



Fire Brigades Union - Southern Region

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire & Isle of Wight



September 2023 Bulletin

Red Plaque Unveil Alan Bannon & James Shears

On Friday 8th September 2023 a red plaque was unveiled in honour of firefighters Alan Bannon and James Shears, who died in the line of duty at the Shirley Towers high Rise fire in 2010.

It was an honour and a privilege for all those involved to play a part in this unveil & to see two of Hampshire's finest remembered in this way.

The event was attended by over 100 guests that included the General Secretary Matt Wrack, FBU President Ian Murray and FBU National Officer Tam McFarlane. Speakers at the event were Matt Wrack and CFO Neil Odin.

It was moving to see Abigail, the daughter of Alan Bannon, unveil the Plaque which is now permanently mounted on St Marys Fire Station Southampton.

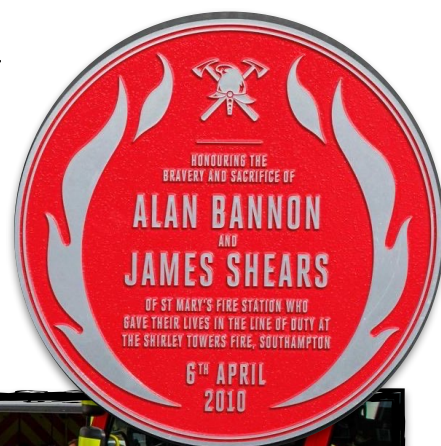
The Plaque was originally planned to be unveiled on the 10th anniversary of the tragedy but the global pandemic prevented this from going ahead at that time. It is worth mentioning that none of this would have been possible if the family hadn't agreed back in 2019 to commission the red plaque, which is fully funded by the Firefighter100 lottery.

The lottery supports Firefighter injured in the line of duty, funds scientific research into contaminant related Firefighter cancers and commissions Red Plaques for those that never make it home.

So please if you have not heard of it or the great causes it supports please take a moment, click the link and find out more.

<https://www.firefighters100lottery.co.uk>

In particular a special thank you to the local reps, Jenna Shergold, Dave Hunt & Jamie Kelly who worked closely with the families and the service to ensure sure this unveil went ahead.





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Regional Office Opens in Reading

Region 12 opened its doors to its new Regional Office recently, firmly planting roots and establishing itself further as a Region equipped and ready for what future challenges are ahead.

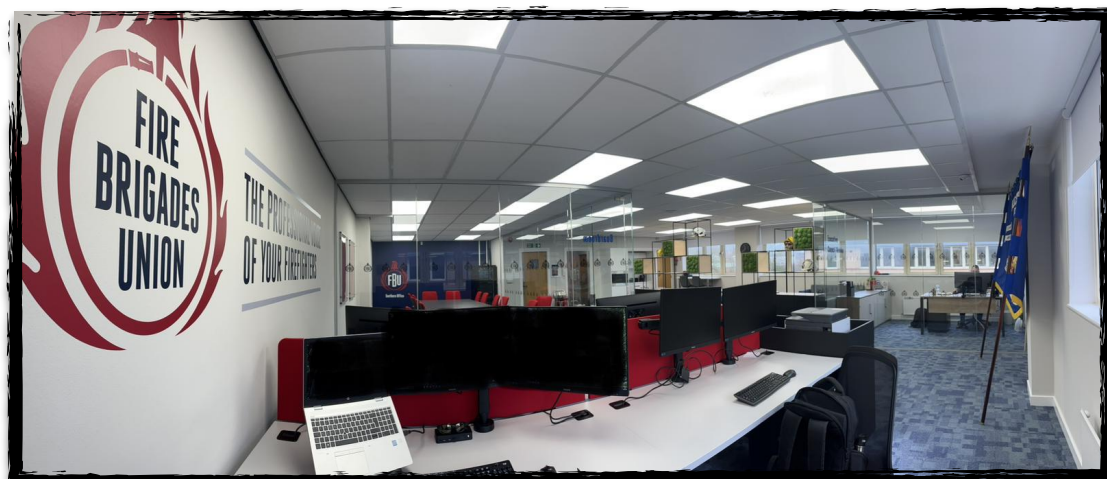
The Office, located central to our region in Reading has a conference room, separate hot desk facility for Regional and Brigade officials/ reps.

The facility has already hosted several regional and section meetings and a planning meeting prior to national conference.

The next Regional Committee meeting at the Office will be held on Friday the 15th September followed by the very first Region 12 B&EMM Section meeting the following week on the 18th of September.

The Office address is:-

FBU Southern Office
Eleanor Marx House
Unit 2 Richfield Place
12 Richfield Avenue
Reading
RG1 8EQ



Any interest in using the office for FBU related work can be requested through the Region 12 Executive Committee by contacting the Regional Secretary via email on Mark.chapman@fbu.org.uk

Letter from the EC - Steve Wright Our Newly Elected Vice-President

Dear Members of Region 12,

I am writing to you today in my recently appointed role as the Vice President of the Fire Brigades Union, serving in an acting capacity since 24th April it was a great honour to formally be appointed to this role on the 8th September 2023

It is a challenging position with immense responsibilities, but one that I am eager to take on and deliver for the benefit of all our members nationwide.

Over the past few months, it has been an incredibly busy period for all our officials and reps. During this time, we have run a fierce pay campaign, which has achieved a pay offer that our members overwhelmingly voted to accept and that resulted in the form of a historic strike ballot with which there is no doubt was fundamental in us achieving the pay offer we did. Through our collective efforts, we were able to move the employers from a meagre 2% pay offer to a more substantial 7% + 5%. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the regional officials, brigade officials, branch and section representatives, and each and every member across region 12 who contributed to this incredible achievement. We know we have much to do in our continued battle for fair pay in the Fire & Rescue Service but there is no doubt that through the unity demonstrated across our region we have made a step in the right direction.



In May, we held our Conference in the seaside town of Blackpool. As the acting Vice President, this was a new experience for me, especially in understanding the vital role it plays at our Annual Conference alongside our President Ian Murray. Our conference serves as the parliament of our union, acting as the ultimate decision-making body. We had delegates from each brigade in attendance, shouldering important responsibilities and making crucial decisions on behalf of all our members.

During the conference, we focused on several key subjects that hold immense significance for our union. First and foremost, we discussed our pay campaign and the steps we must take to move forward and continue to fight for fair pay for our

members. We also addressed the vital issue of equality in the fire and rescue service, aiming to ensure fairness and inclusivity in all aspects of our work. Additionally, we dedicated time to discuss and prepare for a general election, recognising the importance of our role in shaping policies and legislation that impact our profession. These priorities are now firmly established within the union, and our regional and brigade officials will play a crucial role in implementing the decisions made at the conference.

As we face the challenges that lie ahead, it is imperative that we remain united. Together, we are stronger and better equipped to overcome any obstacles that come our way. Our union has a long-standing tradition of solidarity and mutual support, and I urge all members in region 12 to continue working together towards our shared goals.

In conclusion, I am honoured to serve as the FBU's Vice President and look forward to working alongside each and every one of you in the pursuit of our union's objectives. Together, we can achieve great things and make a real difference in the lives of our members. I urge you to hold meetings, be active in our union and shape the future of the FBU and the Fire & Rescue Service. Members input is invaluable, and our officials and reps are here to represent your interests and advocate for your rights across the region.

Thank you once again for your unwavering commitment and dedication to the Fire Brigades Union. Let us move forward with confidence, knowing that we have the strength and determination to overcome any challenges that may come our way.

In solidarity,

Steve Wright,
Vice President & Executive Council Member Region 12

Robyn Richardson Elected as National NWC Secretary



It is with great pleasure that we announce the election of Sister Robyn Richardson to National Womens Committee Secretary.

Robyn started her Fire Brigades Union related activism in Hampshire and Isle of Wight, initially starting at grass roots level as Branch Rep for Control and swiftly taking on the Women's Section within that Brigade soon after.

Robyn's taste for activism has only grown with her responsibility. Robyn became the first Regional Treasurer for the newly re-established Region 12, assisting in its reformation whilst supporting members within her own Brigade.

Once the Region was established and positions became substantive Robyn stood as the Regional Women's Committee rep representative as well as Control, representing members for both sections across the four brigades within Region 12.

Robyn comes from a family rooted in trade unionism and activism, recalling fondly on her childhood years spent at rallies with her parents fighting for better provisions for the education system.

Robyn has kicked off her start as NWC Secretary with the ["Fight for 52" campaign](#) which seeks a mandatory and nationwide fully paid 52 week period of maternity for Firefighters.

We are certain Robyn's pace won't slow down as she takes these new challenges head on, representing Women's issues from across



FBU Represent at the Trade Union Congress





This years TUC Conference was held in Liverpool from Sunday 10th until Tuesday 12th of September 2023.

The Fire Brigades Union is one of 48 Trade Union Bodies that attend and form part of it decision making progress, shaping national policy and the fight for workers rights.

This years delegation was made up of General Secretary Matt Wrack, President Ian Murray, EC Members Adam Taylor (Region), Jamie Newell (Region), National LGBT+ Secretary Maria Buck and our very own newly elected Vice President and Region 12 EC member Steve Wright.

The FBU addressed conference on multiple high profile issues including:-

- Resisting the anti-union laws
- Climate change
- Fire and Rescue
- Child poverty
- Trades councils
- Covid
- Pay review bodies
- Trans rights
- Sexual harassment
- Housing



General Secretary Matt Wrack was elected to TUC President and warned politicians [“If they fail workers, they will face a determined, mobilised trade union movement”](#).

When accepting the role Matt vowed to ***“build a movement that can defeat this authoritarian war on workers”***

Direct Entry = DIRECT ACTION!!!



On Tuesday 12th July 2023 Members of the Fire Brigades Union descended upon Oxford County Council to lobby against Direct Entry. Members from Oxfordshire, East Midlands, Dorset & Wiltshire, Cornwall, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, our Neighbours Buckingham & Milton Keynes.

Direct Entry looks to introduce people into the organisation at Station Manager level with absolutely no Fire Service Experience whatsoever.

This decision has been rationalised by the service as a means to diversify the workforce. The FBU disagree. The best place to diversify the workforce is at the point of entry and not through a single rank of middle management.

This decision has the potential to undermine Firefighter Safety, degrade response capability and effectiveness to the public, all at great expense to the public purse.

Approximately £175k over a period of 3 years before they are competent for the role they have been employed to undertake.

Councillors entering the meeting were only too happy to listen to our members concerns and were shocked at the proposal and its associated costs. In fact many championed OXFRS on their previous approach to engage in minority groups to recruit a more diverse workforce at grass roots level and were surprised to hear diversification of the workforce was the rational for Direct Entry.

Direct Entry was not an agenda item for the Council Meeting and as such not a topic for discussion or deputation. However the FBU overcame this by submitting a petition that had reached over 800 signatures in just 5 days. This permitted a 3 minute speech to full council by EC member Steve Wright.

Direct Entry is now firmly on the radar of Oxfordshire councillors and more importantly the inexcusable waste of public sector finances proposed to facilitate this NFCC project.

The communities of Oxfordshire and its Firefighters are not lab rats and we must do all we can to fend off this dangerous experiment.

A word of thanks from Nick Bourke OX FBU Brigade Secretary:-

"A big thank goes out to all you fantastic FBU members who travelled from far and wide.

From West Midlands, Dorset & Wiltshire, Cornwall, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, our Neighbours Buckingham & Milton Keynes as well as great support from the EC.

Finally, I would also like thank Steve Wright and Mark Chapman for the unwavering support and drive they show as the Officials for Region 12."



PETITION





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Region 12 - Tunics



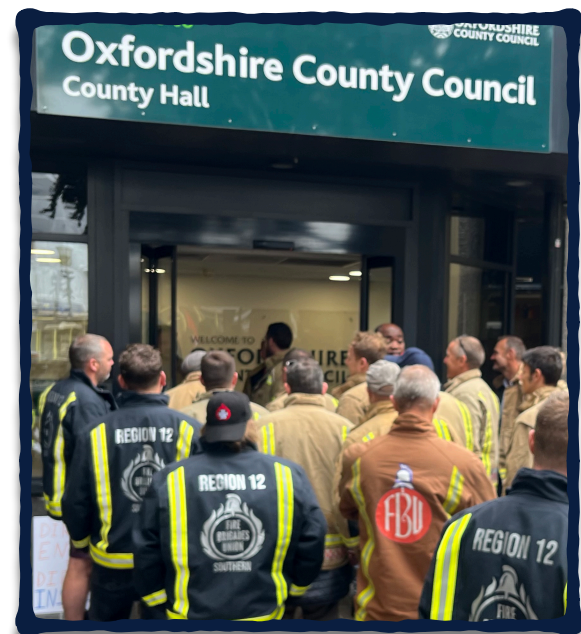
Following the recent rallies and lobbies many will have noticed the introduction of the Region 12 branded Fire Tunics.

We have managed to source a number of Tunics for officials across the Region which has had a really positive feedback from members and other regions. It has not only helped to identify each other at rallies but also allowed us to proudly identify ourselves as Firefighters and Trade Unionists when meeting with

Since the introduction there has been a lot of interest from members also wishing to get one. With today's ballot result making the likelihood of Industrial Action ever more likely it is clear that there is an appetite for these tunics, in particular for the picket lines.

For those that were fortunate enough to inherit their old Tunics as a result of new Fire Kit being issued we are now in a position where we can get your Tunics branded and back to you in good time for any future periods of Industrial Action or Lobbying.

If you are interested contact the Regional Office via email at Region12.office@Fbu.org.uk



R12 SOUTHERN



Attacks on our Right to Strike

The UK Government has made no attempt to hide their attacks on the democratic freedoms of the worker. In 2016 the Trade Union act was introduced, specifying thresholds that union democracy had to surpass in order for industrial action to be ratified as legal.

Thresholds such as 50% of those with with voting rights are now required to return their ballot.

Thresholds such as 40% of the entire membership voting yes for industrial action before it can legally take place.

Let's not forget if these same thresholds were applied to politicians the Westminster benches would be cleansed of the hypocrisy that stains this country & undermines every key worker that they so flippantly coin as heroes.

For comparison and to put that into perspective, there are 46,560,452 registered voters in the UK and only 0.0004% of them got a vote on Rishi Sunak becoming PM.

A UK prime Minister elected into position to lead this country on a fraction of the requirement imposed open the workers.

Make no mistake, the trade union laws, when compared to those of the political system in this country is weighed massively towards the employer and is designed to stave off any potential fight back by the workers.

Now, in a period like no other where each and every organised and unionised workforce is taking steps towards industrial action this government again ramps up it's attacks on workers rights.

In the time that Grant Shapps, the architect behind the latest "Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill", has been involved in Government we have seen sustained attacks on the UK Fire Service that has resulted in:-

- Central funding cuts to fire and rescue services of 30% in money terms.
- Cutting one-in-five (20%) or nearly 12,000 firefighter jobs.
- Closing nearly 50 fire stations in England.
- Removing more than 200 fire appliances in England.
- Fire response times to incidents at least 10% slower for the first appliance (and no figures for other appliances).
- Privatisation, deregulation and contracting out of fire safety, control rooms and training.

Yet he claims this imposition of legislation is about safety!!!

Ministers say there are minimum service levels in some European countries. They repeat Germany, France, Italy & Spain in a repetitious mantra but this is where their claims fall down. The FBU has strong links with firefighter unions in Europe and is aware that some European countries require some sort of minimum service provision.

However, in Germany, France, Italy and Spain the right to strike is guaranteed by their constitutions. They will not be arrested or sacked should they strike. It is their civil liberty, as much as it is ours right now.

This Government has stripped back our public services to the bone & when we dare to fight and defend them they try and strip back our democratic freedoms too.

Fire Brigades Union - Southern Region



Meet your Officials

Storms Menri - Region B&EMM Section

In December 2022 at the Regional Annual General Meeting Storms Menri was elected as our first Regional Black and Ethnic Minority Members (B&EMM) representative.

Storms joined Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) in January 2023.

Currently based at Cosham Fire Station on the periphery of the city of Portsmouth Storms has previously served in the British Army for 10 years as a medic/nurse.

He likes volunteering and has spent most his spare time in the last 3 years mobilising equipment for Ghana National Fire Service and conducting military operations via the Army reserves.

An elite athlete he also represents the Army in 400m and 400m hurdles.

Storms is under no illusion of the task that lies ahead of him in building up the B&EMM section, with Brigades such as Oxfordshire only having 1% of the workforce from this section.



Region 12 B&EMM Section Meeting
18th September 2023

1100 to 1300 hours

Invite open to all section members. Please contact Storms via email to confirm your attendance.

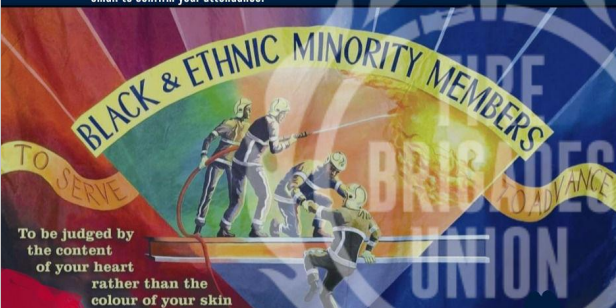
Contact:

Storms Menri
Regional B&EMM Section Rep
Storms.Menri@FBU.ORG.UK

He has made the first steps in coordinating and organising, setting up communication links with B&EMM representatives from each of the Brigades in Region 12 and progressing this. To the first B&EMM Section meeting for Region 12 which will be held on Monday the 18th September 2023.

The meeting will have guest speakers including Amit Malde, London Firefighter & National B&EMM Secretary.

If the B&EMM Section represents you and you would like more information regarding the meeting on the 18th please contact Storms via email on [**Storms.Menri@fbu.org.uk**](mailto:Storms.Menri@fbu.org.uk)



R12 SOUTHERN



Fire Brigades Union - Southern Region

Regional & Brigade Officials



Steve Collins
Brigade Secretary
Stevej.collins@fbu.org.uk
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Paul Mortimer
Brigade Chair
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07920828089



James Hunt
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07590655217

Fire Brigades Union Berkshire Region 12

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 FBU Berkshire

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Tony Brandon
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07412485767



Kieron Thomas
Brigade Organiser (Acting)
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 Bucks FBU

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Jamie Kelly
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Dave Hunt
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Stuart Eade
Brigade Organiser (Mainland)
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07779111584



Rich Cullen
Brigade Organiser (IOW)
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Fire Brigades Union Hampshire & IOW Region 12

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 Hampshire & Isle of Wight FBU

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Nick Bourke
Brigade Secretary
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Jonathan Shuker
Brigade Chair
Jonathan.Shuker@fbu.org.uk
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Lee Newport
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Regional Secretary
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Twitter - @Chappers181



Greg O'Neill
Regional Chair (acting)
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Fire Brigades Union Southern Region Region 12

Berkshire @FBUBerkshire

Buckinghamshire @FBUBucks

Oxfordshire @Oxfordshire_FBU

Hampshire & Isle of Wight @HIOWFBU

 Twitter - @FbuSouthern

 Fire Brigades Union - Region 12

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 Region Office Email:- Region12.Office@fbu.org.uk





Fire Brigades Union - Southern Region

Regional & Brigade Officials



Region Officials

- EC Member - Steve Wright
07961 421498 Steve.Wright@fbu.org.uk
- Regional Secretary - Mark Chapman
07725 007757 mark.chapman@fbu.org.uk
- Regional Chair - Greg O'Neill
07714 876422 Greg.oneill@fbu.org.uk
- Regional Vice Chair - Lee Newport
07886 011 142 Lee.Newport@fbu.org.uk
- Regional Treasurer – Vacant

Regional Representatives

- Firefighter Control - Jenna Shergold
07919 367086 Jenna.shergold@fbu.org
- Fairness at Work - James Harris
07779760856 James.Harris@fbu.org.uk
- Firefighter Magazine - Mark Chapman
07725 007757 mark.chapman@fbu.org.uk
- Officers - Gary Jackson & Nick Bourke
gary.Jackson@fbu.org.uk nick.bourke@fbu.org.uk
- Regional H&S - Matt Nind
07919111984 matt.nind@fbu.org.uk
- Regional Education and Learning Officer - Greg O'Neill
07714 876422 Greg.oneill@fbu.org.uk
- Retained Section - Rob Dellow
07901717067 rob.dellow@fbu.org.uk
- Women's - Robyn Richardson
07725 996201 Robyn.Richardson@fbu.org.uk
- B&EMM Section - Storms Menri
07540974420 Storms.Menri@fbu.org.uk

Vacant Regional Positions

- LGBT - Vacant

Brigade Officials

Berkshire

- Brigade Secretary – Steve Collins
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- Brigade Chair – Paul Mortimer
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- Brigade Organiser - James Hunt
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Buckinghamshire

- Brigade Secretary – Chris Wycherley
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- Brigade Chair – Tony Brandon
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- Brigade Organiser - Kieron Thomas
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Hampshire & Isle of Wight

- Brigade Secretary – Jaime Kelly
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- Brigade Chair – Dave Hunt
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- Brigade Organiser – Stuart Eade
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- Brigade Organiser – Rich Cullen
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Oxfordshire

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- Brigade Chair – Jonathan Shuker
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- Brigade Organiser – Lee Newport
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THE PROFESSIONAL VOICE
OF YOUR FIREFIGHTERS



FIREFIGHTERS 100
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