Brain Injury Matters

IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

Brain Injury Matters

Supporting, Empowering and Advocating on behalf of all those affected by Acquired Brain Injury

#livingbeyondABI

braininjurymatters.org.uk

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CHAIRPERSON'S OVERVIEW

Our work and provision of services this year must be set against the background of the cost-of-living crisis and the challenging funding environment. Despite these challenges we continue to deliver innovative programmes to meet the needs of our users.

Our Children and Youth Service incorporating the Family First and Youth Empowerment programmes supported 203 people throughout the year.

The Youth Matters Empowerment Programme (13-18 years) supports young people and families to understand ABI and its impact. A particular highlight was the mentoring group's creation of "My Invisible Brain Injury". This short film was the legacy project of the group developed to help the young people's communities understand their experiences of living with an ABI.

Our Arts, Sports and Wellbeing service provides long-term community support and rehabilitation for adults living with an ABI in the community and continues to go from strength to strength. Our participants have showcased their talent in arts exhibitions and local festivals and the Pedal Power programme continues to evolve. Some standout moments over the past year, include, being shortlisted for The Annual Charity Awards in London, participants taking part in their first duathlon and one of our participants being featured on the BBC's 'Chronicle of Belfast'.

Claire Sullivan, Chairperson, Brain Injury Matters

Central to our delivery is our commitment to raising awareness of ABI and we have seen a significant increase in staff involvement in conferences and workshops throughout the year, including the presentation of two abstracts on our work with children and young people at the prestigious International Brain Injury Association World Congress.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and work of our staff team, the Board and our families and volunteers who enable us to deliver our services. I was delighted that our Head of Adult Services won the "Healthcare Advocate of the Year" at the CO3 Awards and one of our volunteers received Highly Commended at the Health and Social Care Awards. This gratitude is also extended to our funders (National Lottery Community Fund, Henry Smith and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland) who continue to work with us as we develop our programmes to meet the needs of users. As we continue to face the challenging funding environment, we believe that the work we have undertaken over the past few years to strengthen our organisation will stand us in good stead, as we continue to work collectively to deliver our services and maintain our support for those individuals and families living with acquired brain injury.

Claire Sullivan,
Chairperson, Brain Injury Matters

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

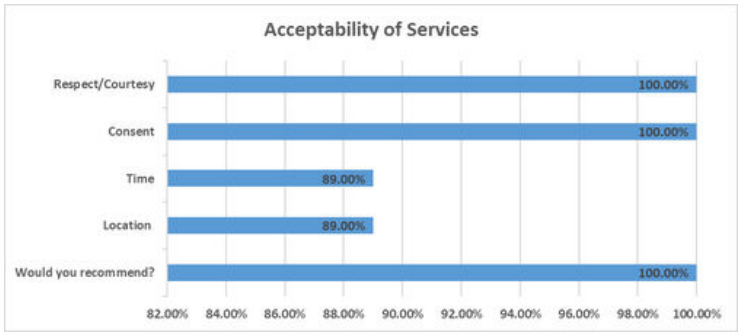
Brain Injury Matters' Children and Youth Service (CYS) supports children and young people 0-18 years and their families with ABI. The Children & Youth Service has 3 main elements: Family First; The Youth Empowerment Programme and Regional social events, activities and workshops.

PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

The performance scorecard captures the outcomes and impact of our work in 3 areas: **Accessibility; Acceptability and Effectiveness**

During 2022-2023 a total of 203 people were supported by CYS offering:

- 351 sessions delivered
- 1068 hours of direct contact delivered
- 30 mentoring sessions
- 98 hours of additional support to other professionals
- 9 family events
- 14 online workshops with 99 participants



An independent review of the Family First Project (*The Family First Project. Seven Year Evaluation Report 2022)* highlighted:

Parents experienced **"nothing else like this"** in Northern Ireland. Recurring themes were (a) flexible engagement; (b) that interventions facilitated a reduction in child behavioural difficulties and (c) an increase in family cohesion.

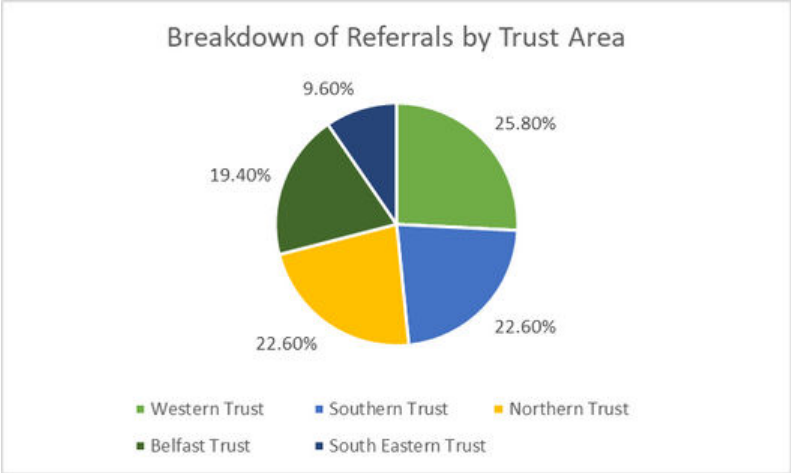
Two independent reviews of the Youth Empowerment Programme (QUB Evaluation of the Youth Empowerment Programme and Youth Empowerment Programme Evaluation prepared by Brian Stratford & Associates) highlighted:

The YEP makes a difference for both the young person and for parents. For young people, the programme improved emotional health and quality of life, as well as personal, familial and peer relationships.
For parents, the programme facilitated a stronger, more stable and resilient family unit and more effective parenting in terms of supporting their child's emotional, social, behavioural and academic development.

CYS Referrals

100%

Of clients and their families would recommend Brain Injury Matters' services to family and friends



351 sessions delivered

1068 hours of Direct Contact delivered

Children and Youth families enjoying a day at Edge Watersports, Cranagh Activity Centre

ADULT SERVICES

Our Arts (Studio), Sports (Hub) and Wellbeing service provides long term community support and rehabilitation for adults living with ABI in the community through the Creative Arts, Sports and Physical Activity, Leisure, Self-Care management and a Counselling service. The aim of the service, led by a team of clinicians and specialist staff, is to support people to come to terms with the problems and deficits from ABI, rebuild a meaningful life and create a renewed sense of achievement and purpose.

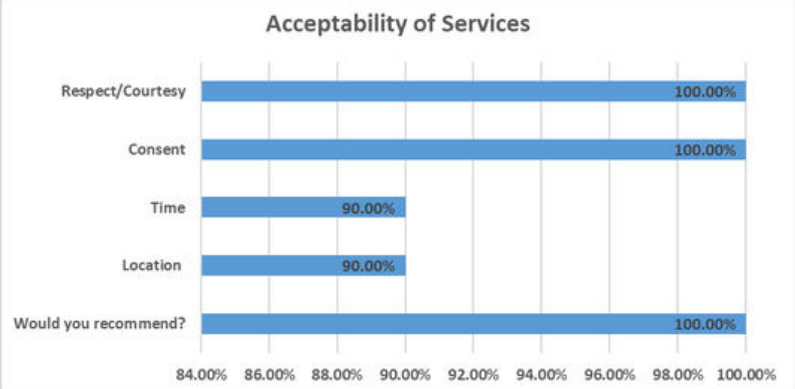
ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES

Arts (Space) and Wellbeing service
1866 sessions delivered

Sports (hub) service
229 sessions delivered

Counselling Service
235 sessions delivered

ACCEPTABILITY OF SERVICES



100%

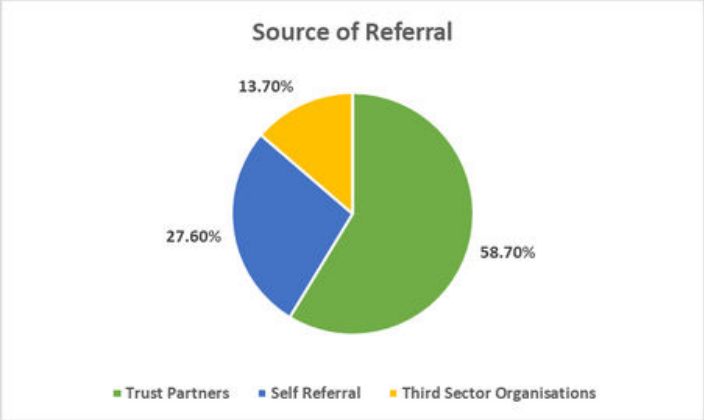
of participants would recommend the service to someone else with an ABI

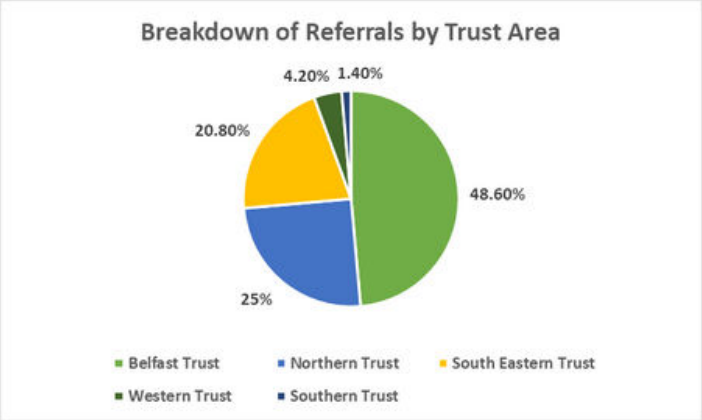
EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES

100% of Wellbeing participants reported that:

- **being with others allowed them to be social, make friends and participate with others.**
- **meeting others with an ABI helped their mood and wellbeing.**
- **having their creative work displayed at exhibitions and festivals helped their confidence.**
- **they were treated with courtesy, respect and care by staff.**

Adult Referrals





PARTNERSHIP WORKING

In 22/23, The BIM (NI) Staff Team proactively engaged in local and regional partnerships to raise awareness of ABI and support the sharing of information and services to the general public and family and friends.

Partnerships with the Equality Commission and the Greenview Group enabled us to enhance our profile. The partnership with the Equality Commission provided the opportunity to offer workshops on workplace reasonable adjustments for those with ABI as well as general ABI awareness training. Together, these helped increase the public knowledge of ABI. The partnership with the Greenview Group supported the purchase of a new trike for "Pedal Power" which ensured the ongoing development of this innovative project.

Additionally, the staff team have also actively engaged with the HSCB Board and the respective Trusts, Community Brain Injury Teams, Belfast HSCT Physical Disability Team, Community Stroke Teams and Stroke Units to raise awareness of the services available.

HIGHLIGHTS

Our approach is to encourage our participants to see beyond their perceived limitations and engage fully in promoting their skills and talents, challenging themselves and society.
Our highlights below represent just a small sample of the exhibitions, fundraising activities, media coverage and initiatives that our service users, families, staff and volunteers took part in!

Thank you Greenview!

April '22

Our Charity Partner, Carryduff-headquartered Greenview donated £4,000 for the purchase of an additional ICE-Trike for our Pedal Power initiative!

This new trike has ensured the ongoing development of this innovative project.

Pedal Power is a Physiotherapist led, evidence based intervention, allowing people with ABI to have regular social interaction, to be physically active, to cycle, attain cycling qualifications, to be skilled and equipped, and to encourage and inspire others.

NI Mental Health Arts Festival

May '22

NIMHAF is a festival that provides a platform for high-quality artwork that deals compassionately and intelligently with mental health.

BIM showcased a number of projects at the Festival: "*A Piece of Me*" An exhibition exploring the theme of *'Gather'* and what this means to Brain Injury Matters artists; representing family and friends, nature, memories and objects in concertinaed journals, drawings, collages and large-scale paintings.

Have a Blast with 'The Enthusiasts', '*The Enthusiasts*' are a choir made up of singers from Brain Injury Matters, members of the Ormeau Community Choir and led by Una McCann. Meeting every week, everyone shares a common interest in singing and the positive effects it has on one's wellbeing. The group enjoy a lot of banter and fun with everyone leaving refreshed and energised.

Local Councils Shine a Light on Brain Injury

May '22

During Action for Brain Injury Week (16 - 22nd May) Brain Injury Matters partnered with local councils across Northern Ireland to light civic buildings blue and green to put a spotlight on acquired brain injury.

Over the course of the week 19 council buildings and public sites were lit up.

CYS brave the water!!!

May '22

Our Children and Youth Service families enjoyed a fun packed day out at The Edge Watersports (Crannagh Activity Centre) as part of our activities for Action for Brain Injury Week 2022.
Families braved the cold water to enjoy some paddle boarding - some professionals in the making! They also took time to reflect on the theme "*see the hidden me*" creating masks to portray the hidden challenges and frustrations of acquired brain injury.

Let's Celebrate!

August '22

"Let's Celebrate" is an art installation inspired by the television series Bake-Off.

From a cake to a full-blown feast, food is often integral to celebrations, bringing people together to share memories and significant moments in their lives.
In remembering personal celebrations, our participants weaved in their own memories, photos, and stories to create a delicious table installation laden with quirky and imaginative fake bakes.

A feast for the eyes, a celebration of guilt free cakes, sweets and tray bakes!

Eastside Arts Festival

August '22

This vibrant community festival celebrated its 10th Birthday in August 2022 and featured over 100 artists with more than 80 events taking place in a range of venues across East Belfast.

Our artists and poets at Brain Injury Matters were very proud to have their work accepted and showcased as part of the festival.

"Dreams Passerine" is an anthology of poetry produced in workshops with poet Natasha Cuddington. As artefacts of poetry's capacity for both personal utterance and creative experiment, this work poignantly explores themes including relationships, life events, interconnectivity with the natural world and the flights of the unfailing human imagination.

"My Invisible Brain Injury"

December '22

Young people from Brain Injury Matters' Peer Mentoring Programme created "*My Invisible Brain Injury*" to help others understand their experiences.

Our peer mentoring pilot programme has been running within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area for the past year. It aims to empower teens living with ABI to create ways in which they can communicate their needs to their community.

"My Invisible Brain Injury" is the legacy of the programme. Through the film, the group wanted to help their communities and networks better understand the needs and experiences of young people living with ABI. The mentees and mentors wrote the scripts, recorded the voiceovers, acted and helped with filming, with the support of Michael MacBroom.

Special thanks to the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for their support and involvement with this unique pilot programme and to our funders, National Lottery Community Fund, Garfield Weston, and Children in Need.

Funding Awards

December '22

COMMUNITY FUND

The Henry Smith Charity
founded in 1628

Dormant Accounts FUND NI

Delivered by
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND

Our Youth Empowerment Programme received a grant of £327,157 to support its roll out over the next three years. The Programme seeks to empower young people aged 13 – 18 to develop strategies to manage the complex issues associated with their brain injury.

We were also delighted to receive funds from the Dormant Accounts Fund NI and The Henry Smith Charity towards our Adult Services to support the continued growth and development of Brain Injury Matters.

"Reconnected" Connecting creativity & colour

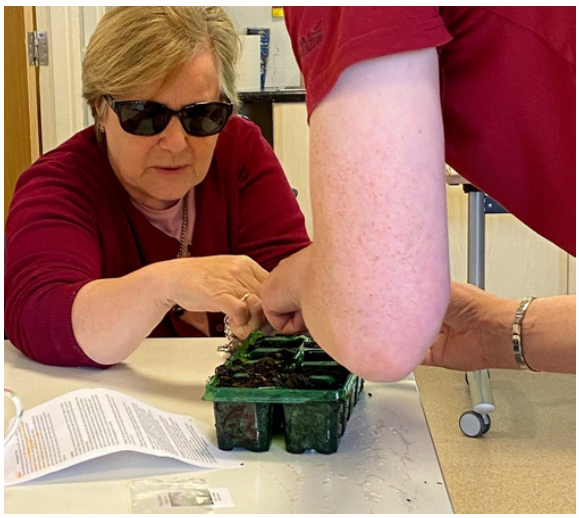
January '23

Rachel Fitzpatrick is a designer and maker working at the interfaces of art, design and social practice. Re-Connected explored the artist's reconnection with creativity and colour after her recovery from a neurological disorder.

The exhibition included the installation Re-Framing, a collaboration between Rachel and participants from Brain Injury Matters. Re-Framing charts a cyclical journey of change and transformation after acquired brain injury.
Over several months of workshops, Rachel and our participants developed a way to create origami 'brains'. The installation was created in an infinity loop of origami brains, representing a journey of re-framing life after acquired brain injury.
Bright colours dominated the final piece, representing positive memories and experiences, with green and blue coloured paper suspended on linen thread representing the community formed by Brain Injury Matters. The installation was showcased at Island Arts Centre, Lisburn.

Good to Grow Gardening Project

March '23



Our participants enjoyed working with Good To Grow Coop. Sandy, Paul, Adele and Gill guided the groups into designing their own garden space and what to plant in it to encourage wildlife and create a relaxing and sensory space to spend time in. The groups learned to plant seeds, propagate more plants for free and design a garden from scratch.

Lisburn Duathlon

March '23

Members of the Pedal Power Crew (Aoibheann, Owen, Graham and Rene) took part in Lisburn Triathlon Club's SERE National! The race is part of the Triathlon Ireland National Series. Such an achievement for our cyclists!

Awards

'22 & '23

BIM was successful in gaining public recognition for our work through numerous awards including;

Gold Star Award at the Families First NI People, Charity and Business Awards.

Highly Commended in the Charity Awards, the longest-running and most prestigious awards scheme in the charity sector. The commendation was received in the Disability Category for our Pedal Power project.

One of our volunteers, Hugh McInally received Highly Commended at the Health and Social Care Awards.

Dr Jonathan McCrea - Head of Adult Services at BIM, won the "Health Care Advocate of the Year" at the CO3 Leadership Awards.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

Having someone to ask how you (the parent) was feeling...checking in on you, seeing how you are doing. I was trying to hold everything together, so it was important for somebody to ask how I was feeling.

I just liked having someone to talk to, someone that understands about the brain injury and being able to explain to me things that I didn't know.

I do feel happier, about explaining to people and talking with people about it now. I'm not scared or embarrassed now or anything.

We could not have managed without the support of (the YEP Practitioner). It was a journey into the unknown, great to have her helping us through.

ADULT SERVICES

It's a safe, non-judgemental space....you are treated like a person, that doesn't always happen.

It's hard to pick a particular thing because I love it all....I can put my hand on my heart and say this is the best place I've ever been to.

We are all communicating and having lunch together, it's great!

Whatever is going on I do it..it gets you out, enjoying things.

CASE STUDY
CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

In January 2022, Family First became involved with a 6 year old female for support in understanding her ABI (Craniosynostosis) and daily functioning (particularly support with social cues, processing information, fine motor skills and homework).

Support provided to the whole family was ongoing for over a year and included: information sessions, puppet role play, and problem-solving discussions on managing emotions, communication and social skills.

Additionally, support to school was provided as the child was attending primary school and had the support of a full-time classroom assistant. This was offered via supportive telephone calls, emails, resources, and signposting for school ABI training.

Upon discharge, the child's mum described the service and its tailor-made approach as "invaluable". She shared that she particularly benefited from "having somebody to talk to and generate new ideas with". The child's mum also advised that she shared some of the strategies with a family member who is a teacher, who passed them onto her own pupils in their school. Finally, the child's family have expressed interest in speaking with other parents impacted by ABI and potentially being involved in the Parent/Carer Empowerment Group due to launch in June 2023.

CASE STUDY
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

L, a 16 year old female, was referred to The Youth Empowerment Programme following a stroke.

L, a 16-year-old female was referred to the Youth Empowerment Programme following a stroke. L reported increased loneliness and reduced confidence in keeping and making friends following her acquired brain injury, particularly as she had to repeat a school year. She reported feeling 'different' from her peers and self-conscious due to the physical impact of her acquired brain injury.

L was supported through 1:1 home-based and online service delivery. L and her family benefited from psychoeducation and advice sessions and additional resources on the portal around attention, memory, motivation, behavioural & emotional regulation, peer interactions, planning, organising & motivation. Further support and resources provided to assist with self-organisation and self-directed learning.

L reports that her confidence and self-esteem have improved since commencing with the programme, which supported her to take a committee role within our Youth Matters Steering Group. L has been integral in the planning and delivery of online activities for her peers and has engaged well with the other young people in these social sessions. The portal has enabled the Steering Group to advertise the events to families, with the young people being involved in the design of the invitations. Both L and her family report that they have benefitted from the service.

TREASURER'S REVIEW 2022/23

Colette Kane, Treasurer,
Brain Injury Matters

The Board of Brain Injury Matters (NI) placed a high emphasis on the financial position of the charity during 2022/23.

22/23 has continued to be a challenging year from a funding perspective. The Board and management of Brain Injury Matters has continually focussed on financial sustainability as a key identified risk during 22/23. The loss of some sources of funding has meant there has been a need to reassess the services the charity is able to deliver and thus the Board has made the difficult decision to cease one of its programmes from April 23. The Board are very grateful to all the funders who have continued or indeed commenced funding the vital services provided by Brain Injury Matters during 22/23. This impact report demonstrates the difference to lives that funding provides. We also thank the staff and volunteers of the charity for the commitment and passion they show every day. Finally we thank PFKFPM for their professionalism in carrying out their role.

Colette Kane,
Treasurer, Brain Injury Matters

Statement of Financial Activities Year Ended March 2023

Statement of Financial Activity to March 2023			
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:			
Donations and Legacies	18,447	22,176	40,623
Charitable Activities	126,060	312,871	438,931
Other trading activities	4,157	-	4,157
Investments	47	-	47
Total Income and Endowments	**148,711**	**335,047**	483,758
Expenditure on:			
Charitable Activities	(228,276)	(320,510)	(548,786)
Raising Funds	(276)	0	(276)
Total Expenditure	**(228,552)**	**(320,510)**	**(549,062)**
Net Income/ (expenditure) for the year before transfers	(79,841)	14,537	(65,304)
Transfer between funds	(19,370)	19,370	-
Net Movement in Funds	(99,211)	33,907	(65,304)
Reconciliation of Funds:			
Total funds brought forward	201,883	6,570	208,453
Total Funds carried forward	102,672	40,477	143,149

LOOKING FORWARD 2023/24

Joe McVey OBE, CEO, Brain Injury Matters

2022/2023 was a challenging and exciting period in the development of Brain Injury Matters. The ongoing impact of Covid-19 was evident in the funding pressures in the voluntary and community sector as the Government sought to recoup the costs and ensure statutory services were resourced as a priority. These financial pressures were exacerbated by the ongoing political instability and the absence of a functioning devolved Assembly. Further cuts to health, education and community budgets combined with the loss of European funding had significant detrimental impact on those organisations such as ourselves providing services in the community

Despite this Brain Injury Matters continued to deliver record levels of service to those individuals and families impacted by acquired brain injury at home, in the community and in our Wellbeing Hub in Belfast. This year also saw us bringing forward new models of delivery in adult services focussing on long term rehabilitation and in the development of our new Peer Mentoring Programme. We rolled out our new advocacy programme with children and launched our "Carers Matters" study in September 2022. This will allow us to expand our advocacy service to support adults adding another important element of our service delivery in 2023/2024.

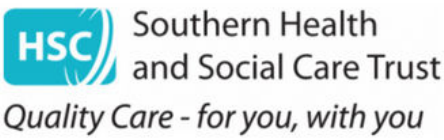
Part of our advocacy work will also be reflected in a greater emphasis on policy development and promotion through participating in conferences and workshops. Presenting and sharing our models of practice provides an opportunity to raise awareness of Brain Injury Matters and more importantly to highlight the needs and priorities of those living with ABI. This will also complement our greater involvement in a range of regional forums working in the field of brain injury and neurology.

Responding to emerging needs has also encouraged us to develop and enhance our existing premises. Our success in gaining support from a range of sponsors allowed us to redesign our premises, creating a larger, inclusive, and accessible space for our Adult Service participants. This reimagined Studio Space and Connections Gallery will open in May 2023 and will allow us to welcome a greater number of participants.
While we will continue to face many challenges working closely with our participants and clients, families and carers will ensure that we continue to deliver on our core purpose, whilst developing and adapting our services to meet evolving needs.

Joe McVey OBE,
Chief Executive Officer, Brain Injury Matters

THANK YOU

Brain Injury Matters is grateful for the generous support of our funders and partners.



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