Change Management

Process Guide

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Introduction

This process guide will provide a detailed explanation on how the Change Management process is enabled within the ServiceNow platform.

Principles and Basic Concepts

A Change is defined as the addition, modification, or removal of anything that could have an impact on an IT service. Change Management is the process responsible for facilitating the implementation of changes.

The goal of the Change Management process is to enable beneficial changes to be made with minimum disruption to business operations, ensuring that the best possible levels of service quality and availability are maintained.

- Change Management should apply a consistent approach to risk assessment, business continuity, change impact, resource requirements, and change approval
- The approach should maintain a proper balance between the need for a change and the timing of its integration into the live environment

Process Scope

The scope of Change Management includes managing all changes to the live (production) environment, including both services and technology.

Process Objectives

The objectives of Change Management are to:

- Provide a systematic approach to control the lifecycle of all changes
- Facilitate beneficial changes to be made with minimum disruption to IT services
- Control changes to the Configuration Management Database (CMDB)

Roles and Responsibilities

Change Management Process Owner

The Change Management Process Owner's primary objective is to own and maintain the Change Management process. The role of the Process Owner is usually a senior manager with the ability and authority to ensure the process is rolled out and used by all stakeholders.

Responsible for:

- Defining the overall mission of the process
- Establishing and communicating the process mission, goals, and objectives to all stakeholders
- Documenting and maintaining the process and procedures
- Resolving any cross-functional (departmental) issues
- Ensuring proper staffing and training for execution
- Ensuring consistent execution of the process across the organization

- Monitoring, measuring, and reporting on the effectiveness of the process to senior management
- Continually improving the process

Change Manager

The Change Manager is responsible for day-to-day facilitation of the change process. This role is focused on the management and administration of all changes.

Responsible for:

- Quality checking newly raised changes. Validates eligibility of change, implementation steps, applicable risk mitigations, backout plans, and planned schedule
- Reviewing standard change proposals for inclusion in the Standard Change Catalog
- Reviewing unsuccessful changes for future improvements
- Chairing CAB meetings
- Managing CAB agendas
- Reviewing retrospectively raised changes for process compliance
- Managing the overall schedule of changes

Change Requester / Change Implementer

The Change Requester/Implementer is responsible for the creation and implementation of changes

Responsible for:

- Raising change records to cover any work being done to a technology service
- Explaining why the change must go-ahead
- Providing detailed implementation steps
- Providing pre-and post-implementation test information
- Providing detailed risk information and mitigation approach
- Providing detailed communications plan
- Providing a backout plan where possible
- Implementing the change following the approved plan at the approved time
- Reviewing the change after implementation to confirm success
- Taking appropriate steps if the change has not gone as intended

Service Owner

The Service Owner must decide if a change has been well planned enough to have mitigated the risk to services as far as is possible.

Responsible for:

- Review full contents of the change
- Approve/reject changes based on the content
- Request further information if an approval decision cannot be made

CAB Team

The CAB Team will facilitate the CAB meeting

Responsible for:

- Reviewing the full schedule of change to identify concerns with potentially conflicting changes
- Providing approval/rejection at CAB meetings for all changes discussed

How changes are initiated

Directly in ServiceNow – IT support users can raise changes directly in the change application as they are required

From an Incident – Incident Managers, Support Center Agents or other IT Support staff can raise a change from an incident when they identify the fix required to resolve the incident

From a Problem – Problem Managers, Support Center Agents or other IT Support staff can raise a change from a problem when they identify the fix required to resolve the problem

Through the Service Catalog - Standard changes can be raised by selecting the appropriate template from the Standard Change Catalog

From a Request – Users outside of the IT department can make a request of IT that requires a change to deliver the request

Automatically via Integrations – Changes can be automatically generated via external systems such as a vendor's system integrations

DevOps – changes are initiated through the Change API through toolsets commonly used within development organizations.

Change Types

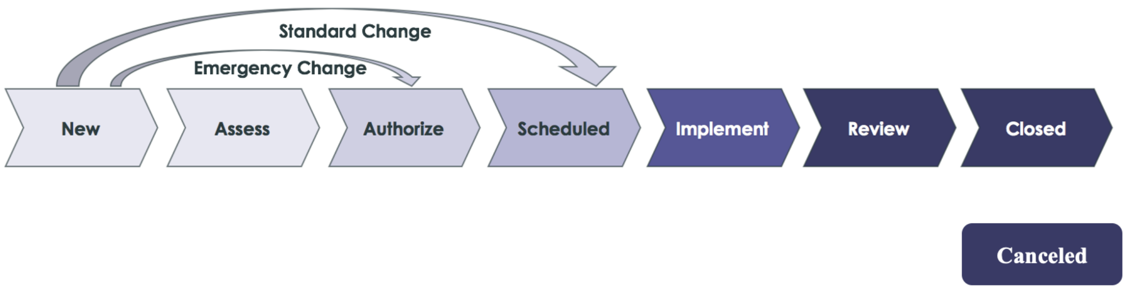
- Normal
- Standard
- Emergency

Change Management Lifecycle

States in any ServiceNow application serve a specific purpose. They are designed to make it clear where in a process a record currently resides and to display progress. States should represent a unique phase in a process where a specific set of related activities are grouped together designed to achieve a particular outcome to move to the next phase of the process. Our recommended Change Management process has the following state model:

- New
- Assess
- Authorize
- Scheduled
- Implement
- Review
- Closed
- Canceled

Process Overview



Evaluating Risk

Identifying risks associated with change requests is critical for an effective change process.

When identifying risks, keep a business-impact focus in mind:

- What could happen that would have an adverse impact on the business?
- Could the change impact other services run on the same infrastructure?
- Could there be unanticipated impact to business processes?
- Will the change increase the support load?

- Are there multiple changes happening at the same time, and are they compatible?
- Do the results from the test environment accurately predict what will happen in production?
- Will the changed service be able to meet its service level targets?

Risk Assessment

When assessing risk assessment, the requestor should ask themselves the following questions:

- What is the complexity of change?
- Has this type of change been done successfully in the past?
- How many users will be impacted?
- How many resources or groups are involved in implementing the change?
- How long does the change take to implement?
- How long does the change take to back out?

Based on the answers to these questions, the requestor will select High, Moderate, or Low.

Priority, Risk, & Impact values

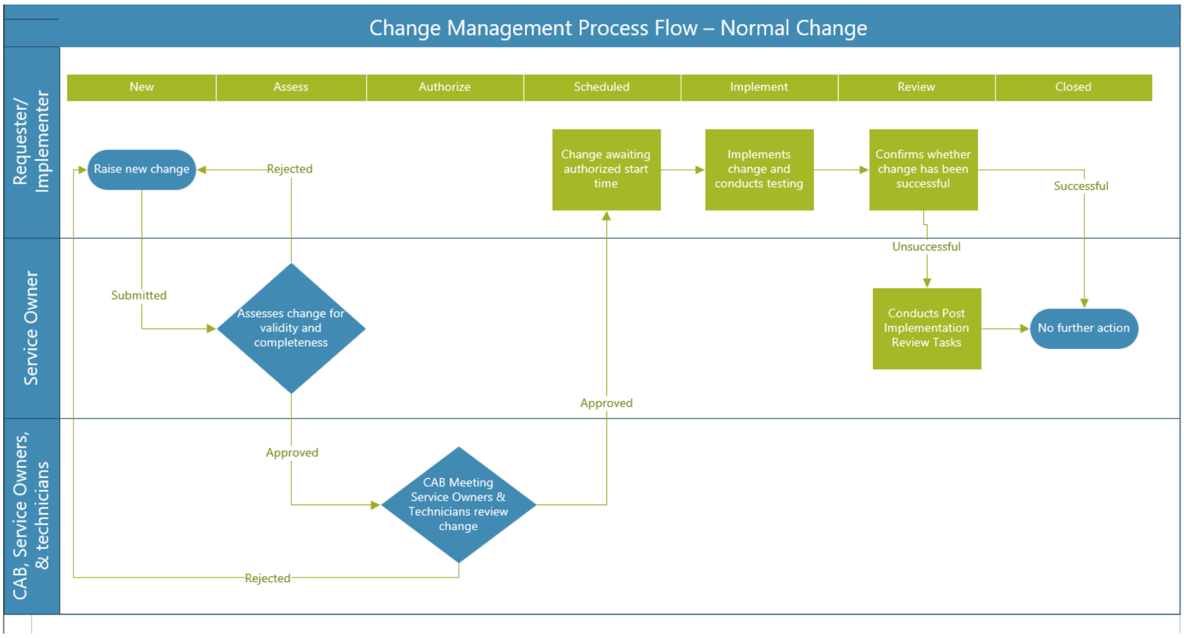
Use the following values for Priority, Risk, & Impact to inform the service owner and CAB of the risk of the change

Priority – The priority will be used to determine the outcome of scheduling conflicts. This field will be replaced with Complexity some time after we cut over to ServiceNow.

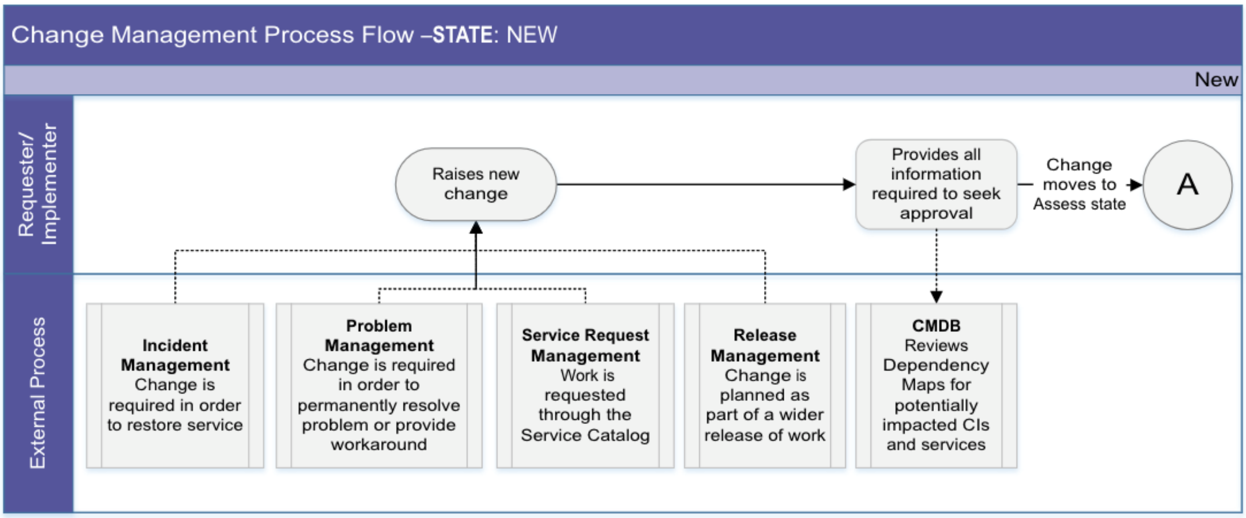
Impact – will the service be available, degraded, or unavailable

Risk – Low (proven repeatable), Medium (Success expected but limited to no experience with the proposed change, High (Success expected but proposed change is complex or difficult to implement

Normal Change Process



State: New



When a change is first created, it is in a state of New. This is effectively a draft of a change and can be updated as many times as necessary to fully populate all the content. A change in New is not considered live in the lifecycle and is not being viewed by anyone other than the requester who is raising it.

When the requester is ready to submit the change, they will click the Request Approval button.

Any fields that are mandatory to move the change through the process will be highlighted at this point and prevent the change from progressing until they are populated.

The mandatory fields are:

- Requested by
- Category
- Service
- Configuration Item
- Priority
- Risk
- Impact
- Short Description
- Description
- Assignment group
- Justification
- Implementation plan
- Communication plan
- Risk and impact analysis
- Backout plan
- Test plan
- Planned start date
- Planned end date

State: Assess

The Service Owner approves the change in the assess state. The Service Owner is conducting a quality control check to confirm the content is acceptable to proceed to the agency CAB. If the Service Owner rejects the request, it will go back to new state and will be mandatory to include a comment explaining why it was rejected.

If more information is required to decide, this should be handled outside of the tool and the approval state set to More Information Required until a conversation has taken place.

Once all approvals have been received, the change will automatically move to Authorize state.

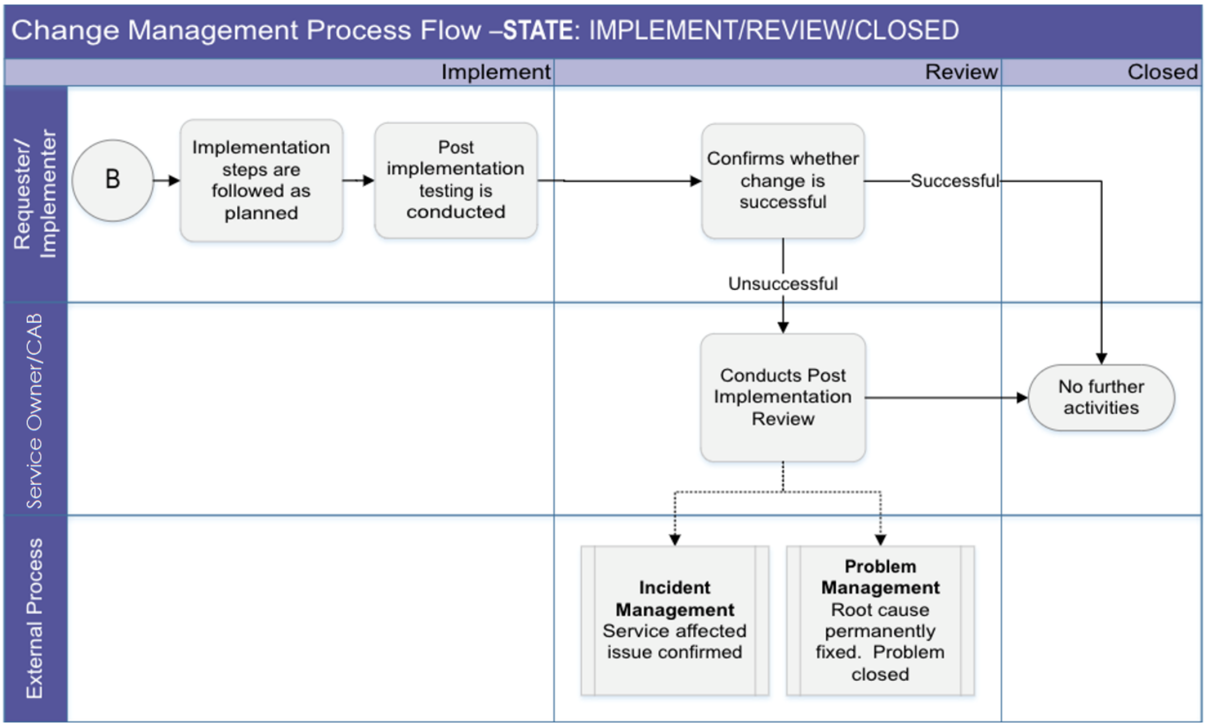
State: Authorize

Authorize state is used to handle CAB approval. All Normal changes will automatically require the CAB group to approve. In addition, authorize state is where the scheduled dates for a change are fully confirmed.

State: Scheduled

No activities take place at Scheduled state. The change is fully approved for implementation and is only waiting for the Planned start date to be met. Once this occurs the change implementor will move the change to the Implement state using the Implement button.

State: Implement



The change is now in the process of being implemented. When the planned start date/time arrives, the implementer will go into ServiceNow and start the change. When the change moves to Implement state the Actual start date field is automatically populated with the date/time. The Work notes field or change tasks can be used to capture all activities taking place as part of the implementation. Once the implementation is finished the Implementer can move the change to Review state using the Review button.

State: Review

Post Implementation Review activities take place during Review state. When the change moves to Review state the Actual end date field is automatically populated with the date/time. The Implementer will populate the mandatory fields:

- Close code
  - Successful
  - Successful with issues
  - Unsuccessful
- Close notes

The Actual dates can be overridden manually if they differ from the automatically populated window.

If the Close code is not set to Successful, additional review fields or tasks can be included at this point, particularly for Change Management, to conduct a more thorough review of why the change did not go according to plan and lessons to learn for the future.

Once the review is complete the Close button is used to move the change to Closed state.

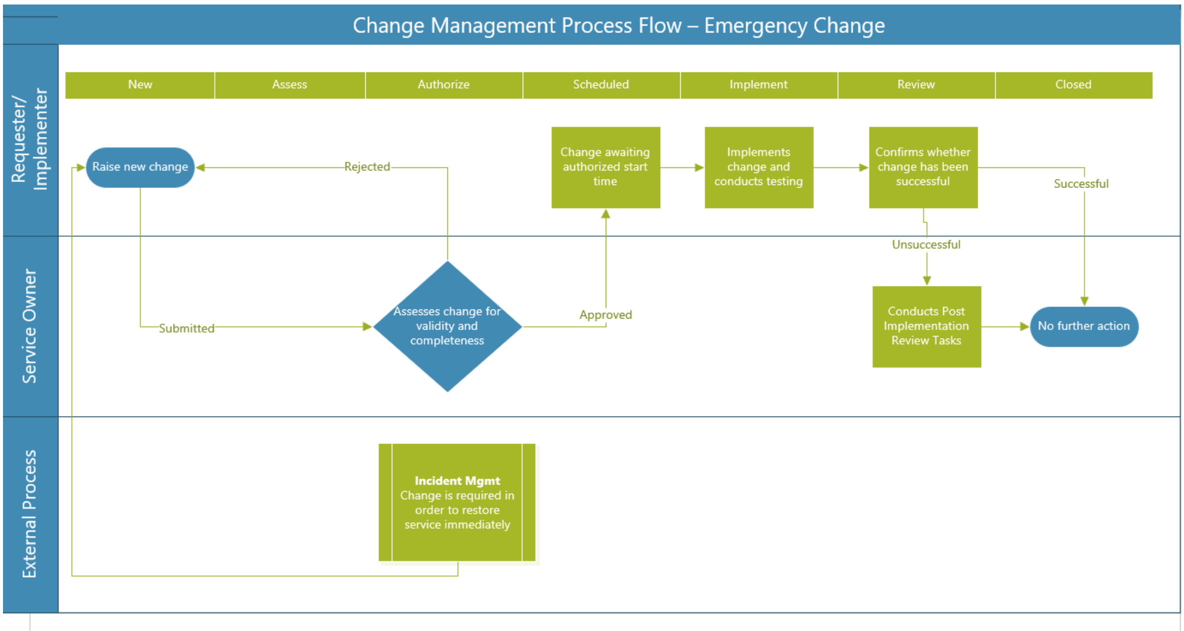
State: Closed

No further activity can occur against the change. In situations where the change was originally considered successful but subsequently discovered to be otherwise, it is acceptable for a Change Manager to return the change to Review state to conduct a PIR against it.

State: Canceled

A change can be canceled at any time. This means the change is no longer required and will not go ahead. The Cancel Change menu option can be used to move the change to Canceled. It is mandatory to enter a Work Note to explain the reason for cancelation. This is captured in the Activity Log.

Emergency Change Process



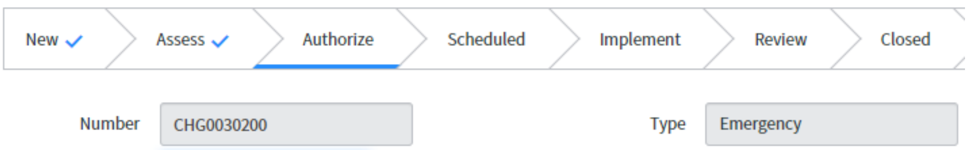
Emergency Changes

Emergency changes are those that cannot follow the normal lifecycle and lead times since they are in response to a service that has already failed or one that is about to fail if no action is taken.

The lifecycle of Emergency changes follows the same lifecycle and activities as a normal change with a few exceptions.

Approval

Approval is only required from the Service Owner who can decide about the content and timing of the change on behalf of everyone that would normally approve. This single approval occurs at the Authorize state which means that the Assess state is not used at all.



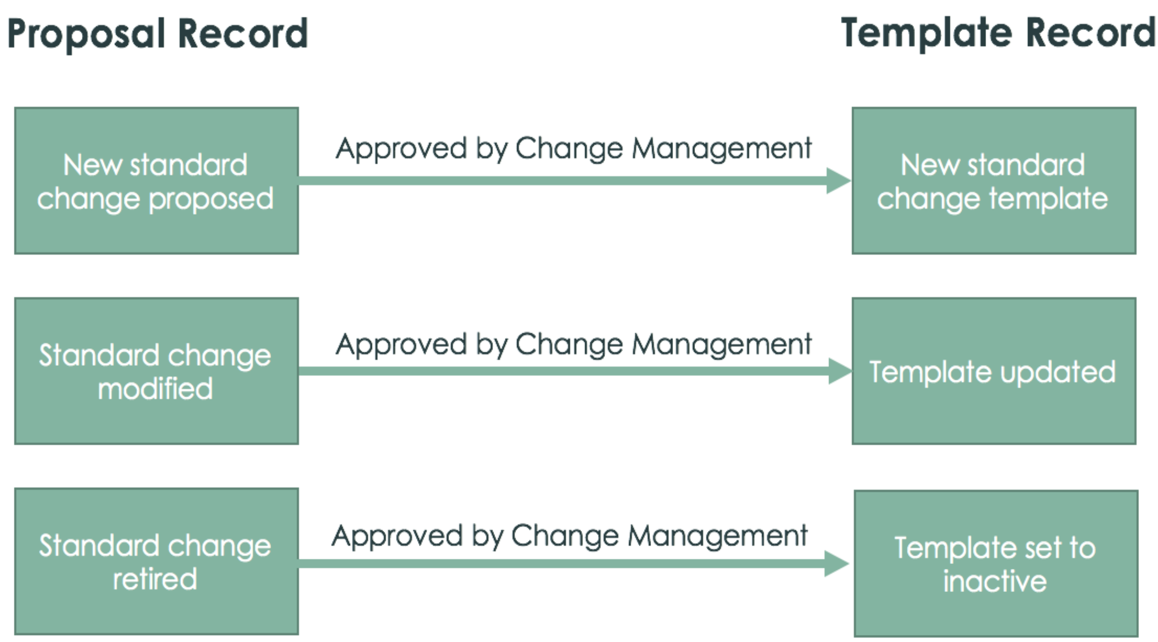
Retroactive Changes

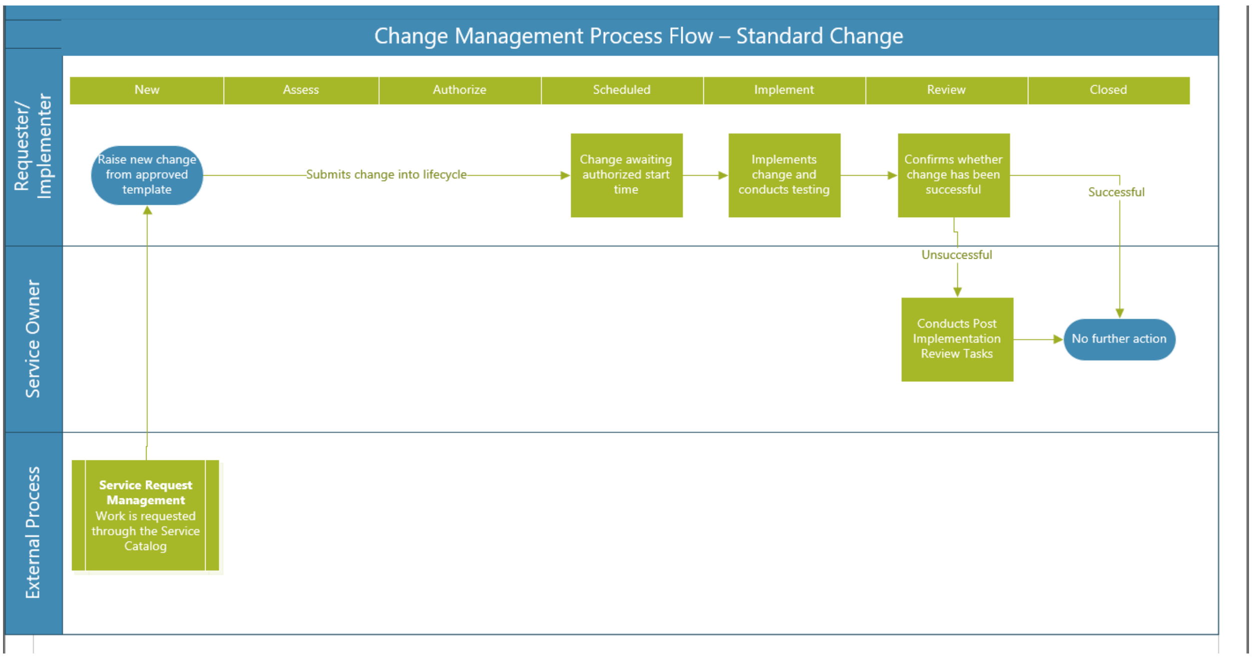
If it is critical to apply a change immediately without any opportunity to raise it as a record and seek approval, a retroactive change under the Emergency change process can be done. Emergency changes allow Planned start and Planned end dates to be in the past. These changes can be immediately moved through to the Review state since they have already been implemented.

It is recommended that these changes would undergo a review by the Change Management team to ensure the process is not being used incorrectly and to understand why it was necessary to implement the change without approval first.

Standard Change Process

Standard Change Template Lifecycle





The Standard Change process offers a method to reduce some of the administration around changes and seeks to address the reputational challenge that change is bureaucratic and a barrier to users performing their roles. This process allows certain changes to avoid a lengthy approval process and CAB discussions completely meaning they can be implemented in a much faster timescale.

Standard changes are those that are low risk, with repeatable implementation steps and a proven history of success. The Change Management team require a means to track which changes are accepted as Standard changes and to give approval for this therefore these changes are stored as Standard Change Templates.

Standard Change Templates

Users can propose a new standard change template through the Service Catalog or directly from an existing change if that change has not been marked as unsuccessful. The template will include all the repeatable information about that change. This is then routed to the Change Management team to review. If Change Management agree the change does qualify as a standard change, they will approve the proposal and it will be published into the Standard Change Catalog as a template. From here, any user with the correct permissions can raise a new change from the template. This will populate a new change record with the data from the template. This pre-populated data will not be editable by the user to maintain the integrity of the approved template. Variable data such as the planned dates can be added, and the change submitted.

Standard change templates can also be modified or retired using this same approach.

It is recommended that the templates are monitored over time to check how frequently they are used or whether any changes were unsuccessful. A periodic review can take place by Change Management to decide whether the template ought to be retired or temporarily withdrawn.

Predictive Intelligence for Change Management uses Predictive Intelligence clustering capability to identify and suggest Standard Change templates to create a change.

Standard Change Templates can be approved through the normal approval process or included within a CAB meeting and approved in the CAB Workbench.

Standard Change Lifecycle

Once submitted into the lifecycle, standard changes go directly to Scheduled state. No approvals are requested since the approval has occurred on the template. However, the Service Owner will be notified of the standard change.

Once the change is in scheduled state, it follows the same lifecycle as a normal change

Overdue Changes

Any change which has passed the Planned end date and is not in New, Review, Closed or Canceled, state is considered an Overdue Change.

These changes should be reviewed by the Change Management team to understand if they have been implemented, in which case the record must be updated to reflect this, or if the change did not go ahead. The Change Manager will need to take a decision on what to do with the change in that scenario.