



THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF NORTH YORKSHIRE

Health and Safety: Employer

Internal audit report 5.23/24

FINAL

17 January 2024

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why we completed this audit

An audit was undertaken in relation to the employee health and safety arrangements in place at North Yorkshire Police (the Force), to ensure appropriate systems are in place to mitigate risks relating to health and safety.

An overarching Health and Safety Policy is in place across the Force in order to communicate health and safety requirements to all employees, allowing the Force to effectively, manage, assess, and improve health and safety standards and performance, using the standards contained within relevant health and safety legislation.

The Force's Chief Constable and the Commissioner have overall responsibility for ensuring that employee health and safety duties, as defined under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, are established across the Force, adhered to and effectively monitored. To support this, corporate governance processes are in place including an overarching quarterly strategic Force health and safety meeting, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, with a flow of information such as notable reported health and safety incidents, and identification of any lessons learned then being disseminated to and from the strategic meeting via specialist district meetings (Coastal, City, and County), that run in tandem with specialist departmental meetings such as Firearms Training meetings; Police Vehicle Collision Panel, and the Uniform and Equipment Group. This flow of information is supported by a quarterly dashboard which collates all accidents, near misses reported, and RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents that have been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

In addition to the above responsibilities, the Chief Constable and Commissioner also have duties under the Health and Safety at Work 1974 Act to ensure that premises within the estate are safe. North Yorkshire Police discharges such duties by ensuring that policy documents, agreed procedures, risk assessments and standard operating procedures are in place. These processes and procedures are managed by a Health and Safety Team who are responsible for the recording, analysis, and communication of all incidents and near misses reported across the Force, attend all health and safety meetings detailed above, as well as deploying preventative controls such as providing health and safety training specific modules to employees, and implementing lessons learned, where applicable, to support the Force with meeting their health and safety obligations.

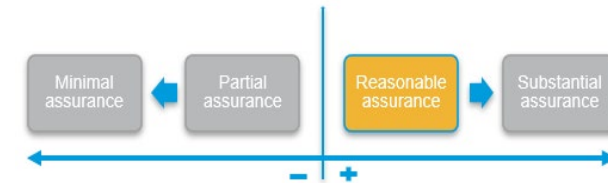
Conclusion

As a result of our review, we have agreed **five medium** priority management actions in relation to implementing refresher health and safety training, and maintaining an overarching training record for all health and safety courses delivered; ensuring that all employees across the Force have completed an up to date DSE (display screen equipment) assessment; ensuring that staff are notified of the annual requirement to complete DSE and PPE (personal protective equipment) checks; and ensuring that all employees are made aware of the 24 hours health and safety incident reporting timeframe via the Force's Health and Safety Policy. We did also find a number of well designed and complied with controls during the review, and they are detailed below.

Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified the Chief Constable of North Yorkshire can take **reasonable assurance** that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this area are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified area.



Key findings

We identified the following exceptions resulting in five medium priority management actions being agreed:



Training

We tested a sample of 10 employees across the Force (five line managers and five new starters), to evidence that they had completed both induction training, and the health and safety training module. However, from our sample testing, we identified a number of missing training log records (this totalled across seven members of staff), and were therefore unable to confirm that all staff within our sample had received sufficient health and safety training. There is a risk that that should an incident occur, the Force would be unable to identify that they had taken the appropriate measures to protect employees, and therefore open themselves up to a reputational risk, compensation claims, and potential legal action. **(Medium)**



DSE annual assessment

From our sample of 10 employees, we were also unable to evidence that a DSE (display screen equipment) assessment had been completed in two cases. Both instances related to new starters; and in four additional instances, we were also unable to evidence that a DSE assessment had been completed within the previous 12 months. This puts the Force at risk of being unable to identify and reduce the health risks of employees working with DSE, such as musculoskeletal disorders, visual fatigue, and mental stress. This could result in reputational and financial risk. **(Medium)**



Incident reporting

The Force's Health and Safety Policy notes that the reporting or logging of accidents, near misses and incidents are required to be completed via an internal intranet submission form, which is automatically emailed to the Health and Safety Team to review the case and further investigate if and when required. Discussions with the Force's Health and Safety Team confirmed that the reporting of any incident should be completed within 24 hours, though we were unable to evidence that this timeframe had been documented within the Health and Safety Policy, nor were we able to evidence that guidance on how to report incidents has been documented within any policy. There is a risk that employees may not, or may be unable to report any incidents within the required timeframe, and as such, the Force may be unable to implement any

remedial actions in a timely manner. From a sample of 10 incidents, seven were RIDDOR reportable, and in one case, we identified that the incident had not been reported within the HSE's specified timeframe, due to late reporting to the Health and Safety Team. **(Medium)**



District meetings

From our sample of 10 incidents, we were unable to confirm that these had been reported as required to the relevant district meetings due to a lack of meeting minutes retained for the coastal and county meetings. If incidents are not reported as part of district meetings, there is a risk that management may be unaware of repeat issues or may miss any learnings from incidents, which could result in repeat health and safety related incidents. **(Medium)**



Risk assessments

The Health and Safety Team maintain a spreadsheet, which includes a total of 78 risk assessments currently in use across the Force. However, from this list, we identified a total of 35 risk assessments that had not been reviewed within the previous 12 months. We did observe that notes were recorded within the spreadsheet to confirm that the Health and Safety Team had reviewed and followed these up with the responsible individuals. We also selected a sample of five risk assessments and confirmed each had been signed off, and the dates in the spreadsheet matched the dates on the risk assessment.

If risk assessments are not completed in line with the required timeframes, there is a risk that controls may not be up to date to mitigate identified risks. **(Medium)**

Our audit review identified that the following controls are suitably designed, consistently applied, and are operating effectively:



Policies and procedures

We were able to evidence that the Force operates a Health and Safety Policy which outlines the requirements to manage, report, and operate in a safe manner. The policy is reviewed every three years in line with the Force's governance guidelines or when the Health and Safety Executive publishes new legislation. We noted that the policy is supported by documented procedures in relation to body armour, building inspections, DSE, exposure to blood borne viruses, legionella and smoke free. All policies and procedures are available to all staff via the SharePoint Intranet.



We confirmed that all Force staff and officers are made aware of their responsibilities in respect of health and safety within the Health and Safety Policy. This included a list of responsibilities for teams and individuals such as the Chief Officer Team (COT), Heads of Service, and Health and Safety Manager. Documented roles included those such as ensuring that local health and safety performance measures are established across each department; understanding the main requirements and implications of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Police (Health and Safety) Act 1997; and ensuring that all accidents and incidents of occupational ill health are recorded, investigated and where necessary, reported to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with RIDDOR.



Reporting

The Force's Health and Safety Advisor compiles quarterly dashboards documenting accidents and near misses reported across the Force, and all RIDDOR incidents that are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). We were able to evidence that these figures are

presented to the Force Health and Safety Team, Joint National Consultative Committee (JNCC), and individual district meetings. As part of our audit sampling, we were able to test the accuracy of the data reported within the dashboard, via a walkthrough with the Health and Safety Advisor, from which we were successfully able to track each denomination outlined, to a reported case via the Health and Safety Team inbox.

We also noted that a representative from each district and department attends the Force health and safety meeting, and as detailed within the Health and Safety Policy, there is a requirement for each representative to disseminate the information reported during the health and safety meeting to all officers and staff, in order to highlight the importance of reporting accidents and near misses in line with the HSE regulation.



The Force conducts Health and Safety meetings on a three-monthly basis, which are attended by the Deputy Chief Constable, and all department heads. We obtained the terms of reference for the Health and Safety meeting, and were able to evidence that both the purpose, and standing agenda items had been documented. These included considering outcomes of Health and Safety audits, and dealing with notable issues as necessary; examining relevant reports, including those which concern accidents and notifiable disease statistics and trends; and monitoring the effectiveness of the health, safety and welfare element of employee training, and commissioning any additional activity as required.

We obtained minutes from the Force health and safety meeting in May 2023 and August 2023 (prior to this, meeting minutes were only taken in the form of a standing agenda) and we identified key areas of consideration: days lost due to injury, near misses, and reported accidents. We reviewed the current action and decision log following the meeting held in August and we confirmed that the log outlined the date the action was raised, a description of the action, priority level, owner, status and commentary of the actions. We also evidenced that the health and safety dashboard had been presented at each meeting.



Lessons learned

Discussions with the Health and Safety Advisor identified that any instances of lessons learned would be discussed initially via the Force's district meetings, and dependent upon the issue, and if this would add value in relation to being shared across the Force, this information would be disseminated through each District Commander, to be shared with the wider teams.

We identified no examples within our sample that would require a lessons learned review, and sharing across the Force, and discussions confirmed that these generally tend to relate to more serious incidents such as firearms issues. We therefore walked through an example from July 2022, where the Force was asked to attend a fractal burning incident that had resulted in a death by electrocution, due to the fractal burning. As such, the Force identified that should such an incident require attendance in the future, there may be a risk that if officers were not aware of the potential risks in relation to an incident involving high voltage electricity, this could potentially cause a major health and safety issue.

We were able to evidence that the Force's Health and Safety Advisor had liaised with the Fire and Rescue Service to obtain a "toolbox talk" that is issued to all firefighters, and had been amended to support Force officers. This aimed to inform all officers of the potential hazards in such scenarios, and any relevant actions to take; this had then been briefed to officers across the Force by means of a toolbox talk briefing.



Building inspections

The Force undertakes quarterly building inspections to fulfil current legislation requirements within the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 5. We reviewed the Force's building inspection procedure which notes that a nominated member of staff for each proposed site will undertake an inspection and document any potential unsafe conditions or hazards which could cause injury or damage.

We obtained three building inspection reports completed between April and June 2023, for York, Harrogate, and Scarborough Police Stations included within the North Yorkshire Police district. For all three inspections undertaken, we were able to evidence that the reports identified each site to be of a satisfactory review. We also noted that additional commentary had been included within the reports, highlighting any potential issues which may occur in the future (for example, a broken window which is unable to be opened and therefore may impact staff wellbeing). For each instance noted, we were able to evidence within the report, that the nominated individual had already declared the issues with the Force's Estates Team, and all necessary remedial action had been implemented.

2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Area: Health and Safety: Employer	
Control	<p>Health and safety training is to be undertaken as part of the induction process and should be completed as soon as practicably possible after the commencement of employment.</p> <p>Performance reporting is completed by the Talent and Development Team on a bi-weekly basis and any non-compliance is fed back to management and the COT.</p>
	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Design ✓</p> <p>Compliance ×</p>
Findings / Implications	<p>The Force currently operates three induction programmes for police staff or non-operational individuals, Force Control Room staff, and officers. Each induction is tailored to the individual roles and outlines the proposed risks in health and safety whilst on the job.</p> <p>We reviewed each induction checklist and confirmed standard training requirements included the fire evacuation procedure, tour of the site and facilities, and near miss and accident reporting. Once the induction checklist is completed, management return it to the Talent and Development Team to store on the individual's file.</p> <p>In addition to the induction training listed above, an in-person health and safety module is delivered by the Force's Health and Safety Adviser. We obtained a copy of the training and evidenced training areas included health and safety legislation, the completion of risk assessments, and reporting of accidents and near misses, including how to raise issues.</p> <p>We tested a sample of 10 officers / staff within the Force, which comprised of five line managers and five new starters, to evidence that they had completed the following training courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction training, including the health and safety module delivered by the Force's Health and Safety Adviser; • Manual handling (an e-Learning course that employees complete once); and • An annual DSE assessment. <p>From our sample, we identified the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In two instances, we were unable to identify that manual handling training had been completed, both instances related to new starters; • In two instances, we were unable to identify that a DSE assessment had been completed, both instances related to new starters, and in the remaining instances where we were able to evidence an assessment had been completed, in four of these instances, the assessments had not been completed within the last 12 months; and • In four instances, we were unable to identify that induction training, including health and safety specific training had been completed. Each instance related to existing members of staff / officers, and not new starters. However, it should be noted that in one of the four instances, the employee had started with the Force, prior to this induction training being required, though staff should still be monitored to evidence completion and refresher requirements. <p>For one employee within our sample, training records were not held by the Force, as the employee was a Police Staff Volunteer, and had therefore been supplied to the Force by the Citizens in Policing and was not a direct employee of North Yorkshire Police.</p>

Area: Health and Safety: Employer

For all training courses that had been recorded as completed, we were able to evidence that these had been completed within the previous 12 months.

Completion of training is logged within TAS (Training Admin System), which allows the Force to monitor and escalates any non-completions of health and safety training, should they arise. Quarterly reports are generated from the system, providing a list of all officers and staff who have lapsed in undertaking health and safety e-learning modules, which are then emailed directly to all relevant managers to allow for follow up of non-completions.

We discussed the missing records with the Health and Safety Advisor and determined that for Health and Safety training for new Police Officers no record is kept in relation to each individual health and safety training element (for example, a tour of site and facilities, and near miss and accident reporting) included as part of the overall induction training package, as there are a significant number of elements included within the induction as a whole. Instead, a record is documented that identifies once the induction training has been completed in its entirety. However, this was not available for any pre-2014 records; though it was noted that all induction training has to be completed before roles are able to commence. As the issue with recording the induction training has now been rectified, and we identified no issues with the recording of this for new starters, we have not raised a management action.

We also identified that the Force has delivered several other health and safety related courses, such as COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health), manual handling, and Fire Warden training; however, the records for these courses are across several systems within the Force, one of which is no longer in use, and it was therefore not possible to identify whether the members of staff / officers we requested sample evidence for had completed these courses. It was also noted that some departments within the Force maintain their own training record systems, for example Force Control Room, who also have their own Training Hub.

If training logs are not complete, and recorded in full for all officers and staff, this provides a risk that should an incident occur, the Force would be unable to identify that they had taken the appropriate measures to protect employees, and therefore open themselves up to a vulnerability of compensation claims, and potential legal repercussions.

<p>Management Action 1</p>	<p>The Force will implement refresher health and safety training on a periodic basis.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Team will review system capability to determine whether overarching training records for all health and safety courses can be retained in one location.</p> <p>As a minimum, records for in-person training delivered by the Health and Safety Advisor should be retained by the team to evidence sessions delivered.</p>	<p>Responsible Owner: Learning and Development Manager</p>	<p>Date: 28 June 2024</p>	<p>Priority: Medium</p>
<p>Management Action 2</p>	<p>A requirement for all employees to complete an up-to-date DSE assessment will be rolled out across the Force and compliance with this requirement monitored.</p> <p>Annual reminders will be issued to ensure this is complied with.</p>	<p>Responsible Owner: Health and Safety Advisor</p>	<p>Date: 28 June 2024</p>	<p>Priority: Medium</p>

Area: Health and Safety: Employer

Control	All incidents and near misses are to be recorded within 24 hours of the incident. Incidents are reported via an online form, and the Health and Safety Team receives immediate email notification once an incident has been logged, as well as the employee's line manager, to ensure the line manager is aware of reported issues.	Assessment:	
		Design	✓
	All incidents are recorded by the Health and Safety Team and are reported to the Force health and safety meetings and the relevant district meeting depending on where the incident occurred.	Compliance	×

Findings / Implications

Within the Force's policy, the reporting or logging of accidents, near misses and incidents is required to be completed via the internal intranet submission form, which is automatically emailed to the Health and Safety Team and Line Manager of injured person to review the case and further investigate if and when required. We understand that the reporting of any incident should be completed within 24 hours, although we were unable to evidence that this timeframe had been recorded within the Health and Safety Policy, nor were we able to evidence that guidance on how to report incidents has been documented within any policy. This provides a risk that employees may not or may be unable to report any incidents within the required timeframe, and therefore the Force will be unable to implement any remedial actions in a timely manner. We tested a sample of 10 accidents (of which seven were RIDDOR reportable) and five near misses to ensure they are reported timely and there are no gaps in logging or recording accidents.

For the 10 accidents:

- Of the 10 accidents reported, only four were reported through to the Health and Safety Team within the 24 hours timescale. The days between the accident occurring and it being reported to the Health and Safety Team sat at two, three, five, 10, 14 and 25 days, meaning the 24-hour timeframe was not achieved for 60% of the sample.
- Of the 10 cases, we noted each case was reported to the next appropriate Force health and safety meeting, which is held on a quarterly basis. Meeting minutes were provided to evidence this.
- In two cases we noted they had appropriate meeting minutes available to confirm they reported the incidents to the district meeting. In the remaining eight cases, no meeting minutes or logs were available to confirm they had been effectively reported to the district meeting.

For the seven cases which were RIDDOR reportable:

- Only one case was reported to the internal Health and Safety Team within the required 24-hour timescale.
- Five of the seven cases were reported to the HSE within the required 10 working days. However, in one case, the RIDDOR was reported within the 15 working day timeframe, allowable for employees who have had a period of absence exceeding seven days. In the final case, the RIDDOR was not reported within 10 or 15 working days and was instead reported 18 working days after the incident. The Force did not adhere to timescales on this occasion, due to the incident being reported to the Health and Safety Team later than the 24-hour timeframe.

Area: Health and Safety: Employer

- In all seven cases, we noted a completed HSE report was retained on file.

For the five near misses:

- In all five cases we confirmed the near misses were reported to the Health and Safety Team within the 24-hour timescale.
- We confirmed for the five near misses, each was reported to the Force health and safety meeting in the quarterly dashboard updates.
- We confirmed for all five cases, each was reported in the relevant district meeting as part of the lessons learnt process.

We were also able to evidence that the Health and Safety Team maintain a tracking spreadsheet for all RIDDOR reportable instances, which details:

- The recorded date of the injury, for example when the officer, or staff members has submitted the report;
- The actual date of the accident; and
- The date this was reported to the HSE, where applicable.

A comments column had also been included, that detailed follow up tracking, for the team to log any instances that require further follow up or document the reasoning behind any instances where reporting to the HSE was late (for example, the accident had been reported late to the H&S Team).

However, without timely reporting of accidents, the Force is unable to investigate and take necessary precautions to ensure the safety of their staff and officers and could result in financial or legal matters if an individual seeks compensation.

Should meeting minutes not be recorded for health and safety discussions within meetings (for example at district meetings), this provides a risk that the Force is unable to appropriately monitor and manage any actions and decisions taken, in relation to health and safety incidents.

Further to this, currently there is no administrative support for the Force's county and coastal district meetings, meaning that any health and safety discussions and lessons learned are not being recorded at all.

Management Action 3

Meeting minutes will be retained for the district meetings and quarterly health and safety minutes to evidence clear record of any incidents being reported.

The Force will ensure that the coastal and county district meetings are supported by a nominated individual to support meeting administration, such as, meeting minutes and decision and actions logs.

Action logs will be retained to support clear action monitoring arising from any incidents.

Responsible Owner:

District Commanders,

Date:

31 January
2024

Priority:

Medium

Area: Health and Safety: Employer

Management Action 4	<p>The Force will ensure that all officers and staff are made aware of the 24-hour reporting timeframe and that all RIDDOR reports are submitted in line with the HSE timeframes. These requirements should be added to the Health and Safety Policy and included within relevant training material.</p> <p>Where incidents are received after the 24-hour timeframe, this will be monitored by the Health and Safety Team and raised with relevant teams / managers, where applicable.</p>	Responsible Owner: Health and Safety Advisor	Date: 31 January 2024	Priority: Medium
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Area: Health and Safety: Employer

Control	<p>The Force undertakes quarterly building inspections at each district premises to confirm building safety and fire safety are in line with regulation. Risks identified will be addressed by a nominated individual per site.</p> <p>General risk assessments are reviewed every 12 months.</p>	Assessment:	
		Design	✓
		Compliance	×
Findings / Implications	<p>Through discussions with the Health and Safety Advisor, we confirmed the Force undertakes quarterly building inspections to fulfil the current legislation requirements within the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations. We reviewed the building inspection procedure which confirms a nominated member of staff for each of the proposed sites will undertake the inspection via the building and fire inspection form. The inspection form should outline any potential unsafe conditions or hazards which could cause injury or damage.</p> <p>We obtained three building inspection reports completed between April and June 2023 for York, Harrogate and Scarborough police stations which come under the North Yorkshire Police district. Through review of each inspection report, we noted that the nominated individuals are required to test against the following criteria for: the general building issues and housekeeping, welfare issues, electrical safety, storage of equipment and waste, first aid, security, and miscellaneous are satisfactory in line with legislation.</p> <p>Through review of the York inspection report, we confirmed that the nominated individual had declared for all seven criteria areas that they were satisfactory. For the Harrogate inspection report we identified the nominated individual had stated they were satisfied with all seven criteria areas. In the remaining inspection report for Scarborough, we noted the nominated individual had recorded all seven criteria areas as satisfactory. However, they provided additional commentary on the report of potential issues which could occur in future such as: a broken window which is unable to be opened and could affect staff wellbeing or a potential fire exit, and coat stands in the middle of a corridor which could result in trips or falls. We confirmed within the commentary the nominated individual had already declared the broken window with the Estates Team to take necessary action which was completed in June 2023 and the coat stand was removed after the inspection was completed.</p> <p>We also evidenced that the Force have in place published guidance, made available on the internal intranet, in relation to general risk assessments. The guidance states that the Health and Safety Team will maintain a copy of a spreadsheet identifying all risk assessments, the responsible risk assessment reviewer, and the date each risk assessment is due. Discussions with the Health and Safety Advisor identified that all risk assessments must be reviewed within a 12-month period.</p> <p>We were able to evidence that this spreadsheet has been maintained by the Health and Safety Team and documents a total of 78 risk assessments currently in use across the Force. However, from this list, we identified a total of 35 risk assessments, that had not been reviewed within the previous 12 months, although notes were recorded to confirm that the Health and Safety Team had reviewed and followed these up with the responsible individuals.</p> <p>This provides a risk that the Force may expose their employees and others to hazards that could cause harm, injury, or illness. This could result in legal consequences, such as fines, compensation claims, or prosecution, as well as reputational damage and loss of trust from employees, and wider members of the public.</p>		

Area: Health and Safety: Employer

From the total of 78 risk assessments, we requested a sample of five to evidence that the review date had been accurately recorded within the spreadsheet, and each risk assessment had received appropriate sign off. No issues were identified.

We were also able to evidence that all risk assessments had been published on the Force's internal intranet.

Management Action 5	The Force will ensure that all risk assessments have been appropriately reviewed within the previous 12 months.	Responsible Owner: Health and Safety Advisor/District Commanders and Heads of Department	Date: 30 April 2024	Priority: Medium
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APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

Area	Control design not effective*	Non Compliance with controls*	Agreed actions		
			Low	Medium	High
Health and Safety: Employer	0 (8)	4** (8)	0	5	0
Total			0	5	0

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

** More than one management action raised against one control.

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