

A TOOLKIT TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTION ACTIVITY



Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council

Women's Aid



CAUSEWAY & MID-ULSTER



Northern Ireland
Executive

END VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN
& GIRLS



CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Context 4

What is violence against women and girls.....	4
Types of violence against women and girls	5
Northern Ireland response	6

Accessing Support 9

PSNI	8
Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conference	9
Domestic violence and abuse disclosure scheme.....	9
NHSCT	11
Sexual Assault Referral Centre – The Rowan.....	11
Safeguarding.....	12
Policing & Community Safety Partnership	13
Women’s Aid	13
24 hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.....	14
Assist NI.....	14
The Rainbow Project.....	15
Probation Board NI.....	15

Good Practice Guidance 16

Generating Ideas 19

Appendices 21

The Executive Office (TEO) EVAWG Programme runs the Change Fund through Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council which contributes to this publication; in doing so, TEO/EVAWG hold no responsibility for the content and are not necessarily endorsing all content used.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is an unacceptable and preventable issue that curtails the lives and futures of so many women and girls. Causing profound harm to victims, those close to them, to communities and to society as a whole. The term covers a range of crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls.

Addressing this issue requires a coordinated response that tackles the underlying causes and drives societal change to deliver freedom and equality for all.

Arising from the launch of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council will oversee the roll out of the Executive Office Change Fund which offers the opportunity to:

- **Equip community groups to prevent violence against women and girls. (Strand 1); and**
- **Resource and mobilise regional community and voluntary sector (CVS) to drive society wide action so that everyone understands what violence against women and girls (VAWG) is and knows how to prevent it (Strand 2).**

This tool kit has been designed to assist eligible groups making applications to the Change Fund to:

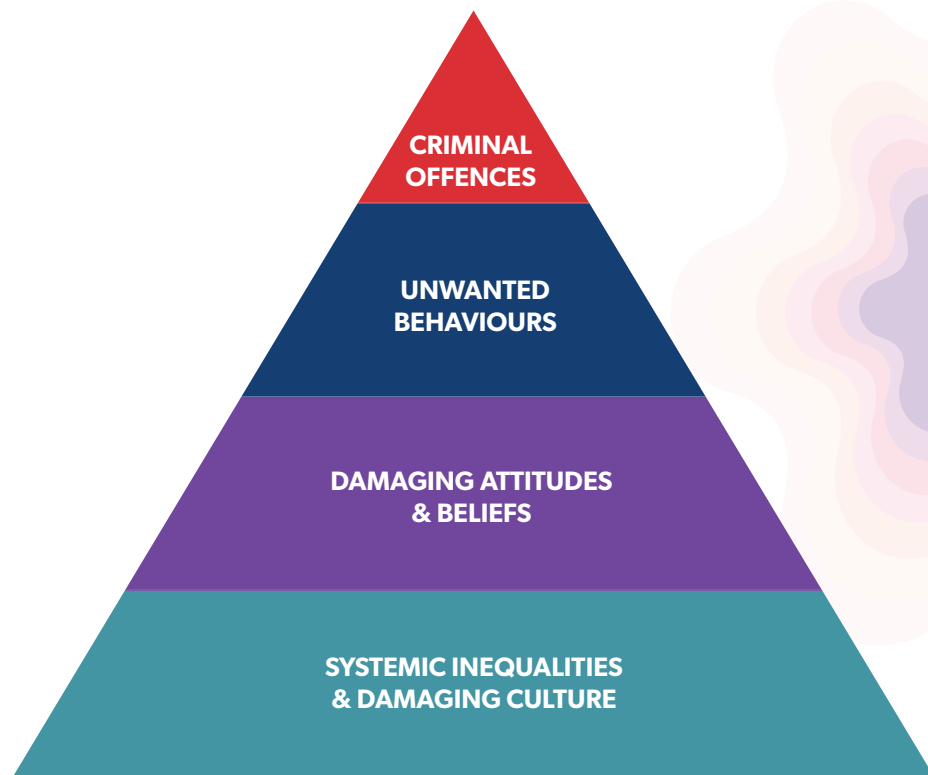
- **Increase understanding of the issues involved in violence against women and girls**
- **Identify frontline services available within Causeway Coast & Glens**
- **Increase understanding of good practice when addressing and responding to violence against women and girls.**
- **Generate ideas for applications to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Change Fund**

This Toolkit has been developed by Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women’s Aid to assist in the development of safe and impactful prevention activities supported by the Change Fund

CONTEXT

What is Violence against women and girls?

Violence against women and girls is an umbrella term that demonstrates how cultural and systemic inequality underpins and supports an environment that ultimately results in the disproportionate abuse and harm experienced by women and girls in our society.



Pyramid of gender-based violence

In order to effect meaningful long-term change that will reduce and eliminate violence within all areas of the pyramid of gender-based violence, abuse must be addressed and misogynistic attitudes challenged at all levels of society.

Violence against women and girls can be perpetrated by abusers known to their victims and by strangers. It can happen in public and within the victim's home.

Types of violence against women and girls

Street harassment	Domestic abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Catcalling And Wolf Whistling</i> <i>Exposure</i> <i>Following, Cornering, Isolating</i> <i>Kerb Crawling</i> <i>Sexual Assault</i> <i>Sexual Gestures</i> <i>Sexual Propositioning</i> <i>Upskirting</i> <i>Down- Blousing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Domestic Abuse And Controlling Or Coercive Control</i> <i>Cyberstalking</i> <i>Non-Fatal Strangulation</i> <i>Stalking And Harassment</i>
Honour-based	Sexual exploitation or abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Female Genital Mutilation (Fgm)</i> <i>Forced Marriage</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Human Trafficking</i> <i>Sexual Exploitation And Grooming</i> <i>Forced Prostitution</i> <i>Sex For Rent</i> <i>Spiking – Drinks Or Injection</i>

In 2024 there were 30,509 domestic abuse incidents recorded by the PSNI. Of this number 2107 were recorded within Causeway Coast & Glens area.

Northern Ireland Response

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework was launched by the First and Deputy First Ministers in September 2024.

The strategy recognises that:

The main focus of the Strategic Framework is to address the culture of damaging attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that can lead to violence against women and girls.

Four themes with associated outcomes have been identified:

THEME 1 - PREVENTION

Outcome 1: Changed attitudes, behaviours, and culture

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it.

Outcome 2: Healthy, respectful relationships

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships.

Outcome 3: Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere – Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do, so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

THEME 2 - PROTECTION & PROVISION

Outcome 4: Quality frontline services, protection, and provision for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls

Provision of high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls.

THEME 3 - JUSTICE SYSTEM

Outcome 5: A justice system which has the confidence of victims, survivors and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls

In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that is trauma informed, considers the needs of people who come into contact with it, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change and has the confidence of the public.

THEME 4 - WORKING BETTER TOGETHER

Outcome 6: All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across central and local government, statutory bodies, and with, within and between the community, voluntary, trade unions, employers, business and other sector.

A two-year delivery plan identifying actions against each theme has been developed.

The first action identified is the launch of a community focused

Change Fund

(see appendix 1) to equip community groups to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.

For further information about the EVAWG Strategic Framework and the first Delivery Plan, and to access the full documents, please visit:

[Strategic Framework – EVAWG](#)

[EVAWG - Action Plan](#)

ACCESSING SUPPORT

Responding to violence against women and girls requires multi-agency cooperation.

Within the Causeway Coast & Glens area both statutory and community voluntary organisations provide services to help address the needs of victims of abuse and work closely together to support victims, reduce risk and contribute to change of attitudes towards women and girls through their actions.

PSNI

The PSNI are the primary point of contact and support for women and girls who are victims of gender-based crime.

In recognition of the fact that there are disproportionate levels of abuse against women and girls at the hands of men the PSNI developed a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan.

[Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan](#)

This identifies three themes with corresponding actions:

Theme 1 – Building Trust and Confidence in policing

Theme 2 – Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit and supporting victims

Theme 3 – Creating Safer spaces for women and girls

While PSNI role in response to crime is well understood, crime prevention is also a vital and important function.

One such response is their role within the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meetings which they chair.

MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)

A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases. They are attended by representatives from police, child protection, education, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Women's Aid and probation They:

- share all relevant information they have about a victim
- discuss options for increasing the victim's safety
- create a co-ordinated action plan.

The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim. The MARAC will also make links with others to safeguard children.

At the heart of the MARAC, is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of a victim's life but they all may have insights that are crucial to the victim's safety.

There is a monthly MARAC meeting in Causeway Coast & Glens

The panel attending MARAC meetings also fulfil the function of reviewing applications to the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme.

What is DVADS?

DVADS is a PSNI operated scheme. It lets individuals, or those concerned about them, make enquiries to the police if they are worried that a partner or ex-partner may have a history of domestic abuse, and they are at risk of harm. This enables the person at risk to get information and make an informed decision (including whether to stay or return to the relationship) to help keep safe.

Who can apply?

- **The partner, or ex-partner of a person suspected of having an abusive past or who they have concerns about.**
- **The people must be (or have been) married, in a civil partnership, living together or in an intimate personal relationship (it need not be sexual).**
- **Information can be sought on behalf of someone else, with any disclosure likely to be to the person at risk of harm.**
- **Applicants must be 16 or over.**
- **Person at risk must live in Northern Ireland, or their circumstances are such that there is potential for them to be at risk here.**

What is meant by risk of harm?

This relates to the risk of harm from domestic abuse. Harm is physical or psychological, which is reasonably likely to cause a person to suffer fear, alarm and distress, but which must be more than transient and trifling.

Right to Ask – how is it instigated?

- **A person can make a direct request to the police.**
- **Applications can be made through the PSNI and NI Direct websites.**
- **A person can apply at a police station or call 101.**

Power to Tell – how is it instigated?

A police officer or member of staff receives information a person may be at risk of harm. Police make necessary checks. The police may disclose information to the person, telling them they are at risk of harm.

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST (NHSCT)

The NHSCT supports victims of abuse dealing with the immediate and long term physical and psychological harm arising from their experiences. This support takes many forms from immediate medical responses to longer term psychological support and/or social services interventions.

Support for victims of sexual assault

The Rowan – Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Support is available 365 days per year and 24 hours per day to those, no matter their age, who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped, whether this happened in the past or more recently.

Access to the Rowan can be done through

- **PSNI via 999 or 101 calls OR**
- **through self-referral (without police involvement) on 0800 389 4424**

If unable to make the first call a friend or family member or any professional or support worker can do this on your behalf.

[Sexual Assault Referral Centre | The Rowan](#)

Northern Domestic & Sexual Violence Partnership (NDSVP)

The Northern Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership (NDSVP), chaired by the NHSCT, is a multi-agency partnership comprised of local statutory and voluntary organisations who provide services to victims of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse. The partnership is tasked by the Regional Steering Group on domestic and sexual violence to deliver an action plan against the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2024-31.

www.northerndsvp.com



Safeguarding

The Regional Out of Hours Social Work Service (RESWS) provides an **emergency social work response across Northern Ireland on an out of hour's basis**. The service is available from 5.00 pm to 9.00 am on weekdays and 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays. The service can be contacted through one central telephone number: **028 9504 9999**.

Referral Gateway Team

If you are concerned about a child or young person, who is not already known to Social Services, the first point of contact should be made to the Referral Gateway Team.

Referral Gateway will respond promptly by gathering information and will pass the refer all to the local gateway team, should it be determined that a social work assessment is required.

Telephone: **0300 1234 333** or **028 9442 4459**
Email: SPOE.Referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net

Adults in need of Protection

An 'adult in need of protection' is defined as a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their: Personal Circumstances and/or life circumstances, and, who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and, where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause him/her to be harmed.

Telephone: **028 9441 3659**
Email: adultsafeguarding@northerntrust.hscni.net

POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (PCSP)

Causeway Coast & Glens PCSP has a long history of prioritising actions to address abuse. Examples of current support includes provision of safety equipment to PSNI for victims of stalking and high-risk Domestic Abuse victims. Promoting wider societal change to address abuse the PCSP also support the delivery of Healthy Relationship programmes available to all secondary schools within the borough.

WOMEN'S AID

The purpose of Women's Aid is to provide a quality based holistic service to women, children and young people affected by all forms of domestic and sexual violence; to educate, challenge and co-operate with external agencies and the wider community with a vision to eradicate domestic and sexual violence. Women's Aid accept referrals from any source and all services are confidential.

Both Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid and Foyle Women's Aid provide support with Causeway Coast & Glens for women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

Services delivered respond to crisis and ongoing impacts of abuse on victims' lives.

- **Refuge provision – emergency accommodation for victims who cannot remain at home**
- **Community based support – housing, legal, benefit, dependents, mental health**
- **Training opportunities**

As part of their preventative work both Women's Aid groups work in partnership to ensure delivery of Healthy Relationship programmes in secondary schools and also ensure teacher training for primary schools in the Social Guardian programme,

www.causewayandmidulsterwomensaid.org.uk

www.foylewomensaid.org

The 24 HOUR DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE HELPLINE

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, managed by Nexus NI, provides information, advice and support to those impacted by Domestic and Sexual Abuse across Northern Ireland.

The Helpline is available to people with lived experience, those concerned about someone, those with concerns as to whether abuse is occurring, and to professionals working with people who may be impacted by abuse. The Helpline will direct callers to the appropriate support in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

You can contact the Helpline at any time, free and confidentially. Trained, experienced staff are available to help via phone, email and webchat.

You can:

Telephone: **0808 802 1414**
Email: help@dsahelpline.org
Live chat via dsahelpline.org

ASSIST NI

The ASSIST NI advocacy service is available to qualifying victims of domestic and sexual abuse. That is those whose details have been shared by the police after reporting a crime as well as those referred by The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre or from a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meeting.

The ASSIST service will support victims of domestic and/or sexual violence from the point of the incident through the criminal justice processes that follow.

www.assistni.org.uk

THE RAINBOW PROJECT

The Rainbow Project is devoted to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ people and their families in Northern Ireland, as well as those questioning their orientation or gender, through partnership, advocacy and the development and delivery of appropriate support services.

In responding to incidents of domestic abuse the PSNI can offer referrals to support organisations. The Rainbow Project is one of these organisations and this ensures that the needs of the LGBTQIA+ people are addressed in a timely and positive manner.

www.rainbow-project.org

PROBATION BOARD NORTHERN IRELAND (PBNI)

In responding to the behaviour of perpetrators PBNI delivers:

Promoting Positive Relationships Programme (PPRP) is an innovative programme designed for adult males, who have demonstrated the potential to be abusive in intimate partner relationships, and whose children are assessed at risk by Social Services. The programme includes the aim to hold perpetrators/abusers accountable and provide effective interventions for their behaviour. The principal aims of PPRP are to ensure the safety of women and children and to prevent further abusive behaviour. It promotes and requires interagency working and central to this are practitioner review meetings, where all agencies involved with the family meet to discuss risk issues and progress on PPRP.

Victims of perpetrators taking part in this programme have access to Women's Aid support.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The Change Fund is intended to enable grassroots involvement in responding to the prevention of violence against women and girls.

It is designed to:

- **equip community groups to prevent violence against women and girls. (Strand 1); and**
- **resource and mobilise regional community and voluntary sector (CVS) to drive society wide action so that everyone understands what violence against women and girls (VAWG) is and knows how to prevent it. (Strand 2).**

Concentrating on the following prevention outcomes of the EVAWG Strategic Framework:

Outcome 1: Changed attitudes, behaviours and culture

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes and plays an active role in preventing it.

Outcome 2: Healthy, respectful relationships

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

Outcome 3: Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do, so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

RESPONSES - successful prevention activities

Identifying activities that are most likely to have a positive impact within your community can be assisted by identifying:

- **specific issues of interest to your community**
- **interventions that address an existing problem**
- **opportunities to consult with your community**
- **your target audience and**
- **key messages that are evidence based**

To assist in the development of preventative activities consideration should be given to:

The World Health Organisation (WHO) RESPECT Framework which identifies seven key strategies:

Relationship skills strengthening

Empowerment of women (economic and social)

Services ensuring access for survivors

Poverty reduction

Environments made safe (schools, public spaces)

Child and adolescent abuse prevention

Transformed attitudes, beliefs, and norm

Ensuring the use of evidence-based approaches will be more impactful and likely to have longer term effects.

Strong evidence supports:

1. **Community mobilization** programs that engage multiple stakeholders
2. **Bystander interventions** that train community members to intervene
3. **Economic empowerment** combined with gender equality training
4. **School-based approaches** addressing gender norms and relationships

Programme Delivery

Given the nature and prevalence of violence against women and girls care must be taken in the design and planning of any activities.

Projects should be:

Survivor-centred:

Place the needs, safety, and well-being of survivors at the centre of all decisions and plans.

Trauma-informed:

Recognise the impact of trauma and adopt approaches that avoid re-traumatisation.

Think whole person:

Acknowledge that women and girls face different forms of discrimination and violence based on factors like race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and socioeconomic status.

Confidentiality and privacy:

Ensure you can protect information and create safe spaces for disclosure.

Prepared for disclosure:

Know the supports that can be accessed should a disclosure be made. See appendix 1

AND

Have boundaries:

Be clear about your level of expertise and access assistance from specialist support agencies when necessary.

GENERATING IDEAS

The Change Fund ensures that for the first time ever in Northern Ireland grassroots, community groups will have the opportunity to plant the seeds of change that will have a long term impact not only on the lives of women and girls but their whole community.

Projects may range from one off small events to planned activities across 2025-26. In their development consider the following:

- **Women are experts on their own lives so start with women's lives.** E.g. A conversation about dating is very different between women in their 20's and women in their 70's, women from different religious backgrounds and women from different ethnic backgrounds. Harness the experiences of women in your community to highlight real experiences and start to unpick positive and negative experiences.
- **Plan an activity around a significant date.** E.g. International Women's Day, Mother's Day, 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence – 25 November – 10 December.
- **Do what you do:** If your community group enjoys crafts, art projects, bringing in speakers then use this as an opportunity to introduce EVAWG as a topic.
- **Positivity:** Building projects/activities celebrating women/girls and their achievements is important to changing attitudes and beliefs about abilities and expectations for women.
- **Partnership:** Consider who you can work with who to enhance your projects impact. Identify other groups in your community, contact specialist agencies to access expertise.
- **Think Myth busting:** challenge thinking with facts and examples of women's lives that evidence their ability. There are many examples worldwide but remember these women are in your community too.
- **Safe places:** Think how you can create safe places for women to access support and information on specialist services.
- **Resources:** Think about resources that can increase safety and/or promote support services. However, you must factor in how to disseminate these safely as victims of domestic violence may not be safe to take certain resources home.
- **Research:** See how other communities have responded to EVAWG. See resources below and remember community mobilization, bystander interventions, economic empowerment and school-based activities as evidenced based activities for delivering longer term impacts.

RESOURCES

The following links detail responses to Violence Against Women and Children and provide information on different types of abuse.

Content may be upsetting to some.

Coercive Control

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmbTqFH4x0w&pp=ygUQY29lcmNpdmUgY29udHJvbA%3D%3D>

Hidden in Plain Sight - Coercive Control and Domestic Abuse

VAWG and Bystander campaign

www.london.gov.uk/VAWGToolkit

Consent

Understanding Consent - Do not force anyone to drink tea

Misogyny

What is misogyny?

Domestic Abuse

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan -Jenny's Story

Eggshells - A Short Film About Domestic Abuse (coercive control, gaslighting, domestic violence)

What is domestic abuse?

Appendix 1

Dealing with Disclosure

While involved with the planning or delivery of Ending Violence Against Women and Girls programmes topics that may have impacted those you engage with will be discussed. Being aware of this means that you can prepare to reduce impact and respond in a supportive manner.

Community groups are not expected to be experts in this field but it is important that victims receive supportive responses and that any safeguarding issues are dealt with appropriately. In delivering an EAWG activity:

1. *Clearly communicate what issues will be discussed. This allows individuals to opt in or opt out.*
2. *Ensure that confidentiality and the limits of this are understood by all. (all successful applicants will be provided with safeguarding training to ensure that this issue is fully understood).*
3. *Ensure you have contact details for local support services. See Appendix 2. A disclosure is not an automatic request for support, however, ensuring that you have this information readily at hand is important so that it can be offered.*
4. *Recognise that making a disclosure is difficult as many victims carry guilt and shame as a result of the abuse they have experienced.*
5. *Listen, do not judge and ensure that you convey that they are not responsible for the abuse they have experienced.*

Appendix 2

USEFUL CONTACTS:

PSNI	Non-emergency 101 Emergency 999
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24-hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline	0808 802 1414
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NHSCT Referral Gateway Team (children/young people)	0300 1234 333 028 9442 4459
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Adult Safeguarding	028 9441 3659
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Emergency out of hours social worker	0800 197 9995
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The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre	0800 389 4424
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Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid	0300 373 1055
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Foyle Women's Aid	028 7141 6800
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