



healthwatch
Bristol

healthwatch
North Somerset

healthwatch
South Gloucestershire



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Bristol
Healthwatch North Somerset
Healthwatch South Gloucestershire

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"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our CEO

It is with great pride that I present the 2024–2025 Annual Report for Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. Since October 2024, The Care Forum (TCF) has delivered Healthwatch services across BNSSG, amplifying local voices—especially from seldom-heard communities—and shaping health and care services through lived experience.

This year, we supported over 38,000 people and welcomed Professor David Croisdale-Appleby, Chair of Healthwatch England, reaffirming the national importance of local voices.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our incredible staff, whose resilience, creativity, and commitment have driven our success. To our volunteers—who gave over 1,370 hours—and student placements, thank you for your passion and energy. Your contributions have been invaluable.

We also thank our communities and stakeholders for their trust, insights, and collaboration. Together, we are building a more inclusive, responsive, and people-powered health and care system.

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger
Chief Executive Officer, TCF



“The Care Forum has delivered Healthwatch services across BNSSG, amplifying local voices—especially from seldom-heard communities—and shaping health and care services through lived experience.”

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger, CEO, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

About us

Healthwatch Bristol, Healthwatch North Somerset and Healthwatch South Gloucestershire are your local health and social care champions.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences help make health and care better.



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 38,770 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 5 staff and, our work is supported by 50 volunteers.

Reaching out:



1014 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

37,756 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as NHS dentistry, changes at your GP surgery and your right to choose where you receive care.

Championing your voice:



We published 5 reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like waiting lists, mental health and long-term conditions.

Our most popular report was '[Investigating local health inequalities using the Core20PLUS5 approach](#)', highlighting the struggles that make it difficult for people living in deprived areas to access care.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by Bristol City Council (including on behalf of North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council). For the period 1st October 2024 to 31st March 2025 we received £118,535.00, which was our first year of providing the service.

A year of making a difference

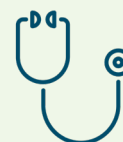
Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Here are a few highlights.

spring

102 people in Knowle West, Hartcliffe and Weston-Super-Mare shared ideas how access to services could be improved.



We attended a Kingswood carers support group to hear about the local services on offer to people with dementia.



summer

Healthwatch visited six acute mental health wards ran by AWP to talk to patients and hear about their experiences.



Work was carried out to better understand people's experiences of being on a waiting list for surgery.



Autumn

TCF became the host provider for Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.



We supported people to share their views, experiences and ideas as part of the government's NHS 10-Year Strategy consultation.



Winter

We supported the BNSSG Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, helping over 1000 people share their views on pharmacy services.



We attended International Women's Day events to speak with women about their experiences of accessing health and care services.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services at a BNSSG level

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across BNSSG to achieve the following:

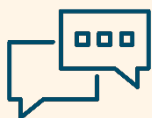
A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



Several initiatives were carried out across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire in 2024/25. This included:

- increasing understanding of health inequalities for marginalized communities
- how the lack of NHS dental care impacts on confidence, nutrition and mental health
- listening to the experiences of surgery waiting lists

The big conversation:



We asked people if and how their physical health affects their mental health, and what changes they would like to see from health and social care services

The Consultant Clinical Psychologist thanked the team for this "excellent piece of work" highlighting the need for embedded emotional support for those living with any health care challenge.

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



In October 2024, TCF became the provider of the local Healthwatch services across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. With their values of Empowering, Collaborating and Influencing, TCF aims to increase community engagement with local communities and further amplify the voices of seldom heard groups. .

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.

Here are some examples of our work in Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucestershire this year:

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



We asked people if and how their physical health affects their mental health, and what changes they would like to see from health and social care services

The Consultant Clinical Psychologist thanked the team for this "excellent piece of work" highlighting the need for embedded emotional support for those living with any health care challenge.

Getting services to involve the public



Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues people face.

In early 2025, we initiated conversations with a carers service to develop a coproduction hub to increase public involvement in Healthwatch projects from the earliest time possible. This approach is hoped to grow over time and ensure the focus of our work is aimed at the areas of greatest need.

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Based on work first started in 2022, last year the team refreshed a tool for people with a learning disability and their carers. It aims to help people recognise when things aren't right, take actions to keep healthy, and to speak up and seek help.

Thanks to this innovative tool 98% leave annual health checks with a health action plan, compared to 53% previously

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

Listening to what people think about adult social care

103 people who draw on care and support from adult social care services spoke about what's working well and what needs to improve

This included older adults, people with Learning Disabilities, people with mental health issues, people with Autism, people with physical and sensory impairment, and carers

What did we do?

8 focus groups were ran and feedback was also collected via email. Topics of discussion included access to a social worker (including access to face-to-face appointments), waiting lists for a reviews of existing care packages, and support for carers.

Key things we heard:

Participants highlighted the importance of high-quality, person-centred care in adult social care. They want choice, consistent staff, timely reviews, and clear communication—especially when needs change. Care should be holistic, organised around individuals, and involve families, particularly in supported living.

Respite care and emotional support are vital for both individuals and carers. Access to social and cultural activities is also key to reducing isolation and supporting wellbeing for those who draw on care and support.

Our work showed that people value high-quality, person-centred adult social care that offers choice, consistency, and timely reviews. Communication—especially around changing needs—is essential.

What difference did this make?

Bristol Council wanted to understand people's experiences of adult social care. The council are now developing a co-production strategy and want to work more closely with people with lived experience.

Listening to your experiences

Investigating local health inequalities

We spoke to people from deprived and marginalised communities to understand the reasons behind existing inequalities

102 people shared the barriers and failures that prevented them from accessing local services and highlighted ways in which services could be improved

Key things we heard:

A significant number of people give up trying to make an appointment or reducing the opportunity for early diagnosis and timely intervention

We found evidence of a combination of systemic barriers and failure to adequately accommodate individual access requirements



"At reception you have to explain what is wrong with you. Confidentiality is gone"

People can feel judged or stigmatised during contact with their GP practice, e.g. when being triaged by a receptionist or care navigator. Communication challenges including not being listened to or being 'fobbed off'. unfamiliar setting

What difference did this make?

The report has been presented to a number of strategic groups and is supporting ongoing work around tackling health inequalities.

As part of this project, Healthwatch identified needing to be better at recording data for Core20Plus communities. As a result, Healthwatch has added several data fields to ensure a better understanding of the experiences of marginalised communities.

Listening to your experiences

Experiences of surgery waiting lists

North Bristol NHS Trust asked us to find out how they could support people on waiting lists with a focus on marginalised and seldom-heard communities.

Responses were gathered from 45 people using an online survey, telephone interviews, and focus group discussion. This included people who were living in the most deprived areas of the region, and people with protected characteristics including disability, ethnicity, age, and neurodiversity.

What did patients tell us they wanted?

- **More frequent communication during their wait for surgery.**
- **Consideration given to personalised needs assessments of holistic factors (social, financial, housing) in advance of elective surgery.**
- **To be directed to evidence-based sources and would like to have links to these in one place, rather than having to find their own information online.**
- **Help in their community, in-person support and Social Prescribing**



"It's momentous, living in a world of pain, unable to pursue my interests and living like a hermit. Even standing and showering are difficult."

(female, 65- 79, awaiting orthopaedic surgery for more than one year)

What difference did this make?

In line with our recommendations, the hospital trust has begun work to contact patients every three months, to ensure they still require and want surgery. They are planning to introduce a patient screening questionnaire to develop a pre-operative management plan for patients while they wait for surgery.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Speaking to refugees and asylum seekers about their experiences of services such as NHS 111, mental health services, GPs and hospitals.
- Working in collaboration with local organisations to ensure we could receive feedback from carer and hard of hearing people.
- Sharing insights with the Patient Experience Teams at the local two NHS hospital trusts.



Listening to people on inpatient mental health wards

An enter and view of 6 inpatient mental health wards was carried out.

Thirty-seven service users and fourteen staff were spoken with to understand what work well and where improvements are needed.

What difference did this make?

The response to the visit was very positive, with changes made in several areas. These include collaborative care planning, addressing noise and safety concerns, and enhancing discharge planning. Activity programmes are being expanded, and staff interaction prioritised through daily support time. Overall, the response reflects a commitment to co-production, quality improvement, and patient-centred care.

Improving Access for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Patients

Healthwatch Bristol actively listened to d/Deaf and hard of hearing people who shared frustrations with inaccessible health services.

They highlighted missing interpreters, unclear communication, and barriers to booking appointments. Patients often missed care due to these gaps. We urged providers to follow the Accessible Information Standard, improve staff training, and use visual aids. The findings push for urgent, inclusive changes that empower patients and improve healthcare equity.

What difference did this make?

An infographic was developed to transform lived experiences into clear, actionable insights. By visually highlighting the barriers Deaf and hard of hearing people face, it has empowered health partners to recognise gaps, adapt services, and foster inclusive care. It's a practical tool that drives awareness, sparks conversation, and supports meaningful change across health and social care settings.

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 37,756 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



Supporting patients to understand changes from the GP recovery plan

Following feedback from patients, a new booklet was published to help explain what changes people may see in their local surgeries

The booklet contains:

- information about the GP Access Recovery Plan and what it means for patients
- the roles of the various qualified health professionals who will be able to support and offer care at GP surgeries
- information about changes at pharmacies
- information about the NHS App, and digital and non-digital ways of accessing healthcare, e.g. booking GP appointments
- positive initiatives already happening in the local area

Supporting Access to Women's Health After Trauma

Angela faced barriers to accessing women's health services due to past trauma and needed support to find safe, appropriate care

Following a historic traumatic incident, Angela found women's health appointments distressing and avoided them. She reached out to Healthwatch for help. Understanding the importance of a trauma-informed approach, we connected her with a local women's service offering therapeutic support and sensitive care. This helped Angela feel more in control and supported to re-engage with vital health services at her own pace.

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 1,370 hours across BNSSG to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Helped host 6 awareness days including, dementia awareness, Healthcare travel services and Mental Health awareness.
- Assisted staff at engagement events, collecting feedback and providing information.
- Carried out an Enter and View visit to a pharmacy
- Took part in Patient-led assessments of the care environment (PLACE) in our region's hospitals
- Brought insights at regional Citizens' Assembly, and meetings such as UHBW's 'Experience of Care', Sirona's People's Voice and NBT's Patient and Carer Experience Group.



At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

I am a qualified dentist from India with a strong aspiration to pursue a career as a Public Health Practitioner in the United Kingdom. I am currently working toward building a robust portfolio for registration with the UK Public Health Register by gaining relevant experience and developing key competencies in the field.

Since joining Healthwatch Bristol I have had the privilege of working with a team of dedicated professionals who have greatly enriched my learning. I have been involved in a variety of projects and I am eager to continue to promote person-centred care, reduce health disparities, and inform policy through community voices.

Harsimrat



I am a retired Nurse, RCN and Open University tutor of 42 years and have volunteered with Healthwatch North Somerset for about 11 years. My many roles and experiences have prepared me to keep the wellbeing of my fellow North Somerset residents at the top of my agenda.

At present I am a member of Sirona People's Voice committee (community care) and my local Patient Participation group for my GP practice and the Gordano Valley Primary Care network.

I attend monthly meetings with the SW Citizen's Assembly affiliated to the SW clinical senate and visit hospital wards every Autumn to perform some Patient led assessment of the clinical environment (PLACE)

Michelle



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

'I joined Healthwatch during my second year of my physiology degree as I was interested in gaining experience alongside my studies and previous time spent in hospital had given me a passion for improving patient care.

As a volunteer, I've got involved in lots of opportunities that I could fit around my studies, including engagement events and data entry. I've also enjoyed being part of more focused projects by doing online research and helping with focus groups. Through being at Healthwatch, I've gained an insight into the different areas of healthcare and have learnt a lot from staff and other volunteers.

It has also built my confidence and given me an interest in a career working more directly with patients and the community, which I hadn't previously considered.'



Josie

Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk



www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk



www.healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk



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Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Bristol City Council (including on behalf of North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council) under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Funding covers the period 1st October 2024 to 31st March 2025

Income		Expenditure	
Contractual income (from 1 st October 2024)	£114,535.00	Expenditure on pay	£71,372.00
Additional income	£4,000.00	Non-pay expenditure	£36,480.00
		Office and management fee	£5,891.00
Total income	£118,535.00	Total Expenditure	£113,743.00

Additional income is broken down into:

£4,000 received from University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust to support recruit of participants to a women's health steering group

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across BNSSG received no funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS)

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

Bristol

1. Primary Care Communication
2. Hospital Care Management
3. Mental Health

North Somerset

1. Primary Care Communication & Empathy
2. Minor Injury Units
3. GP changes to supplementary services

South Gloucestershire

1. Primary Care Satisfaction
2. Neurodivergent diagnosis for children and young people
3. Economic Deprivation

We're deepening our focus on how key issues shape people's experiences of health and care and we're taking steps to ensure those most affected by inequality are heard. By actively engaging with marginalised and excluded communities, we're working to make sure their voices drive real change in services.

We're also ramping up efforts to gather feedback from social care service users, so their lived experiences directly shape how care is designed, delivered, and improved.

Statutory statements – Bristol

Healthwatch Bristol is hosted by The Care Forum, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ

Healthwatch Bristol uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Local Advisory Group (LAG) consists of members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our LAG ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our local community.

Our work priorities are driven by what people have told us is important to them, through our surveys and feedback forms, information and signposting enquiries, web page views, and our review of localised strategic data.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2024/2025 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have worked with NBT, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, the ICB and marginalised community representatives.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be published on our website and shared with our mailing list whilst also being shared with the Integrated Care Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Oversight Scrutiny Committee.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had 2 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we share information with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Board. We also share information with relevant commissioners and service providers to ensure recommendations are visible and acted upon. A new system of following up on recommendations has been introduced in 2024/25 to ensure we are able to routinely measure the impact of future work

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Bristol is represented on the Bristol Council Health and Wellbeing Board and the ICB Board by varied Healthwatch Bristol staff.

During 2024/25 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending the meetings and workshops.

Staff also attended relevant HOSC, ICB, Inequality Committees throughout the year.

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Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Wellow Ward, a secure ward at Fromeside	Planned in collaboration with the AWP Patient Experience Team	Impact of the 6 Enter & Views is still being assessed following a change of provider for the Healthwatch services in BNSSG
Three wards at Callington Road Hospital: – Lime Ward – Silver Birch Ward – Cherry Ward		
Oakwood Ward at Southmead Hospital		
Juniper Ward, Longfox Unit, at Weston General Hospital		

Statutory statements – North Somerset

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We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have worked with North Somerset Welcomes Refugees, Portishead Youth and Community centre, young people, members and those experiencing multiple needs to gain vital insight.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be published on our website and shared with our mailing list whilst also being shared with the Integrated Care Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Oversight Scrutiny Committee.

Statutory statements – North Somerset

Responses to recommendations

We had 1 provider who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we share information with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Board. We also share information with relevant commissioners and service providers to ensure recommendations are visible and acted upon. A new system of following up on recommendations has been introduced in 2024/25 to ensure we are able to routinely measure the impact of future work

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch North Somerset is represented on the North Somerset Council Health and Wellbeing Board and the ICB Board by varied Healthwatch Swindon staff.

During 2024/25 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending the meetings and workshops.

Staff also attended relevant HOSC, ICB and Inequality Committees meetings throughout the year.

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Statutory statements – North Somerset

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
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Oakwood Ward at Southmead Hospital		
Juniper Ward, Longfox Unit, at Weston General Hospital		
Jhoots Pharmacy, Portishead	Due to the average Pharmacy First clinical pathway consultations per month being 4.6 times lower than the national average	The stakeholders who received this report ahead of publication did not provide a response to our findings.

Statutory statements – South Gloucestershire

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The way we work

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We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have worked with the Kingswood Carers support Group, the Yate Refugee Resettlement Hub and other marginalised community representatives.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be published on our website and shared with our mailing list whilst also being shared with the Integrated Care Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Oversight Scrutiny Committee.

Statutory statements – South Gloucestershire

Responses to recommendations

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Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

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For example, in our local authority area, we share information with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Board. We also share information with relevant commissioners and service providers to ensure recommendations are visible and acted upon. A new system of following up on recommendations has been introduced in 2024/25 to ensure we are able to routinely measure the impact of future work

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire is represented on the South Gloucestershire Council Health and Wellbeing Board and the ICB Board by varied Healthwatch South Gloucestershire staff.

During 2024/25 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending the meetings and workshops.

Staff also attended relevant HOSC, ICB, Inequality Committees throughout the year.

Statutory statements – South Gloucestershire

Enter and view

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Oakwood Ward at Southmead Hospital		
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