



Annual Report 2013–14

**Remuneration Board of the
National Assembly for Wales**

July 2014

The Remuneration Board

Sandy Blair CBE (Chair)

Mary Carter

Stuart Castledine

Professor Monojit Chatterji

The Rt Hon Sir George Reid (Chair) to September 2013

Biographies of Board members are available at Appendix A.

Secretariat to the Board

Carys Eyton Evans, Clerk (to September 2013)

Gareth Price, Clerk (from September 2013)

Al Davies, Deputy Clerk (from September 2012 to September 2013)

Dan Collier, Deputy Clerk (from September 2013)

Lisa Hatcher, Team Support (to September 2013)

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Introduction

Sir George Reid was the Chair of the Remuneration Board from its creation in 2010. Sadly, he had to stand down as Chair and as a member of the Board in September 2013 for health reasons. Sir George is a man of many strengths: he has a lifetime of experience at the highest levels of public life; a formidable intellect; astute political intuition; and a sincere desire to see the National Assembly develop as a strong national parliament. Those of us who worked with him directly also know of his outstanding abilities as a chair, his wisdom, humour, relentless drive and his kindness. His colleagues on the Board, the Assembly and Wales as a whole owe a great deal to Sir George for his contribution and, as his successor as Chair, I am all too aware of the gap he leaves behind. As the search for his replacement continues, the Board is determined to continue to work in the principled and evidence-based style that Sir George established from the outset.

The Remuneration Board has always had the goal of putting in place - a year before the start of the Fifth Assembly - a structure of pay, pensions and allowances which is fair, clear, value for money and fit for purpose. This report describes the work that we have undertaken in 2013-14 and I am pleased to say that we remain on track to achieve that goal.

During the year the Board met formally on six occasions. Between meetings, members have consulted by phone and email and have carried out a range of research work within their individual professional competencies. As Chair, I have liaised regularly with the Presiding Officer and party leaders and have met Assembly Members and their staff on a frequent and regular basis.

The Assembly has evolved substantially since its establishment. It started as a corporate body with limited powers and is now an independent parliamentary body making important primary legislation. The Wales Bill currently before Parliament will give the Assembly significant new fiscal responsibilities and the recommendations of the Silk Commission point towards further growth in the institution's legislative competence. All this adds significant pressure and responsibility to the work of a legislature with just 60 Members.

Against that backdrop it is our job to ensure that Assembly Members are suitably remunerated and have access to adequate financial resources to enable them to fulfil their functions. On behalf of the taxpayer, we must also ensure probity, accountability, value for money and transparency in the use of public funds. I hope that the steps we have taken in the last year demonstrate that we have met all of those requirements. The people of Wales deserve good government and good government can only be delivered when scrutiny, challenge and representation in the Assembly is strong. We intend to play our part to make that so.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sandy Blair", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sandy Blair CBE DL, Chair of the Remuneration Board
July 2014

1. The Remuneration Board

This chapter describes the Board's functions, remit and ways of working.

Establishment and Appointment

1. The Remuneration Board of the National Assembly for Wales is the independent body responsible for setting the remuneration and allowances of Assembly Members and their staff. The Board was established by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010 (the Measure), which received Royal Approval on 22 July 2010.
2. The Board was appointed by a transparent public appointments procedure undertaken in the summer of 2010. Biographies of all Board members can be found at Appendix A. Members of the Remuneration Board have been appointed for a fixed period of five years, and may serve no more than two terms of appointment.
3. The Assembly Commission formally approved the appointments on 21 September 2010, and the Board held its first meeting on 1 October 2010.
4. Following the resignation of Sir George Reid in September 2013, Sandy Blair was elected to be Chair by the Board under section 1 of the Measure with effect from October 1, 2013. This decision was formally endorsed by the Board at its meeting on 18 October 2013.

Functions and Objectives

5. Our functions, as set out in section 3 of the Measure, are to determine the level of remuneration and system of financial support for Assembly Members (hereinafter referred to as Members) which enables them to fulfil their roles.
6. The Measure sets out three key objectives that we must seek to achieve when making a Determination. These are to:

- provide Assembly Members with a level of remuneration which reflects the complexity and importance of the functions they discharge, and does not deter individuals from seeking election to the Assembly on financial grounds;
- provide Assembly Members with adequate resources to enable them to exercise their functions; and
- ensure probity, accountability, value for money and transparency with regards to the expenditure of public funds.

Statutory Requirements

7. In carrying out our functions, section 3 of the Measure obliges us to keep the implementation of our decisions and their effectiveness under review, taking particular account of the experience we gain from the operation of our Determinations, any changes in the functions of Members, and any other circumstances we deem to be relevant.

8. Whilst we are independent of the Assembly, and are not subject to its direction or control or that of the Assembly Commission, section 2 of the Measure obliges us, when exercising our functions, to consult those likely to be affected by our decisions. This includes Members, staff employed by Members or by groups of Members, relevant trade unions and any other persons whom we consider to be appropriate.

9. Section 2 of the Measure permits us to meet in private if we consider it appropriate to do so, but also requires us to act in an open and transparent manner and publish on the Assembly's website such information as will enable the public to be kept informed of our activities. In addition, section 11 requires us to lay before the Assembly an annual report on our activities, including our use of resources, during each financial year.

Principles

10. Our work to date has been underpinned by a set of clearly defined principles:

- financial support and remuneration for Members should support the strategic purpose of the Assembly and facilitate the work of its Members;
- decisions must be appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales;
- the system of financial support for Members must be robust, clear, transparent, sustainable and represent value for money for the taxpayer.

Methodology

11. The decisions set out in our Determinations derive from transparent and participative review of the system of financial support and remuneration, and are based on the evidence we gather from Members, their staff, and other relevant individuals, organisations and sources. The evidence we have received has enabled us to come to a clear view of the strategic purposes of the Assembly and the way that Members fulfil those purposes. We have put in place a system of remuneration which targets resources to support these purposes and all aspects of a Member's role. In accordance with our remit, we respond as necessary to feedback by considering amendments to our Determination to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

12. In accordance with section 9 of the Measure, we have received clerking and research assistance, legal and other advice, and administrative support from Assembly Commission staff. This support is provided as part of the general duties of Commission staff, and therefore does not incur any additional costs to the Remuneration Board.

Consultation and Evidence Gathering

13. Throughout our work, and in accordance with section 2 of the Measure, we have undertaken consultation with a range of stakeholders. We are particularly grateful to those who have taken the time to provide evidence to support our work since our establishment.

14. Feedback from Members when we consult regularly has enabled us to evaluate the effectiveness of the systems we have put in place. We will continue with this participative approach to ensure our decisions remain fit for purpose.

2. Our work in 2013-14

This chapter explains the changes we have made to our Determination during the year following feedback and evidence from Members. It also outlines key areas which we have considered but which have not resulted in changes to the Determination in 2013-14.

Reviewing our Decisions

15. We are required to keep our Determination under review so that it continues to provide Members with the resources they need to perform their duties. In order for us to do this, we invite feedback and evidence from Members which enables us to assess the effectiveness of our decisions and identify any areas for revision.

16. We have reviewed our decisions in a number of areas, listed below. Where necessary, we have made amendments to our Determination. Unless otherwise stated, the changes introduced are effective for the financial year 2014-15.

Assembly Member pay for 2015-16, the final year of the Fourth Assembly

17. In 2011, at the start of what was then a four year Assembly, the Board decided to freeze the base salary for a Member at its 2010-11 level until the end of 2014-15. Since then, legislation has been enacted that means the next Assembly election will not take place until May 2016. The Board, therefore, must set the base salary level for the final year of this Assembly in 2015-16. In our view, it was sensible to take that decision as early as possible so as to give clarity to Members and the public.

18. Had we known at the time that the Assembly would exist for a further year before dissolution, there is no reason to think that we would have done anything other than freeze base salary for five years, rather than four. Given this and the continued pressure on public spending, earnings levels across Wales and the pattern in public sector pay settlements, we considered there to be a strong argument to support a continuation of the freeze. At the same time, we recognised that, by the end of 2014-15, Members' salaries will have been frozen since 2010/11. This represents a significant real terms

reduction. We recognised too that there has started to be some slight relaxation in public pay constraint.

19. We consider, therefore, that a small increase in basic salary for the final year of this Assembly is appropriate. We were clear that this decision was a matter of providing a fair salary for one year only. We will be conducting a detailed exercise to look at Members' salaries for the Fifth Assembly.

Decision

20. The basic salary of a Member in 2015-16 will increase by 1%, from £53,852 to £54,390.

21. The increase in basic salary costs arising from this decision will be £32,280 in 2015-16.

Assembly Member support staff pay 2014-15

22. In 2013 we undertook a major review of pay and arrangements for Assembly Member Support Staff (AMSS), described in our report published in December¹. Following consultation with Members and their staff, we agreed to increase each pay point on the AMSS pay bands by 1% from 2014-15. We also gave a commitment to look in the future at the provision of a death in service benefit for AMSS; redundancy and continuity of service; leave entitlement; and pension contributions.

Decision

23. The pay award for AMSS for 2014-15 is a 1% increase. The new pay scales are shown below. For the 2014-15 financial year each Member will receive a maximum staffing allowance of £90,789 to fund employment of staff on these scales

24. The maximum increase in salary cost that could arise from this decision would be £62,695 although actual expenditure is likely to be lower than this.

¹ Review of Assembly Member staffing and Assembly Member Support Staff pay: December 2013

25. Figure 1: Pay scales for Assembly Members' support staff 2014 - 2015

	Pay Point 1	Pay point 2	Pay point 3	Pay point 4	Pay point 5
Chief of staff	£34,117	£35,865	£37,704	£39,637	£41,673
Additional Group Support	£31,016	£32,606	£34,276	£36,033	£37,885
Band 1	£23,049	£25,115	£27,373	£29,837	£32,532
Band 2	£19,684	£21,652	£23,823	£26,214	£28,856
Band 3	£17,824	£19,205	£20,693	£22,301	£24,037

26. Consideration of support staff pay for 2015-16 will be given at the start of 2015.

Office Cost Allowance

27. Members are entitled to claim an Office Costs Allowance to reimburse them for all reasonable costs relating to the running of an office and engaging with constituents. In March we agreed to raise the allowance in line with the forecast increase in the Consumer Prices Index in 2014. This took the Allowance to £17,014.

Decision

28. The office cost allowance for 2014-15 was increased from £16,697 to £17,014 in line with the Office for Budget Responsibility's forecast rise in the Consumer Prices Index in 2014 of 1.9%, as set out in the UK Government's Budget for 2014-15.

29. The maximum potential cost of this decision is £19,000.

Residential accommodation expenditure

30. Our Determination provides for payments to reimburse Members whose constituencies and regions are furthest from Cardiff for the cost of staying overnight in Cardiff in connection with the performance of their role as a Member. Since 2011, 25 Members have been eligible for these payments.

31. The Board received feedback from Members that rises in the market for rented properties had outstripped adjustments to the allowance. As a result we undertook an analysis of Members' payments and the 'market rate' for accommodation within a reasonable distance of the Senedd. In March we agreed to increase the maximum level of reimbursement in respect of

residential accommodation for Members whose main homes are located within the outer area.

Decision

32. The maximum level of reimbursement in respect of residential accommodation for Members whose main homes are located within the outer area was increased from £8,400 per annum to £8,820 (ie £700 per calendar month to £735) for 2014-15.

33. The maximum potential cost of this decision is £10,500

Consideration of exceptional payments

34. The Board recognises that from time to time individual Members may face exceptional personal circumstances that affect their ability to fulfil their duties. These will often be of a confidential nature and can arise at short notice. The Board has a duty to support Members in all aspects of their role and is of the view that, if such circumstances are brought to its attention, it should come to a view as to whether there is a case for providing exceptional financial support. Clearly, any such requests need to be dealt with sensitively, while ensuring appropriate governance arrangements for reporting the Board's consideration and decisions.

Decision

35. In November 2013 we amended the Determination to clarify the steps that a Member must follow if submitting such a request and the process we will take in assessing whether additional support should be made available. During the year we received one request under this new procedure. In that case we were not persuaded of the need for additional support beyond that already available.

Support for Assembly Members with caring responsibilities

36. On several occasions we have considered introducing an allowance for Members with caring responsibilities. Following our most recent consultation with Members, we decided not to introduce any additional provision at this time. We will consider the issue again before finalising arrangements for the Fifth Assembly.

37. During the year, the Board agreed to conduct an Equalities Impact Assessment of its Determination for the Fifth Assembly to ensure that we follow best practice in this field. To do so, we receive support from the

Assembly Commission's equality team and specialist assistance from *Diverse Cymru*.

Resettlement Grant

38. All Members are entitled to a Resettlement Grant if they stand for election and are defeated. This payment is akin to a redundancy payment.

39. For Members elected for the first time in 2011, the grant will be calculated on the basis of one month's salary for each completed year of service, up to a maximum of six month's salary.

40. Members elected prior to 2011 currently enjoy transitional arrangements which mean that any of them who do not seek re-election in 2016 will still be entitled to a resettlement grant. This does not apply to any Members who were elected for the first time in 2011 or later.

41. The size of the grant for Members elected before 2011 is calculated according to a formula based on the Member's age and length of service. The size of the payments for these Members will vary between 50% and 100% of a year's salary, according to the operation of this formula.

42. The Board consulted Members on a proposal to remove entitlement to Resettlement Grant for those Members elected prior to 2011 who do not seek re-election. Our proposal was that the current transitional arrangement should cease at the end of this Assembly so that all Members are treated equally. This would mean that 2016 would be the last election where a pre-2011 Assembly Member would receive a resettlement grant if they choose to stand down.

43. This proposal caused concern among many Members who argued that it unfairly affected Members who have taken decisions about when to stand down on the basis of the rules currently in place.

44. The Board remains of the view that these payments cannot be justified in the long-term and we have a duty to ensure the good use of public money. Having considered the representations we received, we amended our original proposal so that Resettlement Grant for Members elected before 2011 will be removed in two stages.

Decision

45. Members elected before 2011 who do not seek re-election in 2016 will receive a Resettlement Grant in line with the formula applicable to those Members set out in the current Determination. Members elected before 2011 who do not seek re-election at the 2021 election will receive a Resettlement Grant at 50% of the level calculated by reference to that formula in the current Determination. Resettlement Grant will not be payable to any Member not seeking re-election at any subsequent election.

46. In due course this will result in a cost saving to the public purse though that saving is impossible to forecast accurately.

Policy and Research Fund

47. One of the early decisions of the Board was to put in place a Policy and Research Fund. Members may claim up to £2,000 in order to commission discrete pieces of research work from external sources. We are very pleased that feedback from Members who have accessed the fund has been positive and we will continue to monitor its take-up and consider options for its improvement.

48. During the year nine Members utilised the Policy and Research Fund to undertake work in the following areas:

49. Figure 2: Information on Policy and Research Fund projects 2013-14

Assembly Member	Title
Elin Jones	The implications of introducing a sugary drinks levy
Eluned Parrott	Report on Apprenticeships in Business in Wales
Jenny Rathbone	European funding opportunities 2014-2020
Joyce Watson	Hope in the Face of Austerity: women and work in Ystradgynlais and District
Julie Morgan	Promoting social cohesion between the Gypsy and Traveller Community and Settled Communities
Leanne Wood	Energy in Wales Research
Mick Antoniw	An Analysis of South Wales Health Reconfiguration Plans

Peter Black	Local Government Reform in Wales
Russell George	Residents and Business Review

Cross-Party Groups

50. In June the Assembly endorsed a series of recommendations made in a report from the Standards of Conduct Committee relating to the operation of Cross-Party Groups. The Chair of the Committee asked the Board to consider the findings in the report.

51. The Board agreed with the Committee's position on the use of allowances for participation in Cross-Party Groups and its call for greater clarity regarding the matter.

52. The system of allowances in place must enable Members to fulfil their duties in each area of their work. As with all use of the resources made available to Members through our Determination, allowances are paid or claims reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred by Members in connection with the performance of their duties.

53. Although Cross-Party Groups at the Assembly are not considered a part of formal business, they are a mechanism for engaging with interest groups from a range of sectors and can play a valuable role in raising awareness of issues. It is our view that allowances payable through our Determination may legitimately be used to facilitate participation in the activities of a Cross-Party Group, for example a claim for overnight accommodation or travel to allow attendance at a Cross-Party Group meeting or event.

54. Members must take personal responsibility for all expenses incurred and must exercise judgment in assessing the relevance of any activity being carried out to their duties as Assembly Members. Our Determination also expects Members to be committed to the principles of openness and transparency. All claims are published on the Allowance Publication System which informs the public about expenditure incurred by Members.

Assembly Member Pensions

55. Our work on pensions is progressing to plan.
56. The design of a pension scheme is a complex and specialist task. Over the course of the five years of the fourth Assembly contributions into the pension scheme will amount to approximately £6.9m – £2.0 m from Members and £4.9 m from the Commission. These are large sums of money and we want to ensure that any changes that we propose to the current scheme achieve a reasonable balance between the benefits provided to Members and the cost to the taxpayer. To ensure that our work is thorough, robust and takes account of all relevant factors, we procured expert pensions legal and actuarial advice.
57. In November 2013, we appointed Wragge & Co to provide us with legal advice on our pensions work as a whole and also to draft the rules of the scheme itself. We appointed PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to provide actuarial advice on the options for the new scheme.
58. In addition, we are grateful to the Trustees of the existing scheme for agreeing that the Board could commission the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) – the actuaries of the current scheme – to model and cost our proposals.
59. The cost in 2013-14 of this legal and actuarial work advice amounted to £63,522 (<1% of the total projected contributions to the pension scheme during the Fourth Assembly).
60. Over the remainder of the year covered by this report, we worked with our advisors to refine options and proposals for the new scheme.
61. Our aim in reviewing pensions for Members has been to put in place future arrangements that are fair in terms of risk sharing and total cost, as well as affordable to the taxpayer and to Members. Arrangements for Members must reflect the changes which are happening across the public and private sectors and affecting the people of Wales. Over time the changes should deliver cost savings for the taxpayer whilst ensuring those who are elected to the Assembly receive appropriate provision for their retirement.
62. As a result of a Legislative Consent Motion passed by the Assembly in February 2013 the Public Sector Pension Act 2013 (PSPA), which provides the legislative framework for changes to public sector pension schemes, applies to the Members' Scheme. We must therefore follow many of the requirements set out in the PSPA when introducing any changes.

63. We will finalise details of the new pension scheme by the Spring of 2015. The scheme will then be in place for Members of the Assembly after the 2016 election. In the meantime, we will consult Members and the public on options and proposals.

3. Work Programme 2014-15

64. Before the next Assembly elections in 2016 we will determine the total remuneration package and system of financial support appropriate for Members of the Fifth Assembly. We have divided our work into four strands:

- a. Member remuneration- pensions
- b. Member remuneration – salaries: base and office holder
- c. Member Support, including staffing
- d. Allowances, including residential, office and travel

65. At its meeting in January 2014, the Board agreed that an Equality Impact Assessment should be conducted as part of this work. Diverse Cymru has been commissioned to provide the Board with assurance that the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken is robust.

66. Our aim is to have undertaken thorough research, consulted widely and published our decisions in each of these areas by May 2015. Prospective candidates for election, political parties and the public in Wales will then know well in advance the financial arrangements in place for the Members elected in 2016.

Remuneration Board

Remit and Membership

The Remuneration Board was established by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010.

The Board is an independent statutory body which has responsibility for:

- providing Assembly Members with a level of remuneration which fairly reflects the complexity and importance of the functions which they are expected to discharge, and does not, on financial grounds, deter persons with the necessary commitment and ability from seeking election to the Assembly;
- providing Assembly Members with resources which are adequate to enable them to fulfil their functions as Members; and
- ensuring probity, accountability, value for money and transparency with respect to the expenditure of public funds.

In fulfilling its remit, the Board is required to act in an open and transparent manner, and, where the Board considers it appropriate, undertake consultation with those likely to be affected by the exercising of its functions.

The Board was appointed under a fair and open recruitment process and consists of a Chair and, normally, four Board members:



The Rt Hon Sir George Reid

(Chair until September 2013 when he stood down from the Board)

A Scottish politician, journalist and academic. Knighted 2012. Privy Councillor, former MP, MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and Chair of its Corporate Body. Lord-Lieutenant of Clackmannanshire. Worked for 15 years in wars and disasters as a director of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent. During his tenure, his appointments included: UK Electoral Commissioner and visiting professor at Glasgow and Stirling Universities. Led strategic reviews of governance in the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Trust for Scotland.



Sandy Blair CBE

(Chair since September 2013)

A former director of the Welsh Local Government Association, WLGA (retired 2004). A local authority chief executive for 16 years before appointment to the WLGA, and President of SOLACE in 1999-2000. Has held a number of public appointments and trusteeships such as non-executive director of the Health and Safety Executive, HSE, chair of the Monmouth Diocesan Board of Finance and roles within the Church in Wales. Has served as a member of the Remuneration Committees for UWIC and HSE. He was appointed Chair of the Bevan Foundation in November 2013.



Mary Carter

Retired as a Partner of KPMG in September 2008 and is currently a member of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body which makes recommendations to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence on military pay, compensatory allowances and charges. A lawyer by background, has specialised for over 20 years in advising UK and non UK companies on remuneration and incentives for directors/senior management and related governance and taxation issues.



Stuart Castledine

A chartered accountant who occupied a number of financial and general management roles within Allied Dunbar, Chartered Trust and Bristol & West Building Society before becoming Tesco's first Financial Services Director. More recently, has undertaken a variety of assignments in the public and private sectors, helping establish joint ventures and alliances as well as being a turnaround director of a number of financial services organisations. A non-executive director of the Welsh Ambulance Service until March 2014.



Professor Monojit Chatterji

An academic with public policy experience, he has published research in such areas as the determinants of public sector pay. Currently Bonar Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Dundee and Bye-Fellow and Director of Studies in Economics at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge, and Chair of the National Joint Council of UK Fire and Emergency Services (the pay negotiating body). Was appointed lay member of the House of Commons Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) in January 2013. Previously a member of the School Teachers' Review Body which makes recommendations to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education and Skills on pay and conditions, and also governance arrangements for school teachers and head teachers in England and Wales. Formerly a member of the Economists Group, Office of Manpower Economics, considering cross-cutting issues on pay in the public sector.

Board Cost Breakdown

The table below shows the direct costs incurred by the Remuneration Board in 2013-14. During this time there were five formal Board meetings plus one informal meeting. Board members also attended additional meetings and teleconferences with external advisors regarding pensions.

Board Member Fees (before tax)

	The Rt Hon Sir George Reid (Chair) Up to Oct 2013	Sandy Blair (Up to Oct 2013)	Sandy Blair (Chair) (From Oct 2013)	Mary Carter	Stuart Castledine	Monojit Chatterji	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Daily rate	243.00	185.00	243.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	
Fees	1,701	740	3,562.14	3,256.08	4,329.58	2,652.50	16,241.30

Board Member Expenses

	The Rt Hon Sir George Reid (Chair)	Sandy Blair (Up to Oct 2013)	Sandy Blair (Chair) (From Oct 2013)	Mary Carter	Stuart Castledine	Monojit Chatterji	Total
Car mileage	-		332.55	104.30	133.70	362.80	933.35
Taxi/Car Hire	125.62		-	20.50	-	145.37	291.49
Air Travel	310.25		-	-	-	693.69	1,003.94
Public Transport	62.47		-	203.50	60.80	35.65	362.42
Accommodation	192.00		-	276	-	410.00	878.00
Subsistence	117.40	67.50	-	38.99	-	321.97	545.86
Total	807.74	67.50	332.55	643.29	194.50	1,969.48	4,015.06

Additional Costs

	Total
Board Meetings	345.42
Actuarial advice on AM pension arrangements from PwC	23,160
Legal advice on AM pension arrangements from Wragge & Co	40,362
Total	63,867.42

Total Cost	84,123.78
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