



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024-2025

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Cymraeg
This document is also available in Welsh

www.npt.gov.uk/welshlanguage

If you require this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Corporate Policy Team on 07805 771506 or email: policy@npt.gov.uk

Introduction

Welcome to our Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2024-2025.

The Welsh Language Standards require the council to 'produce an 'annual report' on the way in which it has complied with the relevant standards during the previous financial year. This is the council's ninth such report.

The Standards give Welsh speakers the right to use the language when dealing with certain organisations and requires these organisations to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than English. The focus is on actively offering language choice i.e. providing services in Welsh without service users or employees having to request them.

2024-2025 was a busy and exciting year for the council in terms of taking action to fulfil our commitment to complying with the standards, whilst preparing to welcome Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr in May 2025.

With our revised Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan now in their

second and third years, respectively, we are beginning to see progress.

Feedback from the compliance monitoring exercise undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Officer for the period was encouraging, and a number of the measures in this report show a gradual but positive trend.

We know that supporting and encouraging Welsh speakers and learners to use their language skills at work is key to our compliance journey. Linked to this, work continued to ensure that employees completed the mandatory Welsh Language in NPT eLearning course, as a result 2,859 staff had completed the course by 31st March 2025, an increase of 1,179 since the end of the previous year. In addition, a number of new initiatives and training opportunities were introduced for council employees during the year.

Whilst adhering to the standards continues to be challenging, it is something that the council remains passionate about. We look forward to working with colleagues and partners to build on our progress to date.

Accountability

The council has ultimate accountability for the implementation of the standards, with the Chief Executive having overall responsibility for ensuring arrangements are in place to secure compliance. In addition, we recognise that each member of staff has a role to play in the successful application of the standards.

Our governance arrangements require the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report to be monitored by Cabinet thereby ensuring progress on performance is being sustained.

The Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Team within the Strategy and Corporate Services Directorate offers advice to council services on how to comply with the Standards. The team also oversees the council's Welsh language complaints process, ensuring that any claims of non-compliance with the standards are promptly brought to our attention.

All information and support materials relating to the implementation of the Welsh language standards are available to council employees on our internal intranet, NPT Connect.

Awareness of the requirements of the standards is raised via Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Team, directorate management teams, and team meetings, as well as through the council's various employee communications channels, e.g. Viva Engage – Microsoft's application for community and conversations in the workplace, NPT Connect Highlights (top news stories), and 'In the Loop' and Sway staff newsletters.

The Welsh Language Officer Group (WLOG) supports the administration and implementation of the standards and helps with the early resolution of any issues that may occur, supports staff in the delivery of services in accordance with the duties placed on the council and helps to promote the language.

Background

This annual report outlines our council's implementation of the Welsh language standards and details specific areas such as the number of Welsh-speaking staff and the language requirements for vacant posts, as mandated by the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015.

The standards applied to the council under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are included in our [compliance notice](#).

Compliance & Promotion

Following a successful recruitment process, our new Corporate Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language) took up post in October 2024.

Welsh Language Commissioner: compliance with Welsh language standards

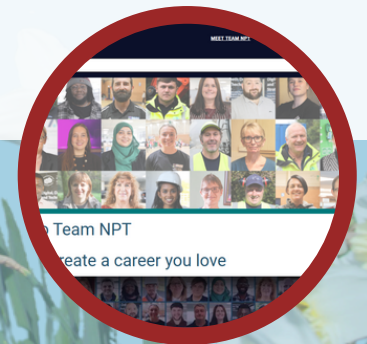
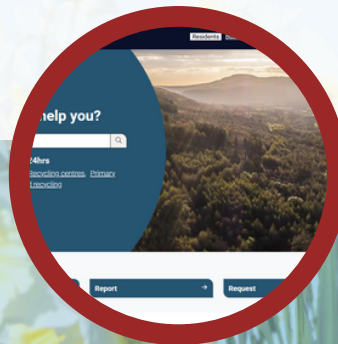
In March 2025 officers met with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Standards Setting and Compliance Officer to discuss the outcome of their compliance monitoring exercise.

A selection of areas of activity were assessed including telephone calls; corporate identity; the corporate website; publicity and advertising; documents; forms; and jobs.

Although much of the feedback received was positive, there were a few instances where we fell short, including:

- anomalies between the Welsh and English language on four social media posts
- out of the 15 webpages reviewed, four had something missing e.g. text, links etc.
- job advertisements lacked a statement on the Welsh language pages that states *'applications may be submitted in Welsh, and an application submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than an application submitted in English'*

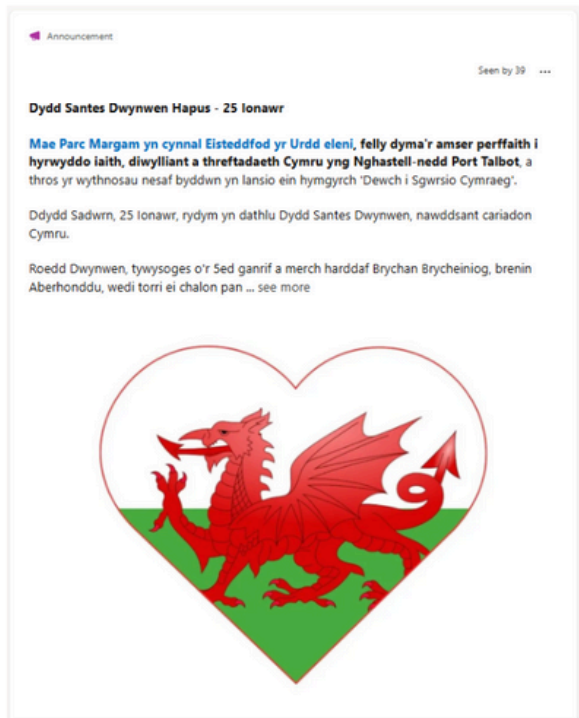
These issues have since been addressed.



Internal Use of Welsh

We recognise that not everyone has the confidence to use their language skills at work and consequently there might be an element of underreporting of Welsh language skills by employees.

In December 2024, we began publishing introductions from the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors in our weekly staff newsletter in Welsh as well as English. Staff news articles relating to Welsh language and culture are now also published bi-lingually.



Over the year we saw a small, increase in the number of colleagues on our Welsh speaking employee directory.

Plans are underway to introduce a new 5-point matrix for self-assessment of Welsh language skills and it is hoped that this, combined with the increase in visibility of the Welsh language in internal communications outlined above, will result in a further increase in numbers on the directory



Internal Use of Welsh Policy

The council is developing an Internal Use of Welsh Policy.

In February 2025, we were pleased to be invited to take part in a pilot being undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner's around this area of work.

The policy will be published during the 2025-2026 financial year.

Service Delivery Standards

Council Meetings

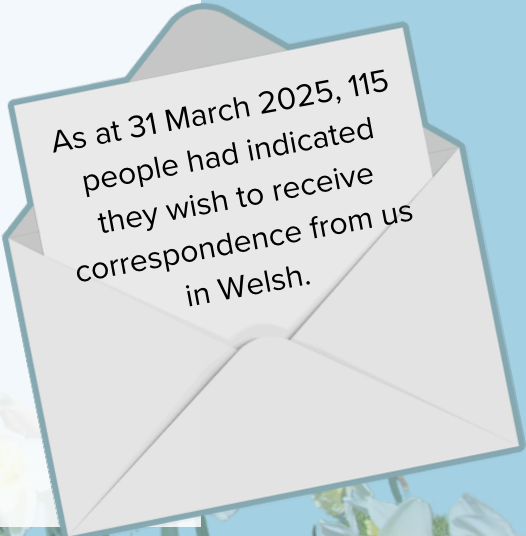
Full Council meetings are held on a hybrid basis, with participants choosing whether they attend in person in the Council Chamber or if they sign in remotely.

With the activation of Microsoft Teams Welsh translation software, we offer simultaneous Welsh translation for all participants in full Council meetings (whether in person or remotely) while being fully integrated with the Council's Public-I webcasting and hybrid audio visual equipment.

Correspondence in Welsh

We continue to make an 'active offer' to correspond with our service users in Welsh with a 'Correspondence in Welsh' button on the 'Request' area of our webpages.

Online correspondence - Our resident account platform, myNPT, was launched during the year and is fully bilingual. Language preference is captured during sign-up and applied across all communications, including bin day notifications. The platform offers a seamless bilingual experience, with the Welsh content designer embedded in the product team to ensure that all new features and content meet the needs of Welsh-speaking users. New "Report It" and "Contact Us" forms have also been developed bilingually, enabling residents to self-serve in their preferred language.



As at 31 March 2025, 115 people had indicated they wish to receive correspondence from us in Welsh.

Policy Making Standards

The requirements of the policy making standards are incorporated into the council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) framework. The impact assessment process is undertaken for all new and revised policies /initiatives and so opportunities to use Welsh as well as not treating Welsh less favourably than English are considered each time. Comprehensive guidance and associated forms are currently available to all staff on NPT Connect.

In November 2024 the Welsh Language Commissioner published the findings from a key line of enquiry on how organisations consider the impact of their policy decisions on the Welsh language. The same month, officers attended a session on the policy making standards as part of the Commissioner's promoting compliance programme.

The Commissioner made it clear that the report is not intended to identify failures, but rather to help organisations learn from each other and to encourage organisations to adopt new approaches. The report makes 5 recommendations. Officers have reviewed the arrangements in Neath Port Talbot in light of the recommendations to identify where the recommendations are already being met, and to create an action plan for responding to the actions where the council's arrangements need to be strengthened.

In October 2024, "Consultation and the Welsh language" training took place for officers involved in conducting consultations on policy decisions (see page 9 – Training). Learning from the training was used to inform a new consultation and engagement strategy and toolkit due to be launched in Summer 2025.





Operational standards

There was a decrease (-11) in the number of staff who identify as having Welsh language skills in 2024-25 compared with 2023-24. The number of Welsh learners made up the majority of this (-9), however the numbers of those identifying as a fluent or fairly fluent Welsh speaker & writer or writer increased slightly (+1 and +2).

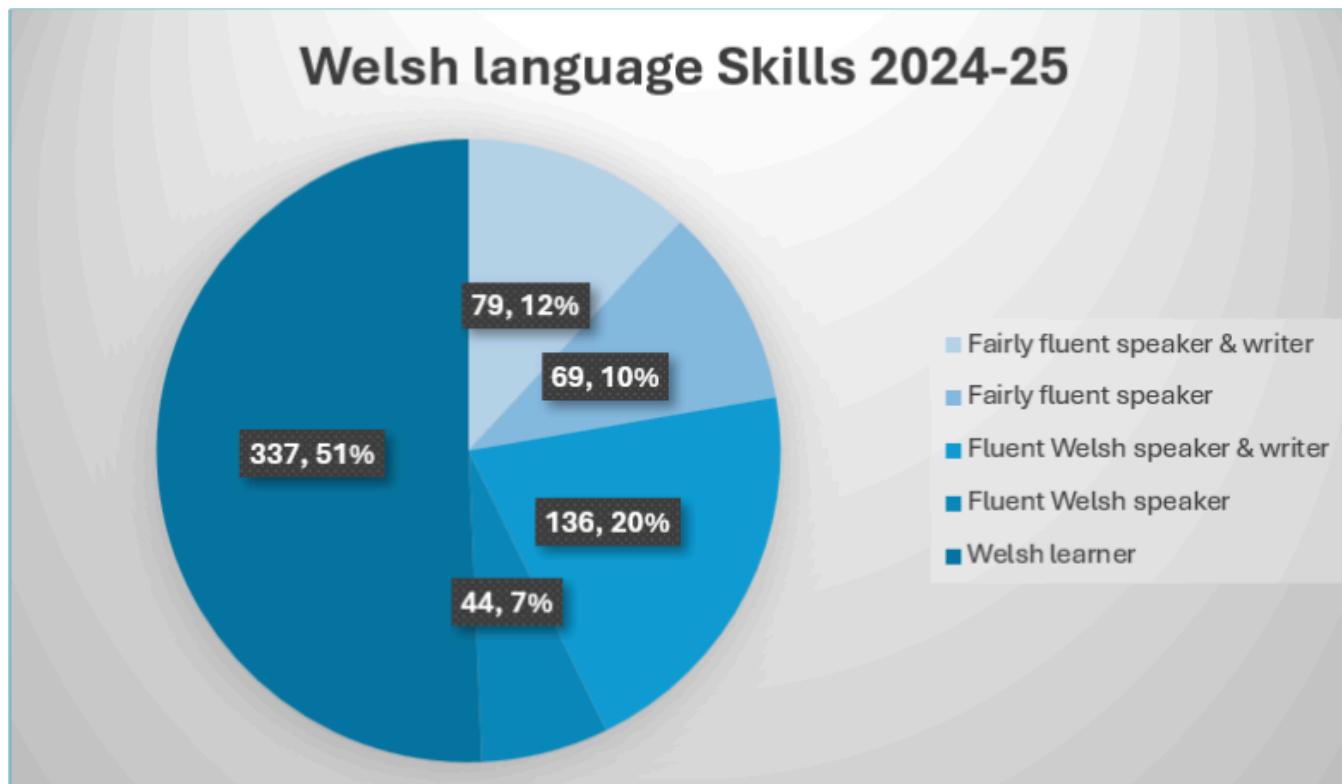
A breakdown of Welsh language skills by directorate/service area can be found on page 14, while a comparison of language skills since 2022-2023 can be found on page 13.

Welsh Speakers directory

During 2024-2025, 130 members of staff were identified on our Welsh speakers employee directory as willing/able to use their language skills as part of their work.

This is a small increase from 2023-2024 (125).

Information, and support material - guidance and other support material on using and complying with the Welsh language standards is available to all staff via Welsh language pages on NPT Connect (intranet).



Training

Our comprehensive training programme signposts employees to various options for Welsh language training and support tools including the 'Help me choose a course' guide and mobile applications, podcasts, music, TV, and resources to use with children and young people.

The council's new Learning Management System, Thinqi was launched in December 2024. Thinqi is a one stop shop for employees' training needs allowing them to complete eLearning, book their own courses and view training records. The platform is bilingual, and employees can select their preferred language or toggle between both whilst engaging with the platform. It also includes Welsh language courses:

- Mandatory Welsh language awareness training
- SCW Welsh Language Awareness (provided by Learning Consortium Wales) - this module gives people working in social care, from early years through to caring for the elderly, an awareness of why Welsh language skills and working bilingually are important. It also signposts to further resources that provide support.
- WLGA (Members) Welsh Language Standards training (provided by Learning Consortium Wales)

As mentioned earlier, in October 2024, "Consultation and the Welsh language" training took place. The bespoke training was developed with and delivered by Ateb who have extensive bilingual communications and compliance experience in consultation and engagement exercises across Wales. It was attended by council officers who are involved in developing consultation documents on policy decisions relating to reorganising education in NPT, officers who hold licences for Snap Survey software, Planning Policy officers and Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Officers. The training completed the enforcement actions in the Welsh Language Commissioner's decision notice on complaint CS114 (proposed establishment of an English medium school in the Swansea Valley).

The logo for Thinqi, featuring the word 'thinqi' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. The 'q' is stylized with a red dot.

Training

In March 2025, in partnership with Menter Iaith CnPT, 'Hyder...ish' sessions were reintroduced for NPT Council employees. The first block of six sessions were held at Port Talbot Civic Centre with five members of staff registering (a further two cohorts are planned for Neath Civic Centre and The Quays, although it is intended to consider the feasibility of making these sessions hybrid to encourage greater uptake). Plans are also in place to re-introduce regular 'Sgwrs' sessions in 2025-2026.

During the year, the corporate induction training session for new employees was also reviewed and updated (for use from the start of the 2025-2026 financial year). The slide deck for the training was made fully bi-lingual. The Welsh language element of the induction was also strengthened. It originally included two slides of basic information on the Standards and what they cover, together with information on where staff can find further information and support. The new version includes 11 slides on Welsh language and culture covering:

- a brief history of the Welsh language (including The Welsh Not; The Treason of the Blue Books; Cymraeg 2050)
- the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011
- the Welsh Language Standards (what, why and how)
- Welsh Language support for staff; and
- more information and guidance

In 2024-2025 (1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025):

- 10 new learners enrolled on various Welsh Language courses.
- 7 learners have completed modules of training.
- 3 learners remain enrolled and are at various stages of completion.
- 2859 staff have completed the mandatory Welsh Language in NPT eLearning course as of 31st March 2025 (an increase of 1,179 over the course of the financial year)



Promotion standards

Our Welsh Language Officers' Group, which includes very much valued representation from Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, continued to meet regularly, one of their functions being to support the implementation of our revised Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

With the start of 2025 heralding the countdown to Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr at Margam Country Park in May 2025, the group was keen to make the most of the enhanced opportunities to promote Welsh language and culture.

Progress on the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy is subject to its own annual report, but some of the activities during the year included:

- Reintroduction of 'Welsh words of the week' features in the weekly employee newsletters. Where possible these were linked to topical themes, e.g. rugby related words to coincide with the Six Nations, St. Daynwen's Day words, words linked to Christmas, words linked to the budget etc.
- We supported the Defnyddia dy Gymraeg (Use your Welsh) campaign in November 2024 through internal communications and amplifying messages via our corporate social media platforms.
- Dydd Gŵl Dewi events for employees held on Monday 3 March 2025 at Neath Civic Centre, Port Talbot Civic Centre and The Quays
- Re-launch of 'Hyder...ish' sessions in March 2025, led by Menter Iaith CnPt. These 6-week, free, informal sessions are aimed at Welsh speaking employees who need to build their confidence.



Promotion standards (cont.)

Welsh Medium Education - Benefits of bilingual education videos

Our Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate produced a series of 'Taith at Ddwy Waith' videos to support the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. These focus on Welsh-medium pathways from pre-birth to further education and promote the benefits of bilingualism and Welsh-medium education.

The videos were made using funding available to trial interventions in response to the results of the linguistic reduction observed in the 2021 Census in former industrial heartland areas of the Western Valleys.

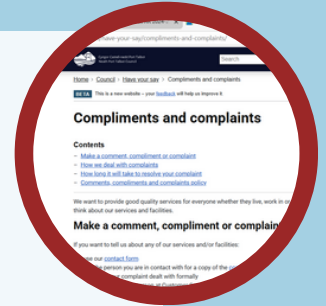


Record Keeping Standards

Complaints

According to Standard 170, the council is required to publish information about any complaints received regarding its compliance with the standards. No complaints were received either via the Welsh Language Commissioner or directly to the council, during 2024-2025.

During the year, the council completed the enforcement actions contained in the decision notice for complaint CS114 (a consultation regarding the closure of three English medium schools to create a new school for around 700 children in Pontardawe).



Measures

Vacant Posts – Language Skills	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025
Desirable	150	123	68
Essential	29	22	12
No Welsh skills required	712	716	466
Need to learn Welsh	5	4	0

Complaints	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025
Number of complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner	1	0	1
Number of complaints where the Welsh Language Commissioner determined no investigation necessary	1	0	1
Number of complaints where the Welsh Language Commissioner determined there was no failure to comply with the standards	N/A	0	0

Language Skills of NPT Council staff	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Fairly fluent speaker & writer	81	77	79
Fairly fluent speaker	74	74	69
Fluent Welsh speaker & writer	139	135	136
Fluent Welsh speaker	53	44	44
Welsh learner	367	346	337
TOTAL	714	676	665

Vacant Posts for 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025		
Welsh language skill requirements	Number of posts	% of posts
Essential	12	2.2%
Desirable	68	12.5%
Need to learn Welsh	0	0
No Welsh skills required	466	85.3%

Measures (cont.) - NPT Council Employees language skills by directorate/service area

Directorate/Service	Fairly Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fairly Fluent Speaker	Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fluent Speaker	Welsh Learner	Little or no knowledge	Prefer Not To Say	Total	Not Reported
Chief Officers	0	0	1	0	0	5	0	6	0
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning									
Early Years Inclusion & Partnerships	6	3	9	2	31	102	5	158	37
Education Development	5	2	9	3	11	36	2	68	17
Leisure Tourism Heritage & Culture	2	1	6	1	15	108	0	133	16
Support Services & Transformation	12	6	29	8	43	392	25	515	210
Environment & Regeneration									
Business Support Services	0	1	0	0	1	6	0	8	1
Engineering & Transport	3	2	4	1	9	90	3	112	41
Planning & Public Protection	3	3	1	1	23	57	3	91	24
Property & Regeneration	3	8	5	4	11	138	2	171	45
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	3	5	11	5	18	144	1	187	42
Streetcare Services	5	8	11	5	31	299	8	367	111
Social Service Health and Housing									
Adult Services	15	11	17	6	48	397	23	517	74
Business Services	0	2	3	2	6	74	2	89	23
Children & Young People Services	9	5	12	3	40	206	2	277	90
Housing & Communities	1	3	4	1	14	81	7	111	14
Strategy & Corporate Services									
Digital Services	3	1	1	0	7	68	1	81	26
Financial Services	2	4	3	0	10	116	0	135	24
Legal & Democratic Services	5	2	4	1	12	44	0	68	24
People & Organisational Development	2	2	6	1	7	86	2	106	26
Total	79	69	136	44	337	2449	86	3200	845

Measures (cont.)

Telephone calls	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Number of staff with fluent/fairly fluent language skills identified in the employee directory	125	125	130
Average time to answer telephone calls – English	65 seconds	48 seconds	55 seconds
Average time to answer telephone calls – Welsh	81 seconds	71 seconds	53 seconds

Our average wait times for Welsh language calls have continued to reduce steadily since 2022-2023.

We retained a full cohort of Welsh speaking employees at our contact centre (ensuring that when Welsh speaking officers left, we recruited Welsh speakers).

The Interactive voice response (IVR) message for incoming calls on our automated telephone system technology was changed during the financial year, to ensure that only callers wishing to converse in Welsh came through to the Welsh language line.

Social Media	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
X (followers)			
English corporate account	17,107	17,131	16,712
Welsh corporate account	476	520	503
Facebook (followers)			
English corporate account	21,273	22,596	25,273
Welsh corporate account	236	313	366

Translations
Total cost of translations
(where able to be identified)

2022-2023:
£46,701

2023-2024:
£89,735

2024-2025:
£66,663

Measures (cont.)

NPT News e-Newsletters Number of subscribers	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Welsh e-Newsletter	20	95	34
English e-Newsletter	2,480	2,769	4,002
Bilingual e-Newsletter	63	N/A	98

Website	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total number of hits on website	5,188,512	5,197,608	4,645,216
Total number of hits on English pages	5,162,837	5,179,020	4,622,932
Total number of hits Welsh webpages	25,675	18,588*	22,284

** Due to changes to Google analytics in 2023-2024, there were periods where it was not possible to identify between Welsh and English hits. This problem has now been addressed by our new website which enable easier analysis.*

**Have Your Say**

Enquiries or feedback on this report are welcomed via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk

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Neath Port Talbot Council,
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Port Talbot SA13 1PJ

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