**Section 1: Definition of a complaint** 

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as:  'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link:  https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Contained in policy at Section 2 What is a complaint.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such.  Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link:  https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Contained in policy at Section 2
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Contained at Section 3 of the Policy Service Request.

1.8	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing.  Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Contained in Policy under Section 3 Service Requests
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Survey Scripts	Our survey script indicates that customers are informed of the right of complaint.

#### **Section 2: Exclusions**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Both on our website and policy we clearly explain the circumstances in which we will not accept a complaint. As a Local Authority we will always consider complaints on individual merits.  Internal use in our procedure we talk about each case on individual merits.
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:  • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.  • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.  • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Both on our website and policy we clearly explain the circumstances in which we will not accept a complaint.

2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	No	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Under Section 6 of the Policy
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 2 Definition of a Complaint. We cover this point.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 2 Definition of a Complaint. We cover this point.

### **Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link:  https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	We have multiple channels which are residents are able to utilise in order to make a complaint. These are listed both in policy and our website.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 2 definition of a complaint we referenced this point.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 3 Accessibility and Awareness
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link:  https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	Please see the link for the policy

3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and- democracy/complaints-and-compliments	On our website we include under further information details of both Ombudsman and direct residents to the relevant web pages.
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure	The Local Authority will engage with third parties upon receipt of consent.
	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the	Yes	Complaints Procedure Provide Stage 1 Acknowledgement as evidence	From the outset of the Stage 1 Acknowledgement Residents are
3.7	Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.			informed of the relevant Ombudsman they can contact.

### **Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes		We have a responsible team of individuals to complete the essential tasks related to complaints management.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.			A policy note has been included in the procedure
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.		Exec Board Paper for Learning To use copies of learning action plans eg	As you will see our structure chart means we sit outside of any core service so are fully impartial and supported for complaints. Our recent Exec Board paper which has been reviewed shows that as a Local Authority we are invested in learning from complaints.

## **Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure  Complaints Procedure	The evidence documents are those that work to for all cases aside from those with social care elements which have to follow an alternative pathway.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure  Complaints Procedure	We have in place the recommended 2 stage process before referral to Ombudsman again aside from those matters which fall under the social care processes.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Policy published on website at the following link: https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-policy-and-procedure  Complaints Procedure	As above we have only a 2 stage process.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Contained in Procedure under Section 6

5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Contained in Procedure under Section 6
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Reference contained under Section 2 and Section 6.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Reference contained under Section 2 and Section 6.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:  a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;  b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;  c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and  d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Reference contained under Section 5

5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the procedure
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Complaints Procedure Complaint Policy	Under Policy Section 12 Under Procedure Section 3
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Complaints Procedure Complaints Policy	Please under Procedure Section 2. Under Policy Section 6
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentations such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	This is contained under Section 6 of the procedure.

5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Complaints Procedure Remedy Guidance	We do not expect our residents to have to escalate their concerns to the highest level to receive a remedy to the issues staff at all levels are reminded of the remedy guidance.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.		Vexatious Policy	Whilst we have a vexatious policy in place we recognise that this requires further work to ensure that it covers all points. Work is being undertaken to update this policy.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.		Vexatious Policy	Whilst we have a vexatious policy in place we recognise that this requires further work to ensure that it covers all points. Work is being undertaken to update this policy.

### **Section 6: Complaints Stages**

#### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Procedure Guidance on how to respond to complaints	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is included.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the Complaints Procedure this information is included.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the Complaints Procedure this information is included.
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the Complaints Procedure this information is included.

6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints Acknowledgement	In the complaint acknowledgement through to the final response complainants are advised of the Ombudsman who can assist.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is included.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is included.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is included.

	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is
	clear, plain language:			covered.
	<ol><li>a. the complaint stage;</li></ol>			
	b. the complaint definition;			
	C. the decision on the complaint;			
6.9	d. the reasons for any decisions made;			
	<ul><li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li></ul>			
	f. details of any outstanding actions; and			
	g. details of how to escalate the matter			
	to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied			
	with the response.			

# Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.

6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints Acknowledgment	In the complaint acknowledgement through to the final response complainants are advised of the Ombudsman who can assist.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issues are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.

6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:  a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 6 of the complaints procedure this information is covered.

### **Section 7: Putting things right**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<ul> <li>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.</li> <li>These can include: <ul> <li>Apologising;</li> <li>Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Yes	Remedy Guidance	We have drafted a full remedy guidance which includes options open to all teams on how to rectify a complaint.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Remedy Guidance	We ask Teams individually to determine the impact but they are able to seek support from the Feedback Team if required.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Remedy Guidance	We ask our teams to include any remedy within the responses which are provided and that these are tracked the Feedback Team will support tracking from Review Stage onwards.

Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.  7.4	Yes	Remedy Guidance	When the Remedy Guidance was issued this was in line with published information supplied on the Ombudsman web pages.
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Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:  a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.  b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;  c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;  d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;  e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and  f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.	Yes	a) The self-assessment is added as an appendix to the report. b) https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-and-compliments c) As Above d) As Above e) As Above f) As Above	<ul> <li>a) Annually we produce the SEF to Committee and it remains published on our webpages.</li> <li>b) The annual report contains information based both on qualitative and quantitative data.</li> <li>c) This is included under the Ombudsman Section</li> <li>d) This is included as part of the commentary under each service area.</li> <li>e) This is included under the Ombudsman Section.</li> <li>f) Links to the reporting section of each individual Ombudsman is linked on our webpage.</li> </ul>

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8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-and-compliments	Our annual complaints reports are published as part of the agenda for Committee to ensure that the full response can be found we will link to the Committee page as this web cast.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self- assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 11 Scrutiny and Oversight

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight

9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Co	•	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Co	•	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:  a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;  b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;  c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and  d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report	С	•	We have as an added additional information in our procedure to cover this requirement. It can be found under 11 Scrutiny and Oversight

9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:  a. have a collaborative and cooperative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;  b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and  c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Complaints Procedure	Under Section 8, 9, 10 and 11 we have information which will show our drive to improve the outcomes of complaints.
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