

# **Domestic Abuse Procedures**

## **(Operational)**

**Date of Issue: October 2019**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) recognises that Domestic Abuse is a serious problem which has a devastating impact on victims and their families. The Domestic Abuse Policy and these supporting procedures seek to provide staff with clear guidance in dealing with both service users who are perpetrators of Domestic Abuse and victims or potential victims of Domestic Abuse.

### 1.1 Definition

Domestic Abuse and abuse hereafter referred to as Domestic Abuse is defined as “*threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.*”<sup>1</sup>

Domestic Abuse happens in all societies, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, cultural background, disability, marital status, age or sexual orientation. It is behaviour which can include physical, sexual or emotional abuse, e.g. undermining self-confidence; threats to others, coercive control, using children; creating isolation of the victim from friends and family; controlling access to money, food, transportation, telephone; destruction of property; and stalking.

### 1.2 Impact of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can account for violent crime across a range of offences, including murder. It can also significantly affect children who are witness to abuse and can lead to trauma and long term psychological damage. It can result in re-housing. The level of violence may escalate over time, yet may go unreported or denied. Within heterosexual relationships, while the majority of victims are women, men are also affected. Domestic Abuse also occurs within same sex relationships.

## 2.0 Policy Statement

The aim of these procedures is to work, in partnership with other agencies, to protect the public from offences of Domestic Abuse.

### 2.1 Aims and Objectives

- To implement as appropriate relevant research and information available to PBNI in the assessment and management of risk presented by perpetrators of Domestic Abuse with whom PBNI is working.
- To monitor the need for, and plan and implement, new interventions to improve our suite of programmes to address this offending behaviour.
- To contribute to partnership working through participation in regional

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Department of Justice, 2013

(and local) Domestic Abuse Partnerships; Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure scheme (DVADS); and Public Protection Arrangements N. Ireland (PPANI).

- Victims will be provided with relevant information and support from the Victim Information Unit.
- To ensure that PBNI staff are provided with necessary clarification and/or training in relation to policy and supporting procedures; and partnership working arrangements.

## **2.2 Outcomes**

- Victims of Domestic Abuse will be protected by reducing service users' opportunity and propensity to offend.
- The assessment and management of risk posed by service users in contact with PBNI will contribute to public protection.
- PBNI's service delivery through reports to courts and Parole Commissioners, case management; programmes; and treatment management will be effective.

## **3.0 Principles**

- The safety of individuals at risk from Domestic Abuse (including children and other dependants) will be of prime concern.
- Violence and abuse involve a deliberate decision of the individual offender to abuse. Service users must, therefore, take responsibility for their own actions including their violence and other abusive behaviour.
- Misuse of alcohol and/or the actions of other people are not a justification for violent behaviour.
- Fundamental to an effective response to anyone who has experienced Domestic Abuse is respect for the individual.
- Work with service users should challenge gender attitudes and behaviour in a constructive manner.

## **4.0 PBNI Interventions**

### **4.1 Introduction**

During the course of their work, PBNI employees may come across people who are perpetrators of, or are victims of, Domestic Abuse. The quality of the initial response is vital, as the victim may feel guilty, ashamed or responsible for the violence.

Victims may be apprehensive about possibly breaking up the family home and may be frightened of retribution from their partner and/or disapproval

from the extended family. Victims may be wary of disclosure in case it makes their life more difficult or alienates their children and wider family. In every instance PBNI employees will consider child protection issues and apply child protection procedures when appropriate.

Some service users with whom PBNI has contact will be subject to supervision for an index offence committed in a Domestic Abuse context; others will be subject to supervision for other offences, but may be perpetrators of Domestic Abuse in current or historical relationships.

PBNI also works with victims of Domestic Abuse:

- In cases where the victim has requested involvement with PBNI Victim Information Scheme.
- As service users, who may themselves be current or past victims of Domestic Abuse.
- In relation to the delivery of approved and accredited Domestic Abuse programmes and interventions including the delivery of programmes for Non Adjudicated perpetrators in conjunction with the Health and Social Care Trusts.
- Through participation in partnership arrangements, such as PPANI and MARAC and the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme (DVADS).

#### **4.2 Pre-Sentence Report Stage**

- MCR's will be prepared if requested by the court ~~are not appropriate~~ in cases of Domestic Abuse. However due to the need to make a full risk assessment a Home visit shall be undertaken.
- ACE (assessment, case management and evaluation) and RA1 are the approved PBNI assessment tools in relation to Risk of Serious Harm and shall be used in all cases involving Domestic Abuse.
- PBNI Risk of Serious Harm Policy and Procedures apply to all assessments and management of Domestic Abuse cases.
- In addition to ACE and RA1 the ~~Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA)~~ B- Safer assessment Tool shall be completed in all cases of Domestic Abuse at the point of the initial assessment or during case management supervision if issues of Domestic Abuse subsequently arise.
- The completion of ACE, RA1 and B-Safer shall also be informed by: PBNI records; available information from the PSNI Domestic Abuse Officers; Social Services (UNOCINI); and multi-agency risk management processes such as PPANI and MARAC.
- Victim historical information is available on request from local MARAC Co-ordinators to assist in the assessment for Pre-Sentence Reports. It is of critical importance, however, that detail of this information is not cited in reports.
- Information on Domestic Abuse history relating to police call-outs

regarding a named individual is available to PSR writers and case managers through submission of 'Form 0' to local PSNI Public Protection Units (PPU's).

- Referrals to PBNI's Respectful Relationships Intervention (RRI) should be considered in circumstances where an offender has identified abusive behaviours within an intimate relationship and where the risk is assessed as low and as such would be best targeted with a low risk education intervention.
- Referrals to PBNI's Building Better Relationships Programme (BBR) Programme shall be made for suitable service users who meet the criteria in ACE / RA1 medium to high risk and B-Safer Moderate to High Risk or professional judgement over-ride. The core emphasis in BBR is to provide the offender with the opportunities in which to effect behaviour change.
- In cases where an offender has a 'recent' history defined as "up to two years of Domestic Abuse or currently charged with such an offence" a referral shall be made to Social Services where there are children in the family (UNOCINI).<sup>2</sup> However, there may be circumstances where concerns beyond this time-frame may merit a referral. If staff have any queries in relation to this, the line manager shall be consulted.
- The Victim Awareness Intervention Toolkit is to be considered for use with all service users within 20 working days of supervision as per standards. However, it is not appropriate for cases involving Domestic Violence, Staff should instead assess the service user using the B-safer model to identify the appropriate intervention e.g. RRI or BBR.
- Where PBNI is concerned that the offender, victim or other adult member of a household may be an "Adult at risk of harm" or "An adult in need of protection", a referral shall be made to the appropriate Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist.
- An "Adult at risk of harm" is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:
  - Personal characteristic AND/OR Life circumstances
  - **Personal characteristics** may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special education needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. **Life circumstances** may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.
- An "Adult in need of protection" is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:
  - Personal characteristics AND/OR Life circumstances AND who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, right 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.

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<sup>2</sup> PBNI – Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy – June 2017

- It is essential for all of those involved in the risk assessment and management of the offender to focus on victim safety and ensure that victims' needs are central. As such, staff shall consider making referrals to Social Services(UNOCINI) , PPANI, MARAC and Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation where deemed appropriate.
- It is best practice to advise an offender of PBNI intention to refer prior to contacting Social Services, MARAC or PPANI; however, this is dependent upon any potential risk to the partner or children.

PSR writers shall also consider interventions such as Electronic Monitoring and Offending Behaviour Programmes, where these may reduce the risk of harm to others..

#### **4.3 Case Supervision: Risk Management and Review**

- The focus of case management shall be on reducing risk posed by the offender and enhancing the safety of victims.
- The Caseplan shall reflect additional requirements / licence conditions and prohibitions about behaviour, movement and association. The home visit will be brought forward where there are domestic abuse concerns.
- The supervising probation officer shall contact the PBNI Victim Information Scheme to determine if the victim is registered, and if so should establish and maintain contact with the Victim Liaison Officer.
- The ACE/RA1 assessments, including B-SAFER, shall be applied or updated when any risk-related information or concerns are raised.
- Where new information and / or concerns arise during the supervision period a new referral (where appropriate) shall be forwarded to Social Services, MARAC or PPANI.
- Risk assessment and risk management meetings shall incorporate information from the following range of sources: PBNI records; available information from PSNI Domestic Abuse Officers; Social Services; multi-agency risk management processes such as MARAC, DVADS and PPANI; and the BBR Practitioner Forum.
- Feedback on the progress of an offender who is on a PBNI Domestic Abuse programme intervention shall be obtained and considered as part of on-going assessment.
- The supervising probation officer shall provide written reports to the BBR multi-agency practitioner forum.
- In all cases where an offender has a recent<sup>3</sup> history of Domestic Abuse, or is currently charged with such an offence, a referral shall be made to Social Services where there are children in the family using the UNOCINI template. However, there may be circumstances where concerns beyond this time-frame may merit a referral. Social Services

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<sup>3</sup> PBNI – Child Protection/ Safeguarding Procedures Policy –June 2017

will consider and assess referrals in relation to Domestic Abuse cases where there are Child Protection concerns. If staff have any queries in relation to this, their line manager should be consulted.

- Where PBNI is concerned that the offender, victim or other adult member of the household may be defined as a vulnerable<sup>4</sup> adult by Health and Social Care Trusts, a referral shall be made to the appropriate Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Adult Safeguarding specialist.
- Risk Management shall be conducted on an inter-agency basis in order to safeguard children, vulnerable adults and victims.
- Staff shall recognise that risk can quickly escalate. It is important, therefore, that there is a swift, appropriate response to any issue of non-compliance where the risk of Domestic Abuse and abuse is escalating.
- Other court orders, such as: Non-Molestation Orders; Occupation Orders; and Protection from Harassment Orders shall be included in PBNI's risk assessment. In cases where the index offence is of Domestic Abuse the allocated probation officer shall contact the PSNI Domestic Abuse officer to check if there are any other relevant court orders extant. If Domestic Abuse emerges in respect of other cases, the supervising probation officer shall similarly check with the PSNI Domestic Abuse officer.
- Staff shall take cognisance of, and respond to any notifications via the PBNI Reportable Incident arrangements. In such instances staff shall consider that the Reportable Incident could be related to Domestic Abuse.
- As part of on-going risk assessment and management staff shall have regular contact with all relevant Statutory and Voluntary agencies. All information gathered shall be recorded on PIMS.
- Early discharge of Probation Orders for offences of Domestic Abuse is not appropriate.

#### **4.4 Programme Interventions**

- To address Domestic Abuse offending behaviour PBNI currently delivers the Home Office-accredited Building Better Relationships Programme (BBR) in a group programme format, and separately, the educational intervention of the Respectful Relationships Intervention, as a 1:1 case management intervention (for criteria for RRI see 4.2).
- The BBR Programme is designed to address violence against female adults, by male service users who are over the age of 18 with an IQ of 80+. The programme requires assessment at PSR stage and an additional requirement / licence requirement, with a minimum 2-year supervision period. The programme is aimed at adjudicated and court-mandated cases only.

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<sup>4</sup> •Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures: Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection. (HSCB 2016)

- The aim of the BBR programme is to stop further domestic abuse and violence by teaching alternatives to coercive, dominating and violent behaviour. The objectives of BBR are:
  - To increase the participant's understanding of his offending behaviour by examining his attitudes and belief system
  - To increase the participant's awareness of the effect his behaviour has on others
  - To provide participants with information on how to change abusive behaviour by exploration of non-controlling and non-violent ways of relating to women
  - To ensure collaboration with the wider Criminal Justice system and relevant victims' organisations in tackling Domestic Abuse.
- Referral to the programme shall be completed and forwarded to the Programme Manager within 10 days of an order being made, or upon release from custody, where applicable and subject to other case management sequencing requirements (e.g. addiction issues). The Partner Support Link Worker referral shall be completed and forwarded at the earliest opportunity following confirmation with the case manager of a place and start date on the BBR programme.
- Prior to the commencement of a BBR Programme the supervising probation officer shall complete the relevant pre-group work.
- Programme facilitators shall ensure that programme participants' addresses and programme start-date details are 'flagged' to their local PPU for action and recording for a period of 1 year in the event of call-outs during and following programme completion.
- Programme facilitators shall ensure weekly feedback is provided to the supervising officer, who in turn shall ensure any relevant information is shared for risk assessment and risk management processes.
- Supervising probation officers shall ensure written updates are provided to the BBR practitioner forum, and any resulting action steps are completed.
- Whilst men are attending BBR, supervising officers and programme facilitators shall ensure the Partner Link Support Worker is kept informed of any issues that could impact on the safety of the victim/s.
- Programme facilitators shall ensure the End of Programme Report is completed and shared with the supervising probation officer and BBR participant within 6 weeks of programme completion.

## 5.0 PPANI

The Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland incorporate persons who from 1st April 2010 have been convicted of a violent offence (including homicide) in domestic or family circumstances: or who have a previous conviction for a violent offence in domestic or family circumstances and about whom an agency has current significant

concerns.

Prisoners sentenced prior to 6th October 2008, can be considered on referral into PPANI by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) on the basis of current concerns, and no later than three months prior to their EDR or end of tariff. The seriousness of the behaviour which resulted in imprisonment, coupled with the impending release, shall be counted as current evidence of behaviour on the part of the offender, that indicates the risk of his/her causing serious harm to others has increased.

The PPANI referral form – the PPANI 1, can be found on the PBNI Intranet → Public Protection → PPANI pro-formas.

PBNI provides Chairpersons for all Local Area Public Protection Panels (LAPPP's). Probation officers shall perform the role of Designated Risk Manager for those cases allocated by the LAPPP, and shall attend all LAPPP's where the offender is under supervision and in other cases where they can make a relevant contribution.

## **6.0 MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)**

The main aim of the MARAC panel is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide to an adult victim, to increase the safety of the victim and make the links to other fora such as the PPANI arrangements, HSCT Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding meetings. Within the MARAC process local agencies discuss identified high risk cases in the local area; share information; and agree a co-ordinated action plan. PBNI's role in MARAC is two-fold. Firstly, PBNI Area Managers are the liaison points for each of the MARAC Committees, and secondly, staff can refer cases to MARAC.

The 'Overview of MARAC Operating Protocol for PBNI Staff' is available on the PBNI Intranet. (See PBNI Intranet → Standards → MARAC).

### **6.1 Referral to MARAC**

A probation officer or psychologist can refer a case directly to MARAC at any stage of PBNI's involvement with service users. Professional judgement and consultation with managers, as required, are key to this decision-making

MARAC aims to target high risk (victim) cases. To target this group effectively, MARAC, have developed the DASH Risk Identification Check List (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour' based violence) as a filtering tool. Referring staff shall only complete the DASH RIC if they are working directly with a victim.

(See PBNI Intranet → Standards → MARAC → Appendix 5).

The majority of referrals from PBNI will arise from contact with perpetrators. In such cases, referring staff shall only complete the MARAC Referral Form.

(See PBNI Intranet → Standards → MARAC → Appendix 6).

Please note a referral (or indeed non-referral) to MARAC does not replace policies and procedures in respect of Domestic Abuse. Rather, MARAC is an additional safeguard, for example,

- (a) If there are children in a household, concern about Domestic Abuse must also be relayed to the local Health & Social Care Trust; and
- (b) If an offender under PBNI supervision has assaulted a partner, enforcement consideration shall proceed as normal.

The PBNI Area Manager shall research the MARAC list and where a case (victim or perpetrator) is either currently or previously known to PBNI shall complete the research pro-forma with the assistance of the Probation Officer to whom the case was/is known.

The PBNI Area Manager shall also make contact with the PBNI Victim Information ~~Scheme~~ Unit to determine if the victim is registered. If they are registered, then the PBNI Area Manager shall discuss the case with the designated Victim Liaison Officer. Feedback shall be provided to the appropriate PBNI staff following the MARAC.

The PBNI representative at MARAC shall forward the official minutes of the MARAC relating to the individual PBNI case to the supervising probation officer who will attach to PIMS for future reference.

## 6,2 The role of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme (DVADS)

DVADS is a police operated scheme launched in 2018 that lets a person (aged 16 or over) make inquiries to the police where they are concerned that their partner, or the partner of someone that they know (such as a friend or family member), has a history of abusive behaviour. The scheme is important in helping to address risk to potential victims, allowing them to make an informed choice on whether they wish to continue in their relationship. The scheme operates within existing MARAC's when they take place.

## APPENDIX

### Other Agencies that can assist

- **Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI)**. The Police are the lead agency in the investigation of crime. The PSNI has specially trained Domestic Abuse Officers, who are based within Public Protection Units. The PSNI also provides the administrative support for the local MARAC panels. The Administrator for each local MARAC can also be contacted through the Police PPU: Tel: 02890 650222 (or for an emergency 999).
- **Women's Aid** is an organisation for women, children and young people experiencing Domestic Abuse. It is an organisation for women run by

women, who provide a range of safe housing services including crisis, medium-term and move-on accommodation. Women's Aid also provides information on a wide range of practical support services and education programmes for women.

24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline (managed by Women's Aid): 0800 917 1414

Email: [24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org](mailto:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org)

- **Health and Social Care Trusts** may offer support to a victim living at home and have statutory responsibility for the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.
- **Child Protection**

Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts Gateway Services for Children's Social Work Belfast HSC Trust		
Gateway Team	Telephone (for referral)	Out of Hours Emergency Service (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)
<b>Greater Belfast Gateway Team</b> Knockbreda Centre 110 Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 6HD	<b>028 90507000</b> <b>Secure email address</b> gateway.services@belfasttrust.hscni.net.cjsm.net	<b>028 9504 9999</b> (covers all of NI)

South Eastern HSC Trust		
Gateway Team	Telephone (for referral)	Out of Hours Emergency Service (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)
<b>Greater Lisburn Gateway Team</b> Stewartstown Road Health Centre 212 Stewartstown Road, Dunmurry Belfast BT17 0FG Tel: 028 90602705	<b>03001000300</b> <b>Secure Email Address</b> gateway.services@setrust.hscni.net.cjsm.net	<b>028 9504 9999</b> (covers all of NI)

<p><b>North Down Gateway Team</b> James Street, Newtownards BT23 4EP Tel: 028 91818518</p>		
<p><b>Down Gateway Team</b> Children's Services 81 Market Street, Downpatrick BT30 6LZ Tel: 028 44613511</p>		

Northern HSC Trust		
Gateway Team	Telephone (for referral)	Out of Hours Emergency Service (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)
<p><b>Central Gateway Team</b> Unit 5A, Toome Business Park, Hillhead Road, Toomebridge BT41 3SF Tel: 028 7965 1020</p>	<p><b>03001234333</b> <b>Secure email address</b> <a href="mailto:central.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net.cjasm.net">central.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net.cjasm.net</a></p>	<p><b>028 9504 9999</b> (covers all of NI)</p>
<p><b>South Eastern</b></p>		

<p><b>Gateway Team</b> The Beeches, 76 Avondale Drive, Ballyclare BT39 9DB Tel: 028 93340165</p>	<p><b>Secure email address</b> southeastern.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net.cjism.net</p>	
<p><b>Northern Gateway Team</b> Coleraine Child Care Team 7A Castlerock Road, Coleraine BT51 3HP Tel: 028 7032 5462</p>		

Southern HSC Trust				
Gateway Team	Telephone (for referral)	Out of Hours Emergency Service (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)		
<p><b>Craigavon/Banbridge Gateway Team</b> Brownlow H&amp;SS Centre, 1 Legahory Centre, Craigavon BT65 5BE Tel: 028 38343011</p>	<p><b>08007837745</b> <b>Secure email address</b> duty.service@southerntrust.hscni.net.cjism.net</p>	<p><b>028 9504 9999</b> (covers all of NI)</p>		
<p><b>Newry/Mourne Gateway Team</b> Dromalane House, Dromalane Road, Newry BT35 8AP Tel: 028 30825000</p>				

<b>Armagh /Dungannon Gateway Team</b> E Floor, South Tyrone Hospital, Carland Road, Dungannon BT71 4AU Tel: 028 87713506		
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<b>Western HSC Trust</b>		
<b>Gateway Team</b>	<b>Telephone (for referral)</b>	<b>Out of Hours Emergency Service (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)</b>
<b>Derry Gateway Team</b> Whitehill, 106 Irish Street, Derry BT47 2ND Tel:02871314090	<b>028 71314090</b> <b>Secure email address</b> gateway.whsct@westerntrust.cjsm.net	<b>028 9504 9999</b> (covers all of NI)
<b>Omagh Gateway Team</b> Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, 1 Donaghane Road, Omagh BT79 ONS Tel:02882835156		
<b>Enniskillen Gateway Team</b> 2 Coleshill Road, Enniskillen BT74 7HG Tel:02866344103		

- **Adult Safeguarding Specialist:**

Belfast HSC Trust

Tel: (028) 9056 5707

South Eastern HSC Trust

Tel: (028) 9266 5181

Southern HSC Trust

Tel: (028) 375 22262 x 3438

Northern HSC Trust

Tel: (028) 2563 5558

Western HSC Trust

Tel: (028) 8283 5944

- **The Department of Social Development** – Local Benefits offices will provide advice on the relevant Benefits available for claimants. Tel: 02890 819643
- **Northern Ireland Housing Executive** has statutory responsibility for homeless people and will (in the case of Domestic Abuse) provide accommodation or meet reasonable costs for emergency or short-term accommodation while the situation is being assessed. Tel: 02890 240588 or 03448920900
- **Victim Support Northern Ireland** offer information and support to the victims of crime and in cases Domestic Abuse and abuse work closely with other agencies. Tel: 02890 244039
- **Rainbow Project** promotes the health and wellbeing of gay, bisexual and non-heterosexual men in N.I. by providing a range of services that includes information, support, education, training, health promotion and counselling. Tel: (028) 9031 9030
- **Men’s Advisory Project** provides counselling and support for men experiencing Domestic Abuse and abuse. Tel: 02890 241929
- **Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities** works to promote good race relations, racial equality and achieve the elimination of racial discrimination ~~works to promote racial equality and human rights for people from ethnic minorities.~~ Tel: 02890 238645

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