

July
2017



Gateway
to the
South



moray
council



Pauline Knox, Senior Commissioning Officer

Dear Colleagues

With all the structural changes that are going on within health and social care provision just now, making sure there's continued support for the 'invisible army' of unpaid carers in Moray – up to 11,000 according to the last census – is the lot of my team.

I'm the strategic lead for carers; I commission support services for carers such as home-based respite and a host of other help.

We have a network of carer service providers, such as Quarriers, the council, NHS, Cornerstone, Crossroads, Alheimers and Enable, who work together to ensure there's no duplication in the support we are providing.

One of the main objectives is to make all the different types of support we have available as easy as possible to access by carers. That means making our presence known as widely as possible, so that when someone needs support they know where to go and how to get it.

There are a lot of people that are carers that are not known to us, mainly because they are managing OK at the moment. However their circumstances may change; that could be a financial change, or that the person they are caring for deteriorates and they then struggle to cope. That's where we come in, and it's vital that people know how to get hold of us.

The council has a raft of carer-friendly policies to help staff who are carers. In fact, I would say it's one of the best places to work if you have a caring role at home. The government recently launched a programme called Carer Positive, helping employers meet the needs of staff who are carers. Part of this programme means that carers are supported to identify themselves as such and can access support within the organisation to help them manage their work and caring responsibilities.

Moray Council is about to be a Level 1 'Carer

Positive' employer, and is working towards Exemplary status within the programme.

Before I started working for Moray Council I was a carer myself, looking after my father, then my son when he was diagnosed whilst quite young. I started as a volunteer, sitting on various groups and committees to make sure I was getting the best for those I looked after, and support for me as a carer.

After a period of time being so involved at volunteer level, I started working for caring services within the council, and the job I do now has evolved massively since then. But I'm passionate about caring, and so is the team I'm lucky to be part of.

Pauline

EDITORIAL

Welcome to your July edition of *Connect*.

Summer hols are here and it's a chance to get out and enjoy what Moray has to offer. After reading our feature piece you might fancy a day out to visit the Tomintoul area; the *Connect* team had a lovely time there, there's much more to that part of Moray than meets the eye and it is well worth exploring.

If you're on leave have a good break, and keep the Factor 30 handy – the sun *will* shine!

TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Jess Barbier-Marsden
PROJECT OFFICER

Angus McNicholl
DESIGNER

Gateway to the South



Located on the northern edge of the Cairngorm Mountains at a height of 1,164 ft above sea level, Tomintoul is the highest village in Moray – in fact, in the whole of the Highlands. (It has the highest off-licence in the UK, too!). *Connect* took a trip there to see what life is like for our colleagues in a rural location that provides a microcosm of council services.

Situated between two rivers, the Avon and Conglass Water, Tomintoul is an 18th century planned village, laid out in a grid pattern along what was a military road (now the A939). Surrounded by a host of distilleries, Tomintoul is part of the Speyside Malt Whisky Trail. With a population of 716, the main local industries are farming, game-keeping, distilleries, and tourism – and a number of our colleagues are also employed there at the primary school, library, DLO depot, and as home carers, not to mention the floating teams from Lands and Parks, Waste and Recycling, Street Lighting, public toilets, etc. that cover the area too.

One thriving village hub is Tomintoul Primary School. It provides education to 40 children in two classes, P1-P3 and P4-P7, plus another ten children in the nursery setting. Head Teacher is Nancy Fraser, who is also the

"We've got lovely parents and lovely children, and a strong Parent Council. We are well supported."

Nancy Fraser, Head Teacher



Head Teacher at Glenlivet Primary School. *"People say 'oh, that must be hard' to have two classes, but all teaching is hard,"* she said.

"It's a very good opportunity actually, as the children can work up to the next level. The system works very well and we've got a fantastic team in both schools."

"The HMI report released last month (June) particularly praised the teamwork in Tomintoul. We've got lovely parents and lovely children, and a strong Parent Council. We are well supported."



"Most children come in at nursery and go right the way through the school."

Dawn Davidson, Nursery Assistant

"I think we're really lucky to work in a rural area like this: we have everything on our doorstep."

Mitch Fraser, Senior Nursery Nurse



Just because they're far away from an urban centre doesn't mean that Tomintoul isn't keeping up with the times – the primary school has just received four years of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to buy recording and editing equipment to train pupils in digital film, music, and drama. The cash will also cover 12 weeks of expert tuition from visiting industry professionals. The school has a programme to develop the young workforce, working with local ghillies, bottling plants and the Lecht ski centre. It's very 'green' too, with three green flags from the Eco-Schools initiative.

Although originally from Invergordon, Nancy came to Tomintoul for a holiday job and stayed. *"The best part is the environment, community and opportunities for outdoor learning,"* she says. *"Which would you rather have? A busy commute? Or a short trip, five miles down the road, meeting no other cars, and then seeing wildlife – oystercatchers, partridge, hares – when you arrive?"*

"The nursery children go out every day; they are expected to be dressed for the weather. The children love it when it snows; they all bring their sledges." Nancy's own children went to Tomintoul Primary and, keeping it in the family, her granddaughter will be starting in August.

Also sharing Tomintoul's family vibe are Mitch Fraser, Senior Nursery Nurse, who has spent 19 years at the school – her children and grandchildren attended it – and Dawn Davison, Nursery Assistant, who has been there for 11 years. Both Dawn and her children attended the school.

Dawn says: *"The community is very supportive. We know the parents of most children that come in. Most children come in at nursery and go right the way through the school."*

Mitch agrees: *"I think we're really lucky to work in a rural area like this: we have everything on our doorstep – the river, open spaces, and the view!"*

"We try to use our environment as much as we can. We took the bikes up to the Crown Estate land where there is lots of space for the children to go cycling."

Tomintoul's librarian is Jennifer Fraser, a native of the village. Although she went away to Dundee for university, she found her way back, working briefly at a





"We recently got Wi-Fi at the library ... if you're stuck in the village with no car, it's a lifesaver!"

Jennifer Fraser, Librarian

local distillery before taking up post in Tomintoul Library. *Connect* caught her on a busy Wednesday morning when three school visits in a row came in, with story and rhyme time for under threes taking place before the library even opens.

"You get everybody from the village in here, a good mix of people," she said. "We recently got Wi-Fi at the library which is a big boost. People come in now to use the computer to order their online shopping – if you're stuck in the village with no car, it's a lifesaver! We have people that are in nearly every day to use a computer – a lot of people in the outlying areas can't get internet so this is their only computer access."

Tomintoul Library has a high percentage of users as it covers large outlying areas. *"I have a couple of older ladies who come in every four weeks with their shopping trolleys – they fill them up with books. In the winter, quite often you can't get out of the village – which is great for me as everyone comes in to get a book!"*

In October, the library will celebrate the 30th anniversary of opening in its current location; it was previously located in the old village hall. If you have any memories or photographs of the old (or new) library, please share them with Jennifer by emailing them to Tomintoul.Library@moray.gov.uk.

Although many of the school and library staff are Tomintoul natives, other colleagues from around the council cover this area as part of their wider remit. Staff from the Keith Lands and Parks depot cover Tomintoul, visiting every two weeks during the summer for grass cutting – as far as the picnic area at the Lecht – and in the winter for maintenance works such as leaf clearing. The crews are responsible for maintaining around 20 cemeteries in the area, and the team of gravediggers based in Keith also attend Tomintoul when their services are needed.



Tom & George, from the Keith Lands & Parks team take a break to talk to *Connect*.

Tom Dougan, a driver/grounds maintenance operator who has been with us for two years, said: *"We cut the grass and keep the area round the headstone tidy, making it decent for the nearest and dearest to see."* Driver/grass cutter George Anderson – 12 years' service with Moray Council under his belt – said: *"We are always out, though heavy rain can keep us back a bit."*

"But as long as it's not monsoon weather we can still do things like shrub maintenance." *Connect* met with the pair as they mowed grounds of Tomintoul Primary, waiting for the children to go back inside before finishing the job, to keep the pupils safe from hazards such as noise or stones that might fly up from cutting the grass.

"We are always out, though heavy rain can keep us back a bit."

George Anderson, Driver / grass cutter





Head Teacher Nancy takes a moment to speak with Mitch and Dawn about their 'learning bags' which are to be stuffed with fun learning exercises for the kids

Although it sounds like a rural idyll, Tomintoul is not without some of the same challenges that face the rest of rural Moray. For example, going to Elgin for a school trip costs a small fortune in bus fees. There used to be two petrol stations in the village but they have both closed down in recent years. With no local place to fill up, a sporadic bus service, and an hour's drive to Tesco, the village can be an expensive place to live.

One frustration expressed by several Tomintoul residents is what they feel is a lack of understanding from Elgin-based colleagues when they come for meetings. It appears they are often late because they haven't allowed enough time for the journey – yet the Tomintoul staff make a point of being on time to their meetings elsewhere, which are equally far to travel. Take note everyone!

Despite its drawbacks, librarian Jennifer would recommend life in Tomintoul. *"It's very quiet and peaceful, and it's got a good sense of community. In a small place, you have to be prepared to get stuck in and do a bit of everything; everyone has a lot of different roles. I'm relief staff at the nursery and also run an after-school club. It's really nice because you get to know everyone and you're really part of the village. I can't imagine going back to living in a house with another right next door! Plus the Screen Machine comes – that's the best thing about living here; the cinema comes to you!"*





Glowing report for Tomintoul School

The school and its nursery class have been handed a glowing report by inspectors from Education Scotland. All areas of performance at Tomintoul Primary have been ranked either 'very good' or 'good' by the inspection team following their visit in April.

It amounts to one of the best inspection reports for any school in Moray in recent years.

The report, published today, praises the collegiate leadership of Nancy Fraser and the effective teamwork of all her staff which had led to continuous improvement across the school and nursery.

The inspectors found that children were enthusiastic, motivated and had a clear understanding of their own strengths and next steps in learning.

Children's wellbeing was central to the life and work of the school and nursery and staff used their very good knowledge of the children to plan effectively to meet their needs.

In addition, partnerships with parents and the local community provided learning opportunities for children.

The inspectors urged the school to continue to raise the attainment of all children and to develop curricular programme to ensure flexible progression routes for all learners across the curriculum.

"We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connect with this inspection," concluded the report.

In a separate but parallel inspection by the Care Inspectorate, all four quality assessments of the nursery class were graded as 'very good'.



Long Service AWARDS

Long-serving members of staff have been honoured at the latest awards ceremony held at Elgin Town Hall last month.

Council convener Councillor James Allan presented certificates to staff who have completed 20, 30 and 40 years' service.

Among them were three members of staff from Buckie High School – senior clerical assistant Irene Smith, who has been with the council for 30 years, and teachers Amanda Cooper and Alistair Oliver, both of whom have 20 years' service.

Two other staff members from Buckie High were unable to attend – teacher Donna Mackintosh (30 years) and catering assistant Aileen Pirie (20 years).



Recipients were:

Forty years – David Smith.

Thirty years – Thomas Evans, Donna Mackintosh, Leslie Margach, Ruth McDowall, Pamela McKerron, Mike O'Brien, Sandra Roy, Gwendoline Simmers, Irene Smith, Brian Sutherland, James Taylor, Alistair Thomson.

Twenty years – Caroline Blake, Amanda Cooper, Margaret Cowie, Ruth Lambourne, Alison Macdonald, Lyn Main, Helen Morrison, Karen Murray, Alistair Oliver, Aileen Pirie, Kevin Price, Carol Sheard.



HR Noticeboard

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

If you're working on a project, are just about to start a project, or would like to learn more about particular aspects of project management, you're in luck! The Project Management Office (PMO) has developed informal training sessions on a variety of project management topics to help develop a bank of these skills across the council.

Sign up to these bite-size learning and discussion network sessions to gain insight into specific aspects of project management. The 45-minute sessions are informal and will focus on a 15-minute presentation followed by Q&A and peer discussions. Click on the topics below to take a look at what's coming up:

[Objective Setting](#) – 10 July
[Stakeholder Management](#) – 24 July
[Benefits Management](#) – 07 August
[Project Planning](#) – 21 August
[Risk & Issue Management](#) – 04 September
[Negotiating & Influencing](#) – 18 September
[Change Management](#) – 02 October
[Project Lifecycle](#) – 16 October
[Project Governance](#) – 01 November

Spaces are limited so sign up now by logging into your CLIVE LearnPro account, or contact Shona Nisbet, PMO Administrator, for more info at shona.nisbet@moray.gov.uk.



Nae more
Bright Ideas?

Our staff suggestion scheme Bright Ideas! will close on Friday 28 July 2017.

We have already received a number of suggestions identifying potential service efficiencies and/or financial savings. If you have a suggestion which you have not yet submitted, then speak up and share your thoughts, we would love to hear it!

All suggestions will be responded to as follows:

| Activity | Deadline |
|--|--|
| Deadline for submissions | Fri 28 Jul |
| Consideration of ideas | Fri 11 Aug |
| Invite workforce feedback on short-listed suggestions | Mon 21 Aug until Fri 01 Sep |
| Display short-listed suggestions at the Employee Conferences | Tues 19 Sep Thurs 28 Sep Tues 03 Oct |
| Finalise outcomes with CMT | Fri 20 Oct |
| Respond to and publish Bright Ideas | Fri 03 Nov |

Suggestions should be put in writing using the suggestion form and submitting it to HR@moray.gov.uk. Paper copies have also been provided within depots for employees who do not have access to a PC.

YOUR VOICE

SURVEY

We asked to hear your voice...and we have! 38% of you completed the staff survey, a 7% increase on the last one in 2015. Thank you for taking the time, it's great to hear your views.

We're going to be busy analysing these and look forward to sharing the results with you soon. Look out for these after the summer on the Interchange and in *Connect*.

BACK TO THE FLOOR

Back to the Floor is a new event within the council's Employee Engagement Programme. A senior manager will spend time in a service, where possible undertaking a practical role in providing the service or shadowing one or more colleagues during a typical working day. The purpose of this is so they can experience what it's like to deliver the service. For example, they might spend time as a classroom assistant, a refuse collector or with the Access Point Team; the opportunities are vast.

Back to the Floor enables you to engage directly with senior managers and share your experiences of the role you carry out, including showcasing any best practice, new efficiencies or technology etc that you have initiated or developed.

We recently ran our first pilot of this activity with Rhona Gunn, Corporate Director kicking (or should we say cooking!) off the first Back to the Floor event. Rhona spent time with the catering team at St Geradine's, working a shift in the school kitchen; she said it was very busy, and also very hot! She enjoyed meeting the team and local pupils and was particularly relieved when the six trays of sponge cake she made actually rose. Rhona had a hand in every aspect of the catering team's daily work from food preparation and service to washing up and sweeping the floor. She enjoyed rolling her sleeves up and very much admired the high standards set for and observed by the team – given it was our first event we asked Rhona to take a selfie with some of her St Gerardine colleagues that day. Catering Officer, Pearl Gray said that the catering team enjoyed Rhona's company and the chance to let her see what it is like 'on the coal face'.

If you would like to invite a senior manager 'Back to the Floor' please look out for further information on the Interchange to find out how to get involved.

Rhona Gunn
(centre) with Elaine
Campbell (left) and
Charlene Maclean
(right)



WELCOME ABOARD

Hello All!

Taking part in the Corporate Induction at the end of the month were new colleagues from across the council.

Don't miss out, the next induction will take place on 31 August – book your place now by logging onto CLIVE LearnPro.

Each month we feature our new starts, colleagues who are leaving us, birthdays and other special events, so keep your news and photos coming in to: connectnews@moray.gov.uk.



Michael Little has just joined us as a Building Standards Officer, coming to us from a previous role at Robertson Homes.



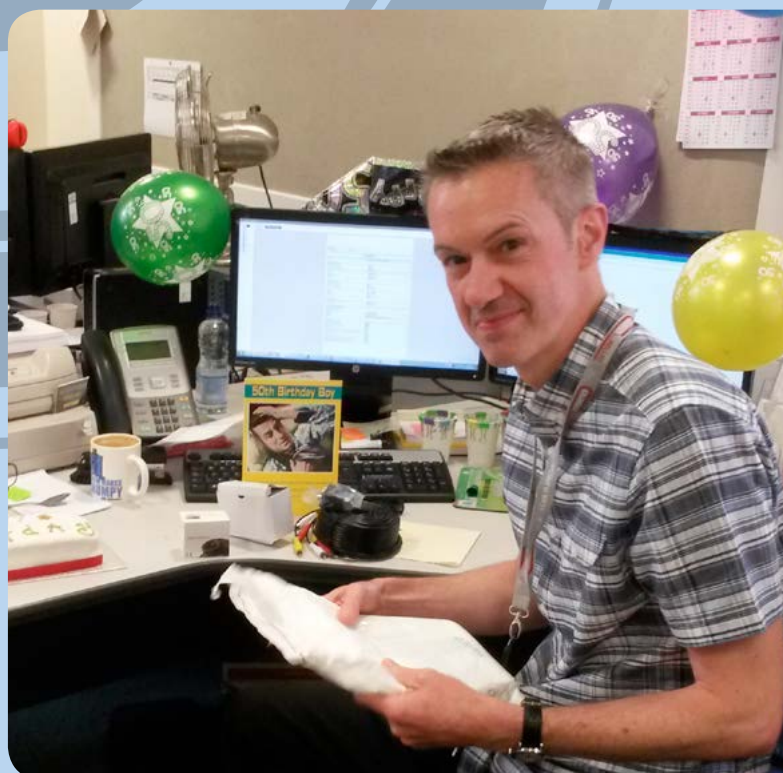
Emma Rowan has just moved up from Glasgow, joining us as an Administration Officer. Welcome to Moray!



Lorna MacLauchlan, a Residential Worker, has been with us for a year and a half but has just found the time for the induction.

HALF-CENTURY CELEBRATIONS

Martyn Smith, a Mailroom Assistant who has been with us for four years, was surprised by his colleagues with banners, balloons, a card, cake, and a thoughtful birthday gift of a bird nestbox with camera inspired by his love of the outdoors. Martyn, who has reached the big 5-0, was off to Kingussie with his wife for a weekend of celebrations.



We are also joined by six interns this summer who are spending four weeks with us learning the ins and outs of the council and getting a feel for the workplace.



Gabriel Luxon-Read is joining us from Forres Academy.



Rachel Hay has come to us from Buckie High School.



Owen Walker is taking part from Forres Academy.



Chloe Reid has joined us from Elgin Academy.



Declan Gordon is from Lossiemouth High School.



Kiari Ross is with us from Elgin High School.

CARER FRIENDLY MORAY AWARDS

Last month, as part of a local event in Moray to mark national Carers Week, 15 local services or agencies were recognised for the invaluable support they give to unpaid carers and were thanked for 'going the extra mile' to help.

Moray Councillor Frank Brown, who is also Joint Chair of Moray Integrated Joint Board, gave the keynote speech reflecting on the many ways in which Moray is already carer-friendly. He presented the Moray Carer Friendly Awards recognising individuals, teams and businesses that have made the lives of carers a little easier by their actions.

Moray Council employees who received awards were:

- 🗨 Karen Cameron, Team Leader (New Elgin Team), Care at Home Service. The carer who nominated Karen said *"Karen gives a friendly care service to my cousin and is helpful with any problem. The whole team are just great"*.
- 🗨 Kyana Murray a Teacher at Portknockie Primary School was nominated for her help to a particular pupil and their parent, who said Kyana has been there for both of us *"helping us in ways she will never know. She was not just a teacher but a friend – if we could give her a heart of gold, we would."*
- 🗨 Community Care, Shared Lives Team members, Alison Sutherland and Karen Netherton who were both nominated by a carer because they *"have made a huge difference to my life and to my mum's"*.



DEDICATED TO TEACHING

A Moray teacher who has dedicated most of her career to children with addition support needs has been honoured by the Queen.

Sharon Aitken has been made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

She has been involved with ASN pupils in Buckie for the past 27 years.

A former primary teacher, she began working in ASN during a one-year secondment to Buckie High School in 1990 and stayed until 1996 after the post was made permanent.

Sharon then helped set up the ASN enhanced provision at nearby Millbank Primary School where she remained until being appointed principal teacher of ASN back at Buckie High seven years ago.

Married with two daughters, she said she was "totally overwhelmed" at the honour.

She heads up a five-strong team at the high school and feels that her colleagues deserve the recognition as much as she does.

"I am part of a team and I would not be able to do my job without their support," said Sharon.

"This honour is as much for them and the young people and their families that I have worked with over the years as it is for me."



Left to right: Karen Netherton, Kyana Murray, Karen Cameron
Kate Simpson, Christine Russell, Louise Parkington, Pauline Knox

DOUG DONS FATIGUES FOR ARMY TEST

Three to four years of juggling work & caring for my parents & life in general had been difficult.

They say that the best way to 'find yourself' is to lose yourself in the service of others but I had been left a bit lost when my 'others' – mum and dad – had departed.

All caring commitments ended in January and I was in need of a good kick up the backside to help me move on. That was when the annual letter from the Army arrived at Moray Council, inviting public sector participants on a leadership training weekend called Executive Stretch. Almost every year it was duly ignored with the same set of excuses:

'I'm too old - not camped since 1971 - not fit enough', etc. But this year I thought, why not? It could be just the kick I needed. I went into the barracks on the Friday with a somewhat jaded view of military leadership, mainly from war films and books telling of past wartime disasters. But what we were exposed to over those three days really helped me realise that things have changed in the forces, and that what they instil in their people is that leadership needs to take different forms depending on the given situation.

Sometimes a leader needs to consult and involve others and be 'touchy feely', at other times, orders need to be followed unquestionably. Times like "Grenade! Hit the dirt!" Not exactly the best time for a meeting or a risk assessment.

The main parts of the army leadership code were defined thus: • Lead by example • Demand high performance • Encourage confidence in the team * Encourage thinking • Apply reward and discipline • Recognise individual strengths and weaknesses • Strive for team goals

After we were all treated to a curry and few beers at the officer's mess, the following morning it was a 5.30am bagpipe alarm clock and drill on the parade ground. We ambled up to the parade ground like a disorganised bunch of scruffs and after 55 minutes we marched smartly and quickly as one tight (ish) unit back to the next exercise. Never saw the purpose of drill, but the sense of togetherness was tangible.

Weapons Drill. When handling a dangerous machine, sticking to a well-designed and easily understood system of work saves people from getting their brains blown out. Safety being built into a system and the rules being

drummed into people from the start and any rule breaking being dealt with appropriately makes it second nature and more likely to be followed.

Building a bridge across a ravine with the royal engineers. Planning, having a good system for getting the job done and everyone knowing the part they play were the main points in this exercise. One exercise involved pushing a Land Rover through a minefield. We didn't do particularly well with most of us and the Land Rover and the leader being 'blown up' on numerous occasions. This taught us that a critical factor in leadership is enabling your team to tell you when things are not going well, and being able to act on that advice. Pushing a 1.5 Ton gun through a park under fire. Sounds ridiculous but fairly got the blood pumping. Clarity of direction and making sure everyone knew their role were the main learning points. Searching a car for weapons. Pay attention to the little things and don't be distracted. Camping out in the woods in a bag. Sounds a bit rough but one of the best sleeps I'd ever had. Also, found that army rations are magic (or I was so hungry I'd have eaten anything).

A great experience at any point in a career. Learning points were many and varied and as with everything in life, some of it could have been regarded as less than pleasant but it all depended on your attitude.

The exercises where the critical outcomes were clearly understood were valuable in making me understand what is necessary to get a bunch of disparate individuals to give their all. Not wanting to let the others down was the key and getting something of that built-in to what we do in Health & safety is what I am now trying to devise.

I really hope others will partake in this great opportunity.

Doug Reid, Health and Safety Manager



SCOUTING FOR BOYS

A stalwart of the scouting movement has been presented with the latest in a long line of awards for his outstanding service.

John Innes is the proud recipient of the Silver Acorn as a mark of the Chief Scout's appreciation of distinguished service to scouting.

It is one of the movement's highest awards and was instituted as long ago as 1932.

John, who works as a joiner with the council's DLO, has been involved with scouting in Forres since 1974 when, as an eight-year-old, he joined the cubs.

For the past 32 years he has been a uniformed leader and is currently Forres group scout leader responsible for 100 youngsters ranging in age from eight to 18 as well as 19 adult leaders.

In addition to picking up a host of awards from the scouting movement, John was appointed a Burgess of Forres five years ago in recognition of his outstanding service to the local community.



John was presented with the Silver Acorn by Graham Haddock (left), the Scottish commissioner for scouting, and UK chief commissioner Tim Kidd, who is deputy to Chief Scout Bear Grylls.

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