document, and that this would form the basis of a formal change request.

## **2.4 CHANGE CONTROL**

The delivery of new or changed Software and Services beyond that committed in the Related Agreements is subject to Change Control under Clauses 101.3, and 101.4, and Schedule A05 of, the Authorities' Agreement, the POCL Agreement and the DSS Agreement. Changes that require modification to the Related Agreements are approved under Clause 101.3 while conforming changes are approved under Clause 101.4. All Releases except those described as Class 1 Reference Data Releases at section 3.2.1 below are subject to Change Control. It is emphasised here that a new Release is the instrument of underlying business change, and it is this business change that is primarily the subject of Change Control.

A proposed change becomes contractually committed upon the presentation of a Change Control Note (CCN) by Pathway and its approval by the Authorities. The CCN as defined by Schedule A05 requires a detailed explanation of the requirements and commercial impact of each change together with commitments to timescales and costs. The Score Card charging mechanism in Schedule A06 of the Related Agreements anticipates extension and re-engineering of products using the existing infrastructure, and is designed to provide Pathway with incentives for business

change. Section 3 provides further details on the expectation of Score Card changes for different types of Release.

It is not required that Pathway should commit resources or expenditure to the development and implementation of a change until the CCN has been approved. However it is possible that the lack of a complete specification of a Client's requirements, or the lack of commercial commitment by a Client at an early stage of negotiations, could prejudice the time to market for a new Service. Equivalent circumstances may also occur for BA. To help avoid such delays, Pathway proposes that the commercial risk that is inherent in incomplete requirements or Client commitment may be shared by the relevant Authority and Pathway by mutual agreement. Clearly the willingness of either party to accept such risks and the apportionment of the risk between them will be determined by their perception of the business opportunities. The acceptance and apportionment of such risks is the key to enable the time to market for new services to be shortened significantly for suitable business opportunities. The agreement of the acceptance and apportionment of any such risks, including any special conditions for the cancellation of the change, shall be recorded within the "Risk" section of the CCN.

The value of the potential risks of cancellation identified in the preceding paragraph will be judged by reference to existing Service Definitions and the Score Card in Schedule A06 of the Related Agreements. To the extent that new facilities fall within the scope of the Basic Score Card options, the potential cost of cancellation is envisaged to be low. Other additional Services (typically where no Score Card column exists) will require greater definition before commencement of work, so that Score Card revisions can be agreed. The level of assessed risk in such cases will generally be higher than for an extension of Basic Score Card unless such pre-work is completed and agreed in advance.

## **2.5 INITIAL AND FUTURE RELEASES**

A pilot system, "IGL", was delivered first into a single Post Office (September 1996) and then extended to 10 Post Offices (October 1996).

Schedule B7 of the Authorities' Agreement describes the initial

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functionality of the Services delivered in two Releases. These are henceforth referred to as Release 1 and Release 2.

Release 2 enables the CONTRACTOR and the AUTHORITIES to introduce additional functionality at around October 1997, the release will also be defined in a Release Content Description.

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1 was delivered in 3 phases: Release 1a (April 1997); Release 1b (May 1997); Release 1c (November 1997). Release 1 provided OBCS, BPS and MIS functionality, interfacing with a range of CAPS releases, and putting in place a foundation of infrastructure services to support later releases. It was delivered into 205 Post Offices.

New Release 2 will provide extended BPS and MIS functionality, introduces APS and EPOSS functionality, and passes information to POCL's interim TIP system for accounting and reconciliation purposes. New Release 2 forms the basis for initial contractual acceptance, and will support the mounting of the Live Trial and so the launching of National Rollout.

Release 2+ is planned to form the basis for concluding contractual acceptance. It will provide extended APS functionality, encompassing Smart Card functionality, and serves to sweep up the remaining outstanding contractual commitments from the original agreements.

Further releases will be required on an ongoing basis. A number of new products are already envisaged to extend the range of business functionality available at the counter. There will from time to time be a need to refresh or extend the supporting infrastructure services or to significantly enhance existing functionality. The ongoing maintenance of the services will necessitate fault correction and service level improvement.

### 3. CLASSIFICATION OF RELEASES

Releases are classified as either Software Releases or Reference Data Releases.

Software Releases fall into 3 main categories: Infrastructure Releases, New Product Releases, and Maintenance Releases. In this section we deal with Infrastructure Releases and New Product Releases. Maintenance Releases are dealt with separately under section 5.

Similarly, Reference Data Releases fall into a number of categories according to the impact and indicative timescales for implementation. It is emphasised that the classifications are not (and cannot be) exhaustive and the timescales are intended to be indicative only. Pathway will provide firm timescales for each Release, on a case by case basis, taking into account, amongst other things, the business priorities for the associated changes and relationships with changes to related Authorities and Client systems.

Similarly, Reference Data releases fall into a number of categories according to the impact and indicative timescales for implementation. It is emphasised that the classifications are not exhaustive and the timescales are intended to be indicative only. These classifications may be refined through the process of mapping specific types of business change to the proposed classes; and this will be developed through the associated process documents that will support the Release Policy and the clarification of business requirements for change. The classifications and processes may also be reviewed in the light of experience.

In the context of new business development and new automation of existing business, the aim is to develop generic functionality through Software Releases, and to introduce this functionality for clients through faster and more frequent Reference Data Releases. More generally, Pathway and the Authorities will work together to clarify requirements for anticipated types of change in order to achieve the best possible flexibility in the Services.

### **3.1 SOFTWARE RELEASES**

Software Releases result from a number of different requirements to change or extend the Services.

This may be simply in order to maintain them in good working order, addressing faults, and improving service levels. Such Maintenance Releases are dealt with separately under section 5.

It may be that one or more additional areas of business functionality are required, perhaps introducing an entirely new service. This would give rise to a New Product Release.

The supporting infrastructure services will periodically need to be refreshed, and existing functionality may on occasion require significant revision or enhancement, and this would give rise to an Infrastructure Release.

So, depending on the nature of the changes required, different types of release are demanded. The impact of such changes measured in terms of the time, effort and risk and cost of implementing the changes will vary widely from one change to another. , and these serve to characterise the different types of release.

Some changes will require extensive development effort and perhaps involve co-ordinated changes to Infrastructure and support Services, while others require only minor localised software development with little or no need for changes to the infrastructure or support services. Some can be implemented in a highly segregated manner, without disrupting too many of the existing components, whilst others may be highly invasive. As a consequence some may require little in the way of re-integration effort, whilst others may require a great deal. All will require extensive and systematic testing of the areas concerned.

Between these extremes there is a continuum of the possible scale and complexity of implementation of changes, but according to their essential characteristics, all will fall into their respective categories of either New Product Release or Infrastructure Release. This is important to recognise because certain changes clash in this respect and do not lie well together in the same release, typically giving rise to problems in implementation or migration. Such changes will need to be targeted for separate releases to avoid such problems. These various characteristics are described in more detail below.

The impact of software changes will be evaluated and stated in a Change Proposal (CP). Where a change is requested or recommended by the Authorities, then a Change Request (CR) and Change Control Note (CCN) would also be required.

Because of the development, integration and testing lead times involved with Infrastructure Releases, it is planned that a maximum of one a year could be implemented. Several New Product Releases may be planned each year, but in general releases should be spread out at least 3 months apart, and avoiding the busy Christmas period where POCL outlets are involved. Section 6 provides more information on timescales.

### **3.1.1 NEW PRODUCT RELEASES**

The principal characteristics of the changes that form a New Product Release are as follows:

- a) Non-invasive changes, requiring little or no revision to the existing components of the services already operating
- a) May be implemented by the addition of discrete components, perhaps entire new services, highly segregated from the existing components, requiring little or no re-configuring of the existing services and their interfaces
- a) May be tested largely in isolation
- a) Imposes little or no re-integration of existing services
- a) Involves little or no migration from existing services
- a) Can be implemented with a backward compatible path, allowing gradual introduction across the network of POCL outlets, and as such permits the operation of a limited pilot
- a) Usually introduces significant new business functionality, and so requires significant levels of user training, which implies a requirement for a gradual training programme
- a) Several can be developed in parallel by virtue of the segregation, are typically of short duration, and can be implemented flexibly, either as separate releases or combined as one release

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### **3.1.2 3.1.2 INFRASTRUCTURE RELEASES**

The principal characteristics of the changes that form an Infrastructure Release are as follows:

- a) Invasive changes, requiring significant revision to the existing components of the services already operating
- a) Major infrastructure components refreshed, or significant re-configuring of the existing services and their interfaces
- a) Extensive service-wide regression testing required
- a) Imposes significant levels of re-integration of existing services
- a) May involve migration from existing service state
- a) May introduce major enhancements to existing business functionality
- a) Cannot easily be developed in parallel because of the re-integration aspects, are typically of long duration, and must be implemented as planned and separate from other releases if possible. Because of the long lead-times such changes are generally best grouped together as one big release.

Beyond these defining characteristics of the changes that may comprise an Infrastructure Release, a number of further attributes serve to separate Infrastructure Releases into two distinct types referred to here as type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 Infrastructure Releases:

- I. No straightforward backward compatible path, prohibiting any gradual introduction across the network of POCL outlets
- I. Therefore does not readily support a limited Pilot or a gradual user training programme, which in general then implies that the changes involved require little or no user training
- I. Must be capable of delivery entirely 'down the wire' with little or no intervention at the outlet

Type 2 Infrastructure Releases:

- I. Can be implemented with a backward compatible path, allowing gradual introduction across the network of POCL outlets
- I. Therefore can support a limited Pilot and a gradual user training programme
- I. May be delivered/configured involving intervention at the outlet, though delivery 'down the wire' preferable.

It is clear that the nature of implementation of a Type 1 Infrastructure Release clashes violently with that of a New Product Release. The two cannot be mixed. Essentially one cannot be phased at the POCL outlet whilst the other can, with obvious implications regarding user training, software distribution/activation/configuration, and the feasibility of introducing the changes as a Pilot.

Care must be taken in planning the content of releases to avoid these clashes. Changes that force a Type 1 style of implementation cannot be targeted at the same release as New Product changes, and vice versa.

Sometimes the requirements of a particular set of business changes appear on the face of it to cause such a clash. A sort of 'catch 22' where, say, a gradual training programme and a pilot are deemed essential, but where associated infrastructure support services need to be significantly enhanced in a synchronised manner across a number of platforms including the counters. The solution is to de-couple the conflicting elements to avoid the clash, say, by laying down the supporting services in an infrastructure release in advance of introducing the new business functionality.

The following table, at a high level, gives a good rule of thumb for the various combinations when targeting changes at releases and in planning release schedules:

	New Product Release	Infrastructure Release - Type 1	Infrastructure Release - Type 2
New Product Release	OK	Incompatible	OK
Infrastructure Release - Type 1	Incompatible	OK	Care Required
Infrastructure Release - Type 2	OK	Care Required	OK

### 3.2 3.2 REFERENCE DATA RELEASES

Reference Data Releases are broken down into more detailed classes according to the impact and indicative timescales for implementation. The classes are numbered 1 to 5 in order of complexity and timescale to implement. The different classes are not mutually exclusive and compound Releases consisting of elements from different classes can be envisaged. In these circumstances the Release taken as a whole is classified according to the class of the highest element within the Release. Generally the class of a Release (other than for Class 1 Releases) will be advised by Pathway by analysis of the business requirement, however the aim will be to identify specific types of business change in advance so that their characteristics (e.g. timescales, dependencies and responsibilities) can be understood by the Authorities when managing their businesses. These would be to support, for example, negotiation with clients and service management processes.

Reference data releases will generally exploit existing Score Card columns and so should not require pricing changes unless a change to infrastructure is called for or specific limits are breached.

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In some instances, co-ordinated attention will need to be paid to migration from and parallel operation with existing services. For example, the APS Client Take-on plan includes the on-going introduction of clients to the extant POCL AP facilities. Hence this is a special case, and will need to be planned separately from other changes enabled by reference data in order to ensure the consistent provision of products across all POCL outlets.

**3.2.1 3.2.1 STANDARD REFERENCE DATA CHANGES (CLASS 1 )**

This represents the simplest and quickest type of Release to implement and includes Immediate Reference Data and Advance Reference data as described in the Related Agreements. Class 1 changes apply only to the value of those defined Reference Data fields which are conformant with the Service Definitions, the SADD and other Controlled Documents. No Software is developed and there are no physical or logistical constraints associated with Service delivery. Typically, such changes will be characterised by simple numeric adjustments to POCL trading variables such as the price of a first class stamp.

The potential for distribution is overnight for use the next day. Service Level targets apply to this class of Reference Data and there will be no impact on the Score Card.

This is the only class of Reference Data that is implemented outside the Change Control procedure.

**3.2.2 3.2.2 BUSINESS RULES CHANGES (CLASS 2)**

These are relatively simple changes to the permitted values of Reference Data fields which define how the services operate. Such changes will require a change to the Service Definitions, SADD and/or other controlled documents.

No Software needs to be developed and there are no logistical constraints associated with Service delivery. Testing of Reference Data parameter changes may be required and also minor changes to documentation. Typically, such changes will be characterised by changes to the business rules. An example could be the requirement, whether or not, to print a receipt for Automated Payment Transactions. Another example is change to the rules governing the Extended Verification Procedure (EVP).

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The potential for distribution is within one month (and could be within a week for straightforward cases) from approval of the Change Control Note, allowing time for any changes to Pathway or Authorities' business rules as identified in the impact analysis.

It is unlikely that any change to the Score Card will be required.

### **3.2.3 3.2.3**

**LOGISTICALLY CONSTRAINED CHANGES (CLASS 3)**

This represents a class of change that is subject to logistical constraints on Service delivery. Typically these are physical changes, such as refurbishment of premises and installation and testing of counter equipment. Some examples are:

- Franchising an existing Outlet
- Creating a new Outlet

The potential for distribution is within one month from approval of the Change Control Note, although the actual timescale will be in line with the associated change in service delivery.

Unless physical limits are breached (Schedule A06, Annex 4) or new infrastructure facilities required, it is unlikely that any change to the Scorecard will be required.

**3.2.4 3.2.4****EXTENDED FUNCTIONALITY (CLASS 4)**

Class 4 covers more extensive changes which reuse existing Software in the same business context or modify functionality and which can be activated by means of Reference Data without new software development. Examples of Class 4 changes include modifying the user interface for existing transactions, amending the format of outputs and re-using existing transaction types for new Clients with a new set of Reference Data. By their nature, Class 4 changes will probably require testing, data take-on, revisions to marketing collateral and user documentation, and user training.

The expected turnaround time will vary from case to case and will need to be determined by impact analysis during the Change Control process. A significant determinant of timescales will be the need (or not) for a new Client link. Without such a need, straightforward transaction type reuse could be envisaged in one month. Implementing a new Client link could take up to 4 months from approval of the CCN. Other Class 4 changes are likely to take between these two extremes.

In most cases no change to the Scorecard will be required other than to include new lines as appropriate, but this will need to be verified during Change Control.

**3.2.5 3.2.5 NEW FUNCTIONALITY (CLASS 5)**

This class of Reference Data Release is directly dependant upon a related Software Release and is associated with the development and testing of new Software. Examples are:

- New (or amended) Service requiring changed Software.
- New (or amended) Service requiring a new type of Reference Data.