

London Ambulance Service

Workforce Disability Equality Standard

LAS Report and Action Plan – 2023/2024

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Overview of the Workforce Disability Equality Standard

Purpose

NHS trusts are required to produce and publish their Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report annually. The purpose of the WDES is to ensure that NHS organisations review their data against the ten indicators outlined in the WDES, produce an action plan to close any gaps in the workplace experience between disabled and non-disabled staff, as well as improving the representation of disabled staff at the Board level of the organisation.

The WDES report is a key component of our workforce EDI work, setting our direction in achieving good practice disability equality across all areas of the employee lifecycle and ensuring our staff have access to career opportunities, development and progression and receive inclusive and fair treatment in the workplace.

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Methodology

The WDES requires NHS trusts and ICBs to self-assess against 10 workplace experience and opportunity indicators. Four metrics are taken from workforce data and the remaining are based on the NHS staff survey.

Scope

The report highlights current practice and shows key areas for improvement and progress within the organisation against key indicators of workforce equality for staff with a disability. It enables benchmarking across similar NHS providers and evidence how we meet our duties set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty and the standards required in the Department of Work & Pensions Level 2 Disability Confident scheme.

Definitions

The 2023 WDES technical guidance acknowledges that one of the challenges in monitoring workforce disability within the NHS is that the definitions of disability used within the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR), NHS staff survey and NHS jobs are not the same.

These definitions also vary when compared to the legal definition of disability, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Work is ongoing to align definitions of disability with the Equality Act's definition and set up cross-system, agreed disability questions.

The social model of disability and the concept of 'Disability as an Asset', which are advocated by disabled people and disability rights organisations, underpin the WDES.

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A message from our CEO

This year's Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report is a powerful tool for the London Ambulance Service to hold us to account on our ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of their abilities, feels valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

This report is a crucial step in our journey to address inequalities for disabled staff in LAS and it is encouraging to note the strides we have taken toward tackling discrimination and promoting inclusivity for our disabled colleagues. It is positive to see the continued increase in staff members declaring a disability, though we recognise the work to do to ensure representation at all levels. We also need to continue to create an environment in LAS where staff feel comfortable declaring their disability so we can better meet the needs of our disabled colleagues, including through implementing reasonable adjustments.

It is disheartening to see the high levels of bullying our disabled staff face from the public and we do not tolerate any harassment, violence or bullying towards any of our colleagues. I have publically made our stance clear on this and am committed to supporting our staff in making the right decision for their safety when treating the public, and hope the public are considerate towards our disabled staff in particular when receiving care.

We recognise that we have taken great strides in our journey to being a more inclusive employer, but we still have far to go to address the challenges shown in this report and the difficulties our disabled staff are telling us about. I am committed to the work required to get us to a place where our disabled colleagues are able to perform to the best of their ability.

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Daniel Elkeles CEO, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

A note from the LAS EnAbled network

The EnAbled staff network is committed to amplifying the voices of disabled staff in the London Ambulance Service. Our aim is to remove barriers and foster a culture of genuine understanding of the lived experiences of staff with disabilities. The network aspires to be a dedicated platform for disabled employees to share their experiences, insight and challenges to break down the invisible walls that often isolate individuals with disabilities. By working in collaboration with the EDI Team and across the Trust, the network raises awareness about the unique needs and abilities of disabled staff, nurturing an environment where their voices are heard and actively sought after. It's not just a support system. It's a catalyst for change that moves the organisation towards a future where inclusivity isn't just a buzzword but a lived reality.

We are pleased with the progress demonstrated in this year's WDES report and the positive steps being taken to improve equality for our disabled staff. We recognise the work still needed and are pleased to work in collaboration with the EDI team to support positive actions.

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Our strategic equality objectives

To achieve the work set out in the LAS strategy 2023-28, we have developed three EDI objectives which will contribute to the delivery of our vision and goals until 2028 and achieve the mission of "being an increasingly inclusive, well-led and highly skilled organisation people are proud to work for."

The LAS strategy states:

"We aim to build a diverse organisation that values and celebrates difference, promotes equality and prioritises the wellbeing of our people. We will build a workforce that knows and reflects the people we serve. We will build an organisation where everyone can feel they belong, their voice is valued and there are opportunities for a career. Discrimination, bullying, harassment and racism have no place in our organisation and we will take a zero-tolerance approach to tackling this behaviour."

To deliver the missions set out in the LAS strategy, we have developed three EDI objectives which will contribute to the delivery of our vision and goals until 2028:

OBJECTIVE 1		Foster proactively a diverse and open culture with an equitable working environment, including through staff training on discrimination and impactful staff networks.
	OBJECTIVE 2	Make measurable improvement in attracting and retaining a workforce that represents London, reaching out to relevant communities and helping staff to build great careers.
. · · ·	OBJECTIVE 3	Generate clear leadership accountability for action based on good management data and staff feedback, including compliance with legislation and equality standards.

Introduction

This Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report highlights the progress we have made as an organisation. Whilst clearly showing the journey and strides we have made to become an inclusive employer, there is still a long way to go. This report reflects our ongoing commitment to fostering a diverse, inclusive and equitable workforce within our organisation that reflects the diversity of the city we serve.

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The following report provides an overview of our progress, challenges and aspirations. This emerges from our collective efforts to create an ambulance service that is not only responsive to the diverse needs of our community, but is also an inspiring model for others to emulate. Over the last year, we have made many strides to improving LAS for our disabled colleagues, including:

- Publishing our reasonable adjustments framework and policy, supporting staff to work to the best of their ability and remove any barriers to performance
- Centralised reasonable adjustments hub and funding to ensure that all staff have equitable access to their adjustments
- Establishing a reasonable adjustments working group with subject matter experts to review policies and procedures to ensure they
 are inclusive to disabled staff
- Increase in number of managers (120+) attending Cognassist training to become a neuro-inclusive manager, supporting our commitment to make LAS an inclusive workplace for all minds to thrive
- Continuing close working with our EnAbled staff network colleagues to better understand the needs of our disabled staff and support them
- Recruiting and training 30+ Independent Panel Members to ensure our recruitment processes are fair and unbiased and reasonable adjustment recruitment requests are upheld

We recognise that achieving true equality requires ongoing assessment, thoughtful strategies and transparent reporting. In order to improve the experience of people with disabilities, we need to create an environment that encourages more disabled staff to speak up about their experiences and share that they have a long-term condition or disability so we can better understand representation in the Trust and help track our progress against indicators.



Understanding the findings



Key findings

Metrics 1-3 and 10 are a snapshot of our **workforce data** from 31 March 2024, while Metrics 4-9 are taken from the **NHS Staff Survey**, conducted in Autumn 2023.

1. Staff Representation 🕢	2. Shortlisting 🚹	3. Disciplinary 🚭	4a. i) Bullying from public 🚭
of our workforce has identified themselves as disabled Non-disable	Non-disabled applicants are 0.84X more likely to be appointed from shortlisting		60.1% for the public
4a. ii) From managers 🞧	4a. iii) From staff 🚭	4b. Bullying reported 🕢	5. Progression 🔂
 18.2% of disabled colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers 6. Presenteeism () 	23.2% of disabled colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from colleagues 7. Feeling valued (44.9% of disabled colleagues reported experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse 8. Reasonable Adjustments () 	 46.9% of disabled colleagues believe the Trust provides equal opportunities for promotion 9. Staff Engagement ()
30.2% of disabled colleagues feel pressured to come to work when not feeling well enough	24.5% of disabled colleagues feel valued by the organisation	64.0% of disabled colleagues say reasonable adjustments were made	The 0-10 staff engagement score for disabled colleagues is $\textcircled{1}{2}$ $\textcircled{2}{2}$ $\textcircled{3}{2}$ $\rule{3}{2}$ $\rule{3}{2$
10. Trust Board 🚭			
0% of our Trust Board (voting membership) are disabled	Muhumuhum Mumuhum Muhumuhum Muhumuhumuhumuhumuhumuhumuhumuhumuhumuhu		

Comparisons

Metrics 1-3 and 10 are a snapshot of our **workforce data** from 31 March 2024, while Metrics 4-9 are taken from the **NHS Staff Survey**, conducted in Autumn 2023.



Percentage of staff in each of the AfC (Agenda for Change) bands 1-9 and VSM (including executive board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce.

Proportion of workforce identifying as disabled (%)



_		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Non- disabled	59.9%	64.1%	67.9%	66.2%	74%
	Disabled	3.8%	5%	6.8%	8.1%	9.9%
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This year, the **proportion of disabled staff has slightly increased**, rising from 8.1% to 9.9%. In **clinical roles, disabled staff make up 9.6%,** compared to 77.0% of non-disabled staff. In non**clinical roles, disabled staff represent 10.3%,** while non-disabled staff make up 64.5%. We have made **great improvements in completion of disability data fields, increasing to 85%** in comparison to 75% last year. This is a positive trend over the last few years, with increased representation over time.

These findings highlight both progress and areas where further efforts can be made to enhance diversity and data completeness within the organisation to create a more inclusive and informed work environment.

Percentage of staff in each of the AfC (Agenda for Change) bands 1-9 and VSM (including executive board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce.

Clinical and non-clinical workforce (%)

compared to 10.3% of those in non-clinical roles.

Disabled colleagues comprise only **9.6%** of our clinical workforce,

Data completeness – ESR (%)

The data completeness rate has seen a large improvement, increasing from 75% to 85%.



Percentage of staff in each of the AfC (Agenda for Change) bands 1-9 and VSM (including executive board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce.



Disabled staff across the organisation

The data shows fairly consistent representation across all bands, however there is a slight overrepresentation in the lower bands. To note, those at VSM level represent a very small number of staff (15 people).



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Relative likelihood of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts.



A figure below 1:00 indicates that disabled staff are more likely than nondisabled staff to be appointed from shortlisting. This year, the data indicates that the **relative likelihood of disabled staff being appointed is 0.84 times more likely than non-disabled staff**. This shows an improvement compared to the previous year when it was 1.20 times and is a **positive shift**. There has been a **varying trend over the last few years**, however we have now returned to levels seen in 2020.

This evidences some of the efforts taken to bridge the gap between shortlisting appointments and promoting inclusivity in the workplace, such as ensuring reasonable adjustments at interview are available for candidates. We will continue to ensure equal opportunities for all to build upon the improvements seen, debiasing our recruitment and selection processes to promote fairness throughout, such as through the use of Independent Panel Members.

Relative likelihood of disabled staff entering the formal capability process compared to non-disabled staff



A figure above 1:00 indicates that disabled staff are more likely than nondisabled staff to enter the formal capability process. In 2021, the relative likelihood of disabled staff entering the formal capability process was 0.98 times more likely than non-disabled staff. However, **fewer than ten colleagues entered this process** in 2022, 2023 and 2024. This metric has **remained consistent and difficult to ascertain due to the low number of cases**.

This metric only applies to capability on the grounds of performance, not ill health.

Given the limited number of cases in the formal capability process, it is challenging to draw significant conclusions about changes in this metric. It's essential to continue monitoring and assessing this data over time to make more informed assessments about the inclusion and support of disabled staff in the capability process.

Indicator 4a i)

Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months.



60.1% of disabled staff members have reported experiencing harassment, bullying, or abuse from patients, relatives, or the public in the last 12 months. Comparatively, the percentage of nondisabled staff members facing similar issues is 48%. This shows that disabled staff members are more likely to experience such mistreatment than their non-disabled counterparts.

Additionally, the percentage has **remained consistent compared to the previous year** which was 59.8%. There has been **a varying trend over the last few years,** but remains fairly consistent. Continuous efforts are necessary to create a safer and more respectful environment for all staff members, including the continuation of training on being an active bystander and tackling discrimination.

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Non-disabled staff	56.1%	57.9%	50.6%	48.0%	48.1%
	Disabled staff	58.1%	60.6%	56.9%	59.8%	60.1%
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Indicator 4a ii)

Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months.



The data indicates that **18.2% of disabled staff members have reported experiencing harassment, bullying, or abuse from their managers** in the last 12 months. Comparatively, the percentage of non-disabled staff members facing similar mistreatment from managers is much lower at 9.5%. It is worth noting that there has been a **slight decrease** compared to the previous year, which was 21.3%. This is a **positive trend over the last few years**, where we have consistently improved our position.

Our priority is to address workplace behaviour to ensure a respectful and inclusive environment for all staff members and reduce the disparities between disabled and non-disabled staff. This includes supporting staff to speak up and call out discrimination, in line with our anti-discrimination statement.

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Non-disabled staff	15.5%	13.3%	11%	11.2%	9.5%
	Disabled staff	28.6%	25.9%	22.5%	21.3%	18.2%
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Indicator 4a iii)

Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months.



This year, the percentage of **disabled staff experiencing harassment**, **bullying**, **or abuse from colleagues is 23.2%**, similar to the previous year of 23.4%. In contrast, non-disabled staff reported a percentage of 15.8%, slightly higher than the 14.9% reported in the previous year. **The percentage of disabled staff reporting these incidents has been consistent**, however non-disabled staff have seen a slight increase. This trend has **remained consistent over the last few years**, after an initial positive trend.

These findings underscore the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful workplace for all employees to promote a psychologically safe working space for everyone. This includes supporting staff to speak up and call out discrimination, in line with our anti-discrimination statement.

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Non-disabled staff	15.7%	14.7%	15.1%	14.9%	15.8%
	Disabled staff	26.9%	22.8%	22.2%	23.4%	23.2%
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Indicator 4b)

Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it in the last 12 months



The data shows an **increase in the reported incidents of harassment, bullying, or abuse at work** by disabled colleagues compared to last year, which was 41%. Although the percentage of reported incidents remains higher for disabled colleagues, there has been improvements in non-disabled colleagues reporting these incidents, which is 41.3% compared to 37.9% last year. There has been a general **positive trend over the last few years.**

The trend suggests that **efforts to improve reporting of incidents of harassment, bullying or abuse have improved**. However, work must be done to support colleagues to make them feel comfortable in reporting incidents, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all employees.

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Non-disabled staff	33.6%	36.2%	34.7%	37.9%	41.3%
	Disabled staff	35.6%	32.5%	43.1%	41%	44.9%
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Percentage of staff believing that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression and promotion.

Disabled ----Non-disabled 60% 55% 50% 45% 40% 35% 30% 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

This year, **46.9% of disabled staff believe that the trust provides equal opportunities for career progression and promotion,** which is an increase from 41.1% in the previous year. Non-disabled staff have a higher percentage, with 54.4% perceiving equal opportunities, up from 46.9% in the previous year. There has been a general **positive trend over the last few years.**

While there has been **an improvement in the perception of equal opportunities** among both disabled and non-disabled staff, there is still a gap in perception between the two groups. Addressing this perception gap is essential for fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace where all employees can thrive.

Percentage of staff saying that they have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties.

Disabled ----Non-disabled 55% 50% 45% 40% 35% 30% 25% 20% 15% 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

This year, **30.2% of disabled staff reported feeling pressured to come to work even when they didn't feel well enough to perform their duties.** This reflects **an improvement from the 36.3% reported in the previous year**. There has been a **positive trend** in reducing the perception of feeling pressured to work despite not feeling well among both disabled and non-disabled staff.

These findings suggest that efforts to promote a healthier work-life balance and a more supportive work environment have a positive impact. However, there is still room for further improvement and focusing on employee well-being and support is crucial to sustain and build upon these positive trends.

Percentage of staff saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work.

- Disabled ----Non-disabled 40% 35% 30% 25% 20% 15% 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

This year, 24.5% of disabled staff report satisfaction with how LAS values their work, representing an increase from the 19.5% reported in the previous year. In contrast, nondisabled staff have a higher satisfaction rate, with a percentage of 34.9% this year, compared to 28.1% in the previous year. There has been a varying trend over the last few years.

These trends indicate that while there is a **general trend towards increased satisfaction** with how the organisation values work, there remains a disparity between disabled and non-disabled staff. Addressing this difference and working to ensure that all employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions is crucial to promoting an inclusive and equitable workplace.

Percentage of disabled staff saying that their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work.





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This year, **64% of colleagues who declared a disability feel that LAS has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work**. This represents an increase from the 57.5% reported in the previous year.

There has been **an increase for the first time in three years** and suggests that there are positive actions being made to ensure employees have the necessary accommodations to perform their roles can contribute to a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

We hope this trend will continue with the introduction of the reasonable adjustments policy and guidance within the Trust. We will continue to actively seek feedback from disabled colleagues to improve adjustments and ensure a more inclusive workplace for everyone, as we recognise this data is not a full picture of the experiences of our staff.

The staff engagement score (out of 10) for Disabled staff, compared to non-disabled staff and the overall engagement score for the organisation.



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The score for **staff engagement this year for disabled staff is 5.7** which is a slight increase from 5.3 in the previous year. Non-disabled staff have additionally increased their score this year to 6.3 which is a slight increase from 5.9 in the previous year.

There has been a **previous declining trend** in the staff engagement score for disabled staff, however this has now **started to improve**. There remain differences in engagement scores between disabled and non-disabled staff, though these differences have remained fairly similar over the last 5 years.

This score highlights the importance of addressing and improving the engagement and satisfaction levels of disabled staff within the Trust. We will continue to promote a more equitable and engaged workforce as a priority.

Percentage difference between the Organisation's Board voting membership and its overall workforce.



The data indicates that there is **no representation of disabled individuals on the organisation's board voting membership**. This percentage has remained unchanged for the past five years. The data shows a **consistent lack of disabled representation on the Trust's board voting membership over the past five years**.

This trend highlights the need for increased efforts to promote diversity and inclusion at the board level of the organisation and additionally ensure staff in leadership positions feel comfortable declaring their disability. Ensuring that disabled individuals are represented in leadership positions can contribute to more informed decision-making and a more inclusive culture.

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Conclusion

This report shows progress from the past year, highlights current practice, and shows key areas for improvement within the organisation against several key indicators of workforce equality for staff with disabilities.

We have made **good improvements against nine of the WDES indicators** in 2024, and we have additionally seen **no change in four indicators**. These results show great improvement following a more collective and concerted effort to eradicate disparities between disabled and nondisabled colleagues, however we recognise the need to continue growing our networks and programmes for positive change. This year, we have begun to champion a range of training and engagement initiatives across the Trust, raising the organisation's awareness of biases and inequalities whilst increasing staff confidence to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion. We have also published our reasonable adjustments policy and guidance, making clear our commitment to an inclusive workplace environment to all staff.

In conclusion, while progress has been made in various aspects of disability equality within the workforce, there are still clear areas requiring attention and improvement. Ensuring equal opportunities, addressing harassment, and promoting diversity and inclusion at all levels remain our essential goals.

Next Steps

Oversight of the WDES will take place through the EDI sub-Board committee and cross organisational working groups will ensure delivery through these key areas of focus:

- Inclusive and unbiased recruitment and selection processes
- Good quality workforce data
- Increased diversity at Trust Board and ELG levels
- Managers equipped for meaningful and compassionate conversations
- Tackle, prevent and challenge bullying, harassment and abuse against staff
- Engagement with disabled staff
- Implementing reasonable adjustments and equipping managers to support staff

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Summary of WDES action plan

The WDES actions are presented below and align to our business plan deliverable for 2024-25: "Improve the proportion of disabled colleagues who say in the NHS staff survey that reasonable adjustments were made and reduce the number of concerns raised on this topic"

Desired outcome	Actions	WDES Indicator(s)
Continue focus on ensuring our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive and unbiased	 Ensure Independent Panel Member programme includes challenge for disability bias Report on the Disability Pay Gap for the first time Work to become a Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) Improve disability representation in CTM recruitment 	1, 2 and 5
Improve the quality, collection and analysis of our workforce data on all protected characteristics for staff	 Create time in teams to access ESR to complete equality data in areas where gaps are greatest, for example through huddles Re-run of 'Safe to Say' campaigns on regular basis 	1 and 9
Increase the diversity balance, including disability, at Trust Board and ELG levels	 Explore barriers to progression in leadership roles for disabled staff Ensure completeness of equality monitoring form for Board members 	1, 2, 5 and 10
Managers equipped with having meaningful and compassionate conversations	 Develop data packs and action plans to drive improvement and accountability at team, department, directorate and executive levels Develop a People Scorecard with representation to use in Feedback and Focus Reviews Ensure EDI training sessions are integral to leadership learning programmes 	3, 6 and 7
Tackle, prevent and challenge bullying, harassment and abuse against staff and create a culture of civility and respect	 Socialise anti-discrimination statement through engagement events and training Deliver drop-in surgery sessions to give staff increased opportunities about discrimination Support the use of body-worn video cameras to de-escalate incidents of violence and aggression towards staff Conduct a deep dive with the EnAbled network to understand why disabled staff are disproportionately affected by violence and aggression from the public 	4a
Disabled staff are engaged in the EDI agenda and empowered to challenge inappropriate behaviours	 Work closely with EnAbled network for lived experience insight, including promoting awareness, supporting positive action initiatives, influence policies and provide input into matters concerning disability Work closely with Freedom to Speak Up colleagues to support staff in speaking up and challenging inappropriate behaviours 	4b and 9
Staff who require reasonable adjustments are supported to be at work and managers are equipped to support them	 Develop and implement neurodiversity toolkit for managers Develop reasonable adjustments process for procuring necessary equipment and programs for staff Develop and deliver reasonable adjustments training to all managers Reduce health inequalities for staff through health and wellbeing programme 	6, 7 and 8



London Ambulance Service

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Produced by the LAS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team

October 2024

For further information and/or request in an alternative format, please contact: londamb.edimailbox@nhs.net

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