RETAIL ENERGY CODE

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01	Initial Assessment Report
02	Preliminary Change Report
03	Final Change Report

CHANGE REPORT

R0157 – REMOVAL OF FACSIMIILE AS A METHOD OF CODE COMMUNICATION

CHANGE REPORT	PRELIMINARY
DOCUMENT VERSION	1.0
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RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE	CHANGE PANEL	CHANGE PATH	SELF GOVERNANCE
PRIORITY STATUS	MEDIUM	URGENCY	STANDARD

DEADLINE FOR ALTERNATIVE CHANGE PROPOSALS	20/02/2024

LEAD CHANGE ANALYST



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CHANGE OVERVIEW

The Public Switched Telephone Networks (PSTN) will be switched off in December 2025 by all telecom companies and will be replaced with an Internet Protocol (IP) digital network, resulting in fax machines becoming obsolete. Retail Energy Code (REC) communication methods referencing fax or facsimile will need to be removed and replaced with electronic mail (email) (where this is not an existing option), unless an alternative form of communication is needed, and this will also provide the REC an opportunity to standardise references to electronic mail.

	High Impact: N/A
	Medium Impact: N/A
	Low Impact: Energy Suppliers Metering Equipment Managers Data Collectors Green Deal Providers Green Deal Finance Parties

CODE MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Code Manager recommends Change Proposal R0157 is **APPROVED** for implementation in November 2025.

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BACKGROUND

1 BACKGROUND

The REC provides multiple communication methods for different functionalities, including in some cases the use of facsimile (more commonly, and hereby, referred to as fax). Fax, as a method of Code Communication, relies on PSTN to provide residual power and data transmission capabilities for fax machines devices.

However, following an Office for Communication (Ofcom) consultation, and the decision to introduce a new IP Digital Network, Ofcom have confirmed that telecoms providers will no longer be required to provide fax services to their customers. Telecom providers are currently in the process of switching off their PSTN that fax relies on, and this means that fax users will need to look for alternative methods of communication, such as electronic mail (email).

By December 2025, Telecom providers will complete the migration to the new IP Digital Network. This will mean fax will become obsolete as a method of communication, including within REC operations and will have to be removed.

Currently, there are no instances within the REC where fax is the only communication option. In all cases where fax is provided as a method of communication, either one, or both of, email and post are listed as alternative options. Both email and postal options will remain as methods of Code Communication for all parties. This forms the basis of the fully formed solution that is provided with this change.

Additionally, in REC documents and products, there is not a standardised approach to referencing electronic mail, with both “email” and “e-mail” being used interchangeably. This means that is difficult to complete accurate searches relating to electronic mail within the REC. To make such searches easier for Market Participants, this change provides an appropriate opportunity to standardise references by replacing “e-mail” with “email”.

Since email is already provided as an alternative method of Code Communication, the solution does not need to insert a new method of Communication into any part of the Code. The proposed solution simply removes all references to fax (and facsimile) and replaces any uses of the word “e-mail” with “email”.

The Code Manager has completed a Code review and has compiled a list of all current references to fax or ‘e-mail’ found in the Code that will be removed or amended as the proposed solution. The list also contains the Document, Clause and/or Product in which the reference is found. This list, which is the basis for the fully formed solution, can be found here.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Public Switched Telephone Networks (PSTN) will be switched off in December 2025 by all telecom companies and will be replaced with an Internet Protocol (IP) digital network. Existing fax machines that are incompatible with new all IP digital networks will become obsolete and no longer capable of meeting Code Communications as prescribed in the REC.

REC participants will need to switch to digital technology, in this case email, that is compatible with the new IP digital networks, to ensure the continual transmission of information that may currently be transmitted by fax.

In addition, the Code Communications prescribed in the REC currently does not have a standardise reference to email within REC documents, with both formats of electronic mail ("email" and "e-mail") being used interchangeably. This is preventing accurate results being presented in document searches.

3 USER STORIES

REF.	USER STORIES
CONSUMER USER STORIES	
C1	As a Consumer, I want to have confidence that my energy supplier can operate efficiently in the energy market.
MARKET PARTICIPANT USER STORIES	
M1	As a Market Participant, I want to be able to share and communicate information with other Market Participants.
M2	As a Market Participant, I want to be able to use new, and futureproofed, technology to support my business and customers.
M3	As a REC Party, I want to ensure I maintain compliance with contractual Code Communication obligations.
M4	As a REC Party, I want to be able to be confident that all accurate results are returned in REC document searches.

PROPOSAL

4 PROPOSED SOLUTION

The proposed solution is to remove all references to Facsimile/Fax in the REC Documents and standardise references to electronic mail by replacing any outstanding uses of “e-mail” with “email.

In all circumstances where Fax is listed as a Code Communication option, email (and in some circumstances, post) is already provided as an alternative method of Code Communication. Therefore, the proposed solution does not include inserting a new, alternative method of Communication into any part of the Code to replace Fax.

Further details on where there are references to Facsimile, Fax, or “e-mail”, that will be amended or removed as part of this proposed solution, can be found here.

5 DRAFT LEGAL TEXT

The legal text makes the required deletions, and standardisations, to the relevant REC Products and Documents.

The draft legal text changes to deliver the proposed solution to R0157 can be found here.

6 DELIVERY AGAINST CHANGE PROPOSAL PLAN

To date, all activity has been completed within the planned timescales.

The Change Proposal Plan can be found here.

7 KEY RISKS, ASSUMPTIONS, ISSUES AND DEPENDENCIES

7.1 RISKS AND ISSUES

No.	ISSUE	NOTES	HOW TO PROGRESS
R0157.PCR.I001	Data Items DI50237 and DI92293.	These are the two data items for Fax Contact Numbers. As part of the change, they could be removed, however there is no firm requirement to do so, but this should be considered as doing so may affect the overall solution, create impacts for parties, and would affect the required lead time required for implementation.	The Code Manager has included a question in the Consultation to ask REC parties if they believe the data items should be removed as part of this change, and if so how.

8 PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND APPROACH

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE	November 2025	PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH	BIG BANG

This Change will be included in the REC's Standard November 2025 release. The precise date is yet to be determined.

An update will be made to the Change Proposal Page on the REC Portal and REC Parties will be informed as soon as the exact date has been confirmed.

9 BUSINESS CASE ASSESSMENT

9.1 COSTS

No costs have been identified to deliver the solution for this change proposal.

9.2 BENEFITS

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS	BENEFITS DESCRIPTION
All Portal Users	R0157 will ensure that all searches of terms and processes in EMAR Digital REC and Data Specification will return all appropriate, and accurate results.
All REC Parties	R0157 ensures that the methods of Code Communications in the REC are futureproofed, utilising the latest technology to support businesses efficiently share and communicate information with other market participants.

9.3 COST BENEFIT ANALYIS SUMMARY

This is a legal text change that market participants are already aware of and there are no costs associated with the implementation of this Change.

The benefits from implementing this change are clear.

10 CASE FOR CHANGE

10.1 SELF GOVERNANCE

The Code Manager considers that there is a case for change to implement this Change Proposal, on the basis that:

- the proposed solution is fully formed and appropriately resolves the problem statement;
- this Change will appropriately align and engage with, and respond to, the outcomes of other Code Changes within the energy industry;
- without implementation of this change, the REC risks using outdated communication methods that may prevent the required and accurate sharing of information between parties; and,
- a positive business case can be made, as set out in section 9 of this Preliminary Change Report.

11 CODE MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Code Manager recommends that the Change Panel:

- **APPROVE/REJECT** the proposed change solution;
- **APPROVE/REJECT** the proposed implementation approach; and
- **APPROVE/REJECT** the proposed implementation date of November 2025.

12 CONSULTATION PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

The Consultation on this Preliminary Change Report for R0157 has been published on the REC Portal on 09 February 2024 and closes on 23 February 2024.

This is a 10 Working Day Consultation as agreed at the Change Panel on 06 February 2024.

Following Consultation, the Code Manager will produce an updated version of this Preliminary Change Report (to be referred to as the Final Change Report). This will include the outcome of the consultation, setting out a summary of the consultation submissions, and the Code Manager's response and recommendation(s).

The Final Change Report will be issued to the Change Panel to make its determination.

13 APPENDIX

CHANGE PROPOSAL	Link
LEGAL DRAFTING	Link
ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS / LINKS	Updating the UK to Digital Phone Lines - Open Reach (Energy) Industry Factsheet

14 GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Facsimile (Fax)	means the machine that receives, and processes the sending of, an exact copy of a page of text or images to a recipient using telephonic transmission.
Internet Protocol Digital Network	is the basis of most modern digital communications and means the process in which the internet layer communications define addressing systems to identify network hosts and to locate them on a particular network, allowing the routing of information between two different locations.
Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN)	means the network in which traditional telephone systems used for voice orientation communications operate through and is a combination of telephone networks used worldwide, including telephone lines, Fiber Optic cables, switching centres, cellular networks, satellites, and cable systems.