BARNARDO'S
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Social Media Policy

Social Media Policy for Colleagues
(This applies to all employed colleagues and volunteers, including trustees.)

Sponsor:	Director of Strategy and External Affairs
Owner:	Social Media Manager
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This Policy contains:
Part 1: our approach to social media at Barnardo's
Part 2: managing Barnardo's accounts
Part 3: advice for colleagues on managing their personal social media accounts

Part 1: our approach to social media at Barnardo's

Introduction

Social media is a vital tool for communicating with the Barnardo's community, including our supporters, decision-makers, parents, and increasingly children and young people (13+). Social media is central to how we inform, build relationships, persuade, and inspire people to support our work.

If used inappropriately, however, social media can create risks to children's safety, negatively impact on our reputation, and ultimately affect our funding or support.

The Policy provides advice for Barnardo's employed colleagues, including employees and volunteers, and our Trustees, about how we use social media safely and effectively.

It should be used in conjunction with other Barnardo's policies and procedures, such as the Social Media guidance document, Social Media crisis management guidance, Social Media community management guidance, Barnardo's Safeguarding Code of Conduct, the Data Protection Policy and our social media strategy.

This policy has been updated to cover each element of the Guidance on Charities and Social Media published by the Charity Commission in September 2023.

Developed by: Digital Content & Engagement
Last reviewed: November 2023

What do we mean by social media?

The term 'social media' is used in a number of ways, but for the purposes of this policy, it is defined as websites and digital applications (apps) that let you create and share content (images/videos/text/audio) or participate in social networking.

Social Media includes web and mobile-based technologies which are used to aid an online dialogue between organisations, communities and individuals. Social Media enables people as well as organisations to share written and visual content, and to make contact with people who may share a common interest.

Scope

This Policy includes:
- Advice for colleagues administering Barnardo's owned social media accounts and sub-accounts across the charity
- Advice for all colleagues, including volunteers, and Trustees (who are senior volunteers) on the use of their own personal social media accounts on the use of their own personal social media accounts

Definitions

- **Bio:** A social media bio is a short descriptive text that appears in the information section of a user's social media account, be it on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or TikTok.
- **Community Management:** Social media community management is the process of engaging audiences across social media networks to increase brand loyalty and grow authentic connections.
- **Moderation:** Social media moderation is the process of controlling the wanted (positive interactions or information) versus unwanted (offensive or discriminatory content) on social media platforms.

Our management of social media

A) Our core Barnardo's accounts
Barnardo's core social media channels are monitored and run by the social media Team, which sits in the Strategy & External Affairs Department.

These channels are: [Facebook](), [LinkedIn](), [Twitter (X)](), [Instagram](), [YouTube]() and [TikTok.]()

The purpose of these channels is to share the key information we want our audiences to know about Barnardo's at a given time. This includes:
- Evidence of our impact
- Ways to access support from our services
- Our position on major issues affecting children
- Our fundraising asks
- Ways of supporting the charity

Task	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
National social media team looking after content planning, scheduling and moderation.	Social Media Officer, Senior Social Media Officer, Senior Social Media Officer.	Social Media Manager	Head of Digital Content & Engagement	Head of External Communications & Engagement and Director of Strategy and External Affairs

On a daily basis (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) we use a social media monitoring and listening tool "Sprout social" to moderate and publish content. Any potential risks out of hours will be flagged by the out of hours duty officer who moderates in the evenings and on the weekends.

Content is created and published by the Social Media Team, with the Social Media Manager and Head of Digital Content & Engagement signing off proactive and reactive content, in collaboration with any relevant colleagues – such as subject matter experts. Where there is concern about any reputational risk, this is escalated to the Head of External Communications & Engagement and/or the Director of Strategy & External Affairs.

The Social Media Team is responsible for triggering any incident response as needed.

B) Barnardo's sub-accounts

Barnardo's has at least 531 social media sub-accounts within the charity. This includes:
- Facebook - 334 accounts - These are a mix of pages, personal profiles, public and private groups.
- Instagram - 65 Accounts
- Twitter - 132 Accounts

These sub-accounts are owned and run by children services, retail, policy, media and health teams.

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Part 2: managing Barnardo's accounts

> ### Rules of moderation and community management
>
> Our 'Social Media Community Management Guidance' outlines best practice for community management when acting as an admin on a Barnardo's social media account. The admins for the main Barnardo's social media channels are the Social Media Officer, Senior Social Media Officers and the Social Media Manager.
>
> Here are some examples of behaviour that could risk the charity's reputation:
> - Insensitive or out-of-touch comments
> - Comments or direct messages that raise a safeguarding concern
> - A negative review or comment/reply to something we've posted that is gaining traction
> - A complaint that tags or mentions the charity
> - An ex-colleague sharing negative views about Barnardo's
> - A current colleague whose bio lists Barnardo's as their employer expressing a political affiliation and/or sharing views that appear to contradict Barnardo's values.
>
> There are several red flag situations that should be escalated immediately. Red flag situations could be defined as the following:

Red flag situation	Examples
High volume of negative comments (Can include any **one** of the following:)	• Over 100 likes • Over 50 retweets • Over 20 replies/comments
Severity of accusations	• Safeguarding • Harassment • Accusations of historic abuse • Financial • Reputational Risk (Reputational risk is defined as anything that threatens the charity's reputation. This includes negative publicity and changes in public perception. Risks to your reputation can hurt your profits and affect your ability to find skilled employees) • Accusation made against colleague or volunteer
Pick-up from notable accounts	• MPs • Journalists/media contacts • Celebrities • Accounts with over 10,000 followers • We wouldn't look at blue ticks on Twitter as people can now pay to have a blue tick as part of a description. Blue ticks on Twitter only no longer represent a verified Individual or company.

If any of the above occurs and there is a risk of reputational or financial damage to the organisation, please follow the social media crisis management guidance.

What colleagues administering Barnardo's owned social media accounts and sub-accounts should do if someone posts abusive, offensive or harmful content on a Barnardo's social media account or raises a complaint

We would advise you to follow the below rules. However, if the situation escalated and there is a risk of reputational or financial damage to the charity, please follow the social media crisis management guidance.

- Only hide comments if they are violating our [guidelines](#).
- If it is a post, reply to acknowledge and aim to take the conversation offline, i.e. encourage them to direct message (DM) or offer a phone number to discuss their concerns further. We would6 do this once and on the first post ideally (if they are more than one posted), as doing this many times can trigger more negative comments and escalate quickly. Keep monitoring.
- If the post breaks our guidelines, point this out gently and say that we cannot tolerate this language – whatever the situation is. But if it is only expressing opinion that might be unfavourable, refer to the point above, i.e. acknowledge and try to take it offline.

If someone outside the charity posts content that poses a risk to the Barnardo's, we will consider:

- What action Barnardo's should take, based on the nature of the content and follow what our policy says. This will help us to comply with relevant regulation and with our own rules
- If we wish to report this to the platform to ban or block users from any further engagement with Barnardo's.
- Taking legal advice and reporting matters to the police where appropriate. For example, if there is a material risk to the personal safety of Barnardo's, an employee, volunteer or beneficiary

We will also consider:

- Whether Barnardo's would benefit from using tools (or reviewing the tools we currently use) that can help us moderate content. This includes moderating content before publication, managing who can comment, and using settings to hide or delete comments from certain users
- Whether relevant colleagues need training in this area, for example on the use of different tools
- Whether colleagues are getting the support they need from the Barnardo's, for example because of their experiences moderating others' comments or criticisms.
- Whether the Barnardo's should pause, or stop, allowing others to post comments

If a complaint is made in response to a Barnardo's social media post, we would:
- Respond with a direct message – not a public reply
- Direct them to our Complaints Policy

If this occurs on a sub-channel and:
   a) it could cause a safeguarding risk then follow our Safeguarding Policy in the normal way.
   b) it could cause harm to our reputation, please inform the Social Media Team for advice.

Managing potential risks in posting or sharing social media content

People can behave on social media, or respond to criticism they receive on social media, in ways they would not in other contexts, including in person.

At Barnardo's, in line with Charity Commission guidance, we do not permit any content on our channels – including our 'core' channels and our sub-channels that is:

- Harmful – what may be harmful to one person might not be considered harmful by someone else, however the UK Safer Internet Centre defines harmful content in simple terms as anything online which causes a person distress or harm
- Inconsistent with Barnardo's purpose – including our charitable objects, and our values and behaviours
- Not in the charity's best interests
- In breach of the law

Campaigning for change

Barnardo's core channels will reflect our policy calls and our recommendations to the Government and to political parties – which are grounded in evidence from our services and in the lived experience of children and young people.

Ordinarily, sub-accounts, and colleagues' personal accounts should not create this sort of content, although these channels can be used to amplify content shared on the core accounts.

Such activity must always be within the rules as defined in Charity Commission Guidance[1]. This means:

- Any 'political activity' will support the delivery of our purpose.
- Barnardo's may support a policy that is supported by a political party or candidate where it also supports our purpose.
- We will always remain independent from all political parties: we will work proactively to demonstrate that independence and take action to avoid any appearance of party-political affiliation.
- We will take additional care around election periods, to ensure we comply with relevant guidance from the Charity Commission.

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/political-activity-and-campaigning-by-charities#what-we-mean-by-political-activity

- At certain times our core social media channels may include a degree of this activity, but it will always be balanced with other content, to make clear that this activity is closely related to our direct work with children and young people.
- Our social media accounts can also be used for other (non-political) campaigning such as educating the public and raising awareness on key issues linked to our purpose.
- We take additional care and comply with applicable rules that apply during an election period.

Our Board of Trustees has agreed a reputational risk framework to guide decisions about when we speak out on key issues that could be considered controversial and/or are likely to divide opinion amongst members of the Barnardo's Community. Following this framework should ensure Barnardo's is compliant with regulation and with our own principles.

Creating a new social media presence for a specific Barnardo's programme, project or service

New social media accounts must be approved by the Social Media Manager who will use the following acceptance criteria. Social media accounts must:

- Have clearly defined objectives and KPIs, defined as part of an approved communications plan
- Have a content plan, clear objectives for the content and requirement to communicate regularly with a specific group of stakeholders on an ongoing basis
- Be based on clear evidence of people's needs and their use of that channel (not hearsay). You could refer to data from Google Analytics, examples of competitors or feedback from the service users themselves.
- Be sufficiently resourced to allow accounts to be checked at least twice a day with responses to questions/comments provided as appropriate
- Not be used for promoting internal initiatives (colleague comms)

Complete a new social media account proposal via Workfront, fill out a risk assessment form and content plan and then submit a request for consideration to the Social Media team (social.media@barnardos.org.uk).

Once you've submitted the Workfront request and the above information, a member of the team will be in touch within a week, and you should have a final answer within 3 to 4 weeks.

Please note that accounts may be asked to close for the following reasons:
- **Inactivity** – e.g.no original posts made for 1 month or more
- **Frequency –** e.g. less than one tweet/post a week over a 2-month period
- **Interest –** e.g. account has been active for 6 months or more but has less than 100 followers

Relevance – programme or project has closed

Creating a new social media account

- When you name your social media page, make sure that it's clear and includes a) the name of the service and b) what your relationship with the Barnardo's is. Sometimes it's best to only use the name of the service itself. For example, Barnardo's Futures or Bristol BASE.

- For x (twitter) accounts, please don't use 'Barnardo's' as part of the @handle as this causes confusion when other users are searching for the official 'Barnardo's' x account.

- Stay clear of anything generic like: @Barnardo'sChildrenServices.

- You should always mention Barnardo's in the description of your account page, clearly explaining that the service is a Barnardo's service, including information on the service, what it does and how it supports children and young people.

- Your page or account profile image should be your service logo or name. Please contact the creative team for logos.

Behaviour: key 'dos and don'ts' for Barnardo's social media accounts

If you are an admin on an authorised page or account for a programme or service, be sure to follow these guidelines as set out by the Digital Content and Engagement team. In any cases, you must not place a child or adult at risk, post any content which is illegal or use the channel to commit a crime.

Do	Do not
Think about how your posts are adding value – are they informative, timely and engaging?	Post any pictures of children, young people and families that we support and/or children without full written consent.
Accredit images, videos, stats and link back to the source, if possible.	Identify users of our services, colleagues, volunteers, partners, or suppliers by name without permission.
Gather written consent for any images/video that you may wish to post on our channels.	Cite or reference clients, partners, or suppliers without their approval.
Always respect copyright and trademark laws, including logos. Comply with the law in regard to copyright/plagiarism.	Posting of someone else's work without permission is not allowed. This includes the "lifting" (reusing content without permission) of images and videos from other sites.
Make sure passwords are changed regularly, limiting access only to those managing the channel, and changing immediately after someone who had access, had left the organisation.	Remember not to express or give support or funding to a political party, nor to a candidate or politician. This includes expressing political opinions on behalf of Barnardo's or to use the channel to influence others to support a political party.
Keep your personal account separate to any account which may have administrative rights on an official Barnardo's channel.	Use personal accounts to communicate with children and young people that Barnardo's works with.
Use Barnardo's brand identity and messages in a clear and concise way: please always refer to the brand guidelines when creating written, visual or audio content.	Alter the Barnardo's logo in any way.

If you are unsure as to whether something is appropriate to post or to share, please contact your line manager or a member of the Communications Team first and refrain from posting/sharing until you have discussed it with your manager. Think how might that person feel if they were to find out something was shared without their knowledge?

Potential breaches of these guidelines for Barnardo's social media accounts will be handled in accordance with our colleague [Resolution Policy | Inside Barnardos](#)

If you have any question or concerns about what information has been released to the public, speak with your manager or a member of the Communications Team.

Working with children, young people and families

Currently, our core channels primarily engage with adults. However, we are committed to reaching children and young people 'where they are', meaning we will be increasingly looking to engage children and young people through social media channels in the future. For now, this should only be done using the Barnardo's main social media channels and not via sub-accounts.

Using the internet and social media is a central part of life for children and young people. We have a set of [principles for engaging children and young people](#) on social media. We will do this in line with our values as a charity, and in the best interests of children. Fundamentally, the content we create, and share must be:

- Safe and appropriate
- Co-produced and/or responsive to the voice and experience of children and young people
- Inclusive and accessible

Videos or images featuring children and young people can only be posted once written permission has been granted by a parent /carer or social worker for all children involved who are under 18. For young people who are over 18, a direct consent will be required.

All channels should clearly communicate on their About or Description section the service opening hours and how to report a safeguarding concern. Be clear that channels are not monitored outside of these opening times and in the event of an emergency, service users should contact emergency services. You may direct to this page for further guidance: https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-help

Each service must include safeguarding 'rules' in their social media channel descriptions. For consistency, you can copy the guidelines from our main Barnardo's accounts. For Facebook, fill in the details on the "About" tab. Specifically, we advise that you update the 'Description' field with 'house rules' for your page and appropriate use of it. See the main Barnardo's rules under "general" for reference:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/barnardos/about/

Be aware of **minimum age requirements** on your page. It would not be appropriate, for example, to use a Facebook page to communicate directly with primary school-aged children, as Facebook requires its users to be at least 13 years old.

Currently, the minimum age to open an account on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok and Snapchat is 13, and for WhatsApp it's 16. YouTube requires account holders to be 18, however a 13-year-old can sign up with a parent's permission.

Young people should not be encouraged to join social media channels in order to engage with Barnardo's or a service we offer. Any information, guidance or engagement offered through social media should be in addition to existing methods of engagement.

Safeguarding

As well as being a great engagement and information tool, the use of social media/networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people. Most children, young people and their families use the internet positively, but sometimes they and others may behave in ways that pose a risk.

Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- Online bullying
- Grooming, exploitation or stalking
- Exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language
- The vulnerable person giving away personal details, which can be used to locate them, harass them or steal their identity
- Coercion into illegal activity, such as distributing illegal content or hate crime
- Indoctrination into ideations, including radicalisation
- Encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking
- People's wellbeing not being promoted, as their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs are not taken into account.

In order to mitigate these risks there are steps you can take to promote safety online:

- Don't target/or engage with children who are likely to be under the minimum requirement age for the social networking service that you are promoting. This is usually 13 years, but can vary by platform so check the T&Cs of that site.
- Don't accept 'friend' requests from anyone you suspect to be underage.
- Avoid collecting, and don't ask users to post any personal details publicly, including: home and email addresses, school information, home or mobile numbers.
- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate and or meet a child or young person that is not directly linked to the work you do.
- The Sexual Offences Act (2003) combats increasing sexual approaches to access children and young people on-line. The Act 2003 created an offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming. This makes it a crime to befriend a child on the Internet or by other social media means and to arrange to meet or intend to meet the child or young person with the intention of abusing them.
    - Be careful how you use images of children or young people – photographs and videos can be used to identify them to people who wish to groom them for abuse.
    - ✓ consider using models, stock photography or illustrations
    - ✓ if a child, young person or adult at risk is named, do not use their image
    - ✓ if an image is used, do not name the child, young person or adult at risk
    - ✓ obtain parents'/carers/guardians or Lasting Power of Attorney's written consent to film, or use photographs on websites
- Ensure that any messages, photos, videos or information comply with existing policies.
- Promote safe and responsible use of social media/networking to your audience online and consider providing links to safety and support organisations on your profile. Remind people to protect their privacy.
- Data Protection considerations – when you are collecting personal information about data subjects, you should always follow the requirements set out in our Data Protection Policy. You should not use social media to collect personal data, this should be done via alternative means, e.g. by signposting to a form on the website.

If you believe a child is at risk, escalate immediately, following our Safeguarding Policy and procedure.

In all cases, please ensure you apply the Barnardo's Safeguarding Code of Conduct to your work, related to managing and monitoring your service social media accounts.

Video and audio sharing

Video is an excellent medium for providing stimulating and engaging content, which can potentially be seen by many people as it is easily shared on social media sites and embedded on other people's websites.

You must ensure that all video and audio files are appropriate to share/publish and do not contain any confidential, commercially sensitive or defamatory information.

If the material is official Barnardo's content, then it must be branded appropriately and be labelled and tagged accordingly. It must not be credited to an individual or production company. Please contact the [Brand Team](#) for a final sign-off of all creative assets created.

As an organisation we have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that [accessibility guidelines](#) are met and that we provide material that is usable by all, regardless of disability or access to the latest technology. When publishing video content, a transcript must be provided alongside the video content and closed captions should be added. Video is an excellent medium for providing stimulating and engaging content, which can potentially be seen by many people as it is easily shared on social media sites and embedded on other people's websites.

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Compliance with relevant laws and internal policies and principles

Barnardo's social media use must comply with the following relevant laws, principles and internal policies:

- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Data Protection Policy
- Copyright law - if you are using any third party content, images or artwork on social media ensure you have the required permissions before posting.
- Defamation law – consider whether your posts may have an adverse impact on the reputation of any individuals they may feature;
- Confidentiality – consider whether content may breach Barnardo's obligations of confidentiality in any respects
- Whistleblowing policy
- Equality and human rights including discrimination, victimisation, harassment, and freedom of expression;

If you are in any doubt regarding legal or policy compliance, please contact your People Team in the first instance. If there is a potential breach in law and/or Barnardo's policy, we will investigate the matter under our Colleague Resolution Policy | Inside Barnardos which may result in formal action being taken up to and including dismissal.

If you are aware of a colleague/service page not operating within this policy, you should inform your line manager and report any reputational risk via social.media@barnardos.org.uk

Please be aware that the social media team monitors the use of Barnardo's social media profiles and accounts that we have authorised for professional use.

Part 3: advice for colleagues on managing their personal social media accounts

Guidance for colleagues, including volunteers, and for trustees using personal social media accounts

The behaviour of our colleagues and volunteers can affect the charity's reputation. This is especially true for senior colleagues and those in prominent, public-facing roles because there is potential for content posted by individuals acting in their personal capacity being associated with the charity. In particular, as a charity we must remain independent of any political party and ensure we *appear* to be independent of all parties. This is essential to maintain the trust and confidence of the public.

Many colleagues will of course have strong views on many issues, and in expressing those views it is important to make clear that we are not speaking on behalf of the charity.

This policy also applies to young people who represent Barnardo's in public-facing engagements, such as parliamentary events or in the media.

When using a personal account to support our work, there are a few key things to note:

1) Please do not include Barnardo's in your username or handle (the letters after the @ symbol). This helps to ensure that personal accounts are, and appear, personal, not official branded channels. It also improves the overall professionalism of your account.

For example, on X (Twitter):

	Do use	Don't use
Name	• Jane Doe	• Jane Barnardo's • Jane Doe Barnardo's • CSM Barnardo's • Barnardo's – Jane Doe
Handle (the letters after the @ symbol)	• @JaneDoe • @JDoe • @JaneDoe85	• @BarnardosJane • @JaneDBarnardos • @CSMbarnardosJane

2) When sharing any work-related content from personal accounts, please ensure you follow the same rules that would apply when posting from Barnardo's accounts. Safeguarding must be the primary consideration, and confidentiality should always be respected. Specifically, photos and videos featuring children and young people must only be posted following permission.

3) If you disclose that you work for Barnardo's on your profile or in any of your posting, you must state that the views expressed are your own.

Below are two models to guide your approach to personal use of social media. All colleagues with a personal social media presence should follow either option 1 or option 2 below. If you are not sure which is best, then please speak to your manager or a member of the External Communications Team before posting.

Option 1	State that you work for Barnardo's in your bio. State that views expressed are your own. You should always consider the likely impact of any posts on the charity's reputation: e.g. Avoid expressing views that could contradict Barnardo's position; stating controversial or divisive positions on relevant issues; and ***avoid any appearance of party political affiliation or bias.*** See our colleague handbook - section Political Impartiality for more information	This is likely to be most suitable for colleagues at Director level and above, and those in public-facing positions.
Option 2	Describe your position as eg. 'working for a children's charity'. We advise that you state 'all views are my own'. Please be mindful on engaging on issues that are sensitive to Barnardo's and could be seen as contradicting our values or could otherwise bring the charity into disrepute. Please note it is often possible to find out where someone works – for instance by cross-referencing an x or Facebook account with LinkedIn.	Best for the vast majority of colleagues.

4) Be yourself but do consider your audience and how you might come across to others. As a rule, you shouldn't share anything on social media that you wouldn't be comfortable for your line manager or other colleagues to see.

5) Be respectful to others when sharing/posting anything on social media and follow our Equality, diversity and inclusion: code of conduct. On personal social networks and messaging services– even closed ones like Facebook and WhatsApp – you should be aware that posts you have made can be shared outside of your network for which you will be held responsible for. If you make a posting which could bring Barnardo's name into disrepute or breach the standards of our Equality, diversity and inclusion: code of conduct then this may result in formal action being taken under our Colleague Resolution Policy.

6) You should also be aware that it is possible for social media users to connect the work you do for Barnardo's with other social media postings. The likelihood of this is increased if you declare on work related social media e.g LinkedIn that you work at Barnardo's. It is therefore important to remember that when posting in a personal capacity you may still easily be identified by other users as working for Barnardo's even if you don't state it.

7) To share Barnardo's messages in a clear, professional, and engaging way, please keep an eye on spelling and grammar. As much as possible, use proper English rather than 'text speak'. Vary your content – here are some tips from x (twitter) on writing successful tweets.

8) It's not advisable for colleagues, including volunteers, to raise concerns with Barnardo's via social media. Please speak to your line manager or People Team if you'd like to discuss an issue or alternatively, please refer to our Resolution Policy for information on how to raise a concern.

9) We regularly monitor social media to keep up with what people are saying about Barnardo's and look for opportunities to share great content from people who work with us. If we notice an instance of a colleague bringing the charity's reputation into disrepute or acting inappropriately, we will escalate it to the relevant line manager and/or HR.

Read more in our 'Social Media Guidance' document.

If you have any questions relating to this policy, please get in touch by emailing social.media@barnardos.org.uk

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