

Deafness – Descriptors of Need

Types of Deafness

Conductive deafness: when sound can't pass efficiently through the outer and middle ear to the cochlea and auditory nerve. The most common type of conductive deafness in children is caused by glue ear – when fluid builds up in the middle ear. For most children this is a temporary condition and clears up by itself. For some children the problem may be a chronic or permanent problem and they may have grommets inserted or be fitted with hearing aids.

Sensorineural deafness: when there is a fault in the inner ear or auditory nerve. Sensorineural deafness is permanent.

Degrees of Deafness

The British Society of Audiology descriptors are used to define degrees of deafness. These descriptors are based on the average hearing threshold levels at 250, 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000Hz in the better ear (where no response is taken to have a value of 130 dBHL).

Type of deafness	Threshold
Mild deafness	Unaided threshold 21-40 dBHL
Moderate deafness	Unaided threshold 41-70 dBHL
Severe deafness	Unaided threshold 71-95 dBHL
Profound deafness	Unaided threshold in excess of 95 dBHL

Level of Support	Early Years (0-4)	Primary	Secondary
Universal Support	<p>Needs are well met without any additional support.</p> <p>A baby, toddler, child who has a re-occurring conductive deafness with no hearing aids.</p> <p>This deafness may be associated with middle ear infections, glue ear, temporary perforated eardrums.</p> <p>The baby, toddler, child is generally making expected progress in all areas of development.</p>	<p>Needs are well met without any additional support.</p> <p>A child who has a re-occurring conductive deafness with no hearing aids.</p> <p>This deafness may be associated with middle ear infections, glue ear, temporary perforated eardrums.</p> <p>The child is generally making expected progress in all areas of development.</p>	<p>Needs are well met without any additional support.</p> <p>A young person who has a re-occurring conductive deafness with no hearing aids.</p> <p>This deafness may be associated with middle ear infections, glue ear, temporary perforated eardrums, cholesteatoma.</p> <p>The young person is generally making expected progress in all areas of development.</p>

<p>Universal Plus Support</p>	<p>A baby, toddler, child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conductive deafness • mild Sensorineural deafness • unilateral deafness • unilateral auditory neuropathy <p>They may be prescribed hearing aids by an audiologist.</p> <p>Their emerging language / speech sounds may be slightly delayed.</p>	<p>A child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conductive deafness • mild Sensorineural deafness • unilateral deafness • unilateral auditory neuropathy <p>They may be prescribed hearing aids by an audiologist.</p> <p>The child is generally making expected progress in most areas of the curriculum.</p>	<p>A young person who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conductive deafness • mild Sensorineural deafness • unilateral deafness • unilateral auditory neuropathy <p>They may be prescribed hearing aids by an audiologist.</p> <p>The young person is generally making expected progress in most areas of the curriculum.</p>
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<p>Universal Plus Support</p>	<p>The baby, toddler or child may seem more dependent on cues from others in their environment.</p>	<p>The child may have a slight delay in vocabulary, speech clarity and early literacy and phonic skills.</p> <p>The child may seem more dependent on cues from others in the class before engaging in an activity.</p> <p>The child may find it difficult to listen and attend if there is background noise, especially in group situations.</p> <p>The child may experience auditory fatigue and appear to lack concentration.</p>	<p>The young person may have some residual delay, particularly in vocabulary development and literacy.</p> <p>The young person may seem more dependent on cues from others in the class before engaging in an activity.</p> <p>The young person may find it difficult to listen and attend if there is background noise, especially in group situations.</p> <p>The young person may experience auditory fatigue and appear to lack concentration.</p> <p>Exam access arrangements may need to be considered by the school.</p>
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<p>Targeted Support</p>	<p>A baby, toddler, child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent: • conductive deafness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mild Sensorineural deafness • unilateral deafness • unilateral auditory neuropathy • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness. • late diagnosis <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p>	<p>A child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conductive deafness • mild Sensorineural deafness • unilateral deafness • unilateral auditory neuropathy • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness. • late diagnosis <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p>	<p>A young person who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conductive deafness • mild Sensorineural deafness • unilateral deafness • unilateral auditory neuropathy • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness. • late diagnosis <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p>
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<p>Targeted Support</p>	<p>The baby, toddler or child may be making expected progress in many areas of development as a result of appropriate support strategies being consistently in place. However, gaps in development may also be identified.</p> <p>Baby, toddler, child may have British Sign Language (BSL) as their home language but are beginning to develop spoken language.</p> <p>The toddler, child is likely to have language delay and some gaps in vocabulary.</p> <p>Speech clarity may be affected.</p> <p>These difficulties may impact on early literacy, phonic skills.</p> <p>The toddler or child has some delay in listening, language and communication which affects their ability to gain full access to the world around them.</p> <p>The toddler or child may have difficulties taking part in social situations and interacting with other children for example, during play, snack times and lunch time.</p> <p>Other needs may be apparent as the baby, toddler, child develops which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness, for example, autism, learning</p>	<p>The child may be making expected progress in many areas of development as a result of appropriate support strategies being consistently in place. However, gaps in development may also be identified.</p> <p>The child may have British Sign Language (BSL) as their home language but are able to use spoken language to access the mainstream curriculum.</p> <p>The child is likely to have language delay and some gaps in vocabulary.</p> <p>Speech clarity may be affected.</p> <p>These difficulties may impact on and literacy, phonic skills, and numeracy.</p> <p>Text-based comprehension and inferential skills may be delayed.</p> <p>The child will find it difficult to listen and attend if there is background noise, especially in group situations.</p> <p>The child will seem more dependent on cues from others in the class before engaging in an activity.</p> <p>The child will experience auditory fatigue and appear to lack concentration.</p>	<p>The young person may be making expected progress in many areas of development as a result of appropriate support strategies being consistently in place. However, gaps in development may also be identified.</p> <p>The young person may have British Sign Language (BSL) as their home language but are able to use spoken language to access the mainstream curriculum.</p> <p>The young person is likely to have language delay and gaps in vocabulary and find it hard to keep pace with the quantity of new topic based vocabulary.</p> <p>Speech clarity may be affected.</p> <p>These difficulties may impact on and literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>Text-based comprehension and inferential skills may be delayed.</p> <p>The young person will find it difficult to listen and attend if there is background noise, especially in group situations.</p> <p>The young person will seem more dependent on cues from others in the class before engaging in an activity.</p>
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<p>Targeted Support</p>	<p>difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>	<p>All the above difficulties will impact upon the child's full access to and understanding of the curriculum, as well as information about the world around them.</p> <p>The child may find it difficult to understand and contribute to group discussions.</p> <p>The child may have difficulties taking part in social situations and following conversations, for example, during breaks and lunch time.</p> <p>The child may be affected by issues of 'being different' which can impact on their social and emotional wellbeing and self-esteem.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent as the child develops which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>	<p>The young person will experience auditory fatigue and appear to lack concentration.</p> <p>Weak attention skills alongside underdeveloped working memory affect planning and organising in relation to problem solving.</p> <p>All the above difficulties will impact upon the young person's full access to and understanding of the curriculum, as well as information about the world around them.</p> <p>The young person may have difficulties understanding and using language for problem solving and may find it hard to ask for help or to seek clarification.</p> <p>The young person will have some difficulties accessing the curriculum, particularly in understanding and lipreading as they are exposed to wider range of subject teachers.</p> <p>The young person may find it difficult to understand and contribute to group discussions.</p> <p>The young person may have difficulties taking part in social situations and following conversations, for example, during breaks and lunch time.</p>
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Targeted Support			<p>The young person may be affected by issues of 'being different' which can impact on their social and emotional wellbeing and self-esteem.</p> <p>The young person is likely to need exam access arrangements put in place by the school.</p> <p>Other needs may be apparent as the young person develops which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>
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<p>Targeted Plus Support</p>	<p>A baby, toddler, child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness • bilateral auditory neuropathy. • late diagnosis <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p> <p>The baby, toddler, child’s deafness causes some language delay which impacts on his/her ability to access their environment.</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child may need to follow an intensive listening and language programme with an adult, in a quiet</p>	<p>A child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness • bilateral auditory neuropathy. • late diagnosis <p>The child will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p> <p>The child’s deafness some language delay which impacts on his/her ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The child needs intensive additional pre and post teaching of language and vocabulary for access to the curriculum.</p>	<p>A young person who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis <p>The young person will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p> <p>The young person’s deafness causes some language delay and impacts on his/her ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>Young person needs intensive additional pre and post teaching of language and vocabulary for access to the curriculum.</p>
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<p>Targeted Plus Support</p>	<p>environment, to develop speech and language.</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child may not be getting full access to spoken language through their hearing aids/auditory implants.</p> <p>They may need access to visual communication for example, signs to communicate and learn about the world around them.</p> <p>They are not making expected progress in some areas of development as a result of their deafness and subsequent language delay, for example, cognition and social development.</p> <p>The baby, toddler, or child's first language may be British Sign Language (BSL) and they have access to spoken language with hearing aids / auditory implants. The Deaf baby, toddler or child will become bilingual in both BSL and spoken language.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent as the baby, toddler or child develops which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>	<p>The child may need to follow an intensive listening and language programme with an adult in a quiet environment, to develop speech and language.</p> <p>The child will experience difficulties in accessing information presented orally. They are not making expected progress in some areas of the curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>The child's first language may be British Sign Language (BSL) and they have access to spoken language with hearing aids / auditory implants, but they may still have a delay in their spoken language which will continue to require additional support.</p> <p>Text-based comprehension and inferential skills will be delayed.</p> <p>The child will have significant difficulties listening and attending if there is background noise, especially in group situations.</p> <p>The child will be very dependent on cues from others in the class before engaging in an activity.</p> <p>The child will experience significant auditory fatigue and appear to lack concentration.</p>	<p>The young person may need to follow a listening and language programme with an adult, in a quiet environment, to develop speech and language.</p> <p>They are not making expected progress in some areas of the curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>Text-based comprehension and inferential skills will be delayed.</p> <p>The young person will have difficulties listening and attending if there is background noise, especially in group situations.</p> <p>The young person will be very dependent on cues from others in the class before engaging in an activity.</p> <p>The young person will experience significant auditory fatigue and appear to lack concentration.</p> <p>The young person will need exam access arrangements put in place by the school.</p> <p>The young person may have issues of 'being different' which may have an impact on his/her social and emotional wellbeing and will need to have opportunities to develop</p>
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<p>Targeted Plus Support</p>		<p>The child may have issues of 'being different' which may have an impact on his/her social and emotional wellbeing and will need to have opportunities to develop their deaf identity with an adult on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent as the child develops which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>	<p>their deaf identity with an adult on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>
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<p>Specialist Support</p>	<p>A baby, toddler, child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness. • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis <p>2- 3 years - The child uses up to 30 single words or signs and cannot communicate in simple sentences.</p> <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child will need to follow an intensive listening and language programme with an adult, daily, in a quiet</p>	<p>A child who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness. • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p> <p>The child's deafness causes significant language delay which impacts upon their ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The child may be profoundly deaf and will not easily access spoken language through the use of their hearing aids/auditory implants They will need access to visual</p>	<p>A young person who has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate to profound bilateral Sensorineural deafness. • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis <p>They will be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHAs or cochlear implants).</p> <p>The young person's deafness causes significant language delay which impacts upon their ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The young person's deafness causes significant language delay and impacts on his/her ability to access their environment.</p>
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<p>Specialist Support</p>	<p>environment, to develop speech and language.</p> <p>The child's deafness causes significant language delay which impacts upon their ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The baby or toddler is not getting full access to spoken language through the use of their hearing aids/auditory implants They will need access to visual communication, for example, signs to communicate and learn about the world around them.</p> <p>A baby, toddler, child's deafness causes significant language delay and impacts on his/her ability to access their environment.</p> <p>They are not making expected progress in most areas of development as a result of their deafness and subsequent language delay for example, cognition, social development.</p> <p>Baby, toddler or child may have British Sign Language (BSL) as their home language. Parental preference may be for access to Total Communication within a specialist setting where other children use signing and speech.</p> <p>Toddler or child may develop spoken English to become bilingual. Child may</p>	<p>communication, for example, signs to communicate and learn about the world around them.</p> <p>The child's deafness causes significant language delay and impacts on his/her ability to access their environment.</p> <p>They are not making expected progress in most areas of the mainstream curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>The child may present as immature and may struggle in a large class as a result of their language delay and deafness, especially in subjects like drama and PE, which can be noisier, despite possibly being age appropriate or slightly below in some other subjects.</p> <p>Without access to most or all of their learning within a small group in a quiet room the child will not develop.</p> <p>The child will need to have opportunities to develop their deaf identity by accessing deaf role models and other deaf peers.</p> <p>This may require extensive deaf awareness intervention and potentially some intervention around behaviour.</p>	<p>They are not making expected progress as a result of their deafness and require some or all of the curriculum to be modified.</p> <p>Without the young person receiving more than the national curriculum requirement of English lessons they will not develop this as a strong second language.</p> <p>The young person may present as immature and may struggle in a large class as a result of their language delay and deafness, especially in subjects like drama and PE, which can be noisier, despite possibly being age appropriate or slightly below in some other subjects.</p> <p>The young person may be a BSL first language user or have a home language other than English.</p> <p>The young person requires a tailored reading curriculum adapted for the needs of deaf children who use BSL as their first language.</p> <p>Without access to most or all of their learning within a small group in a quiet room the young person may not develop.</p> <p>The young person may need to have opportunities to develop their deaf identity.</p>
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<p>Specialist Support</p>	<p>need access to BSL support while developing spoken English.</p> <p>Other needs which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, may be having a significant effect on the learning for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN. Baby/toddler/child may need to be considered at Specialist Support Plus.</p>	<p>The child may suffer with anxiety about being different and will require to be taught with similar pupils due to the impact wearing a hearing aid/implant has on their behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Other needs which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, may be having a significant effect on the child's learning for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia, please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN. Child may need to be considered at Specialist Support Plus.</p>	<p>The young person may suffer with anxiety about being different and will require to be taught with similar pupils due to the impact wearing a hearing aid/implant has on their behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Other needs which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia, may be having a significant effect on the young person's learning. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN. Young person may need to be considered at Specialist Support Plus.</p>
<p>Specialist Plus Support</p>	<p>The deaf baby, toddler or child may have multiple significant needs that require additional input from a multi professional team.</p>	<p>The child's hearing needs are met but they have additional needs to deafness and require extra adult support to access the curriculum.</p> <p>Child may have a severe spoken language delay on account of their deafness.</p> <p>The child is not making expected progress in the mainstream curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>Language deprivation may result in behaviour difficulties due to frustrations.</p> <p>The child needs access to a deaf peer group to develop age-appropriate social skills and their deaf identity.</p>	<p>The young person's hearing needs are met but they have additional needs to deafness and require extra adult support to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The young person may have a severe spoken language delay on account of their deafness.</p> <p>The young person is not making expected progress in the mainstream curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>The young person needs access to a deaf peer group to develop age-appropriate social skills and their deaf identity.</p> <p>The young person will require an intensive 1:1 literacy development programme once</p>

<p>Specialist Plus Support</p>		<p>Child will require an intensive 1:1 literacy development programme once they begin to develop their first language.</p> <p>The child may be at risk of harm due to SEMH and lack of body awareness.</p> <p>The child may be severely or profoundly deaf and will not easily access spoken language through the use of their assistive listening devices. They will need access visually to support their learning.</p> <p>Child is not making expected progress in the National Curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent as the child develops which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>	<p>they begin to develop their first language either signed or spoken.</p> <p>The young person may be at risk of harm due to SEMH and lack of body awareness.</p> <p>The young person may be severely or profoundly deaf and will not easily access spoken language through the use of their assistive listening devices. They will need access visually to support their learning.</p> <p>The young person is not making expected progress in the National Curriculum as a result of their deafness.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.</p>
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<p>Exceptional Support</p>	<p>The baby, toddler or child has an audiological diagnosis of permanent: • profound lateral deafness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis of deafness <p>The baby, toddler or child may be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHA or cochlear implants) but still</p>	<p>The child has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profound lateral deafness • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis of deafness <p>The child may be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHA</p>	<p>The young person has an audiological diagnosis of permanent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profound lateral deafness • bilateral auditory neuropathy • late diagnosis of deafness <p>The young person may be prescribed with hearing aids or wear auditory implants (called BAHA or cochlear implants) but still</p>
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	<p>cannot access many or all of the speech sounds.</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child may not yet have a first language or the baby/ toddler/ child's first language is sign language.</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child's deafness and language mode impacts on their ability to access the world around them.</p> <p>The child's language impacts on their ability to communicate with non-signers.</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child will be unable to access information presented orally.</p> <p>The baby, toddler or child requires intensive access in BSL to develop language and access the world around them.</p>	<p>or cochlear implants) but still cannot access many or all of the speech sounds.</p> <p><i>The child's first language is sign language or the child may not yet have a first language.</i></p> <p><i>Child begins school without any access to language either signed, spoken, or written.</i></p> <p>The child's deafness and language mode impacts on their ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The child's language impacts on their ability to communicate with non-signing peers.</p> <p>The child will be unable to access information presented orally.</p> <p>Text based comprehension and inferential skills will be severely delayed if they have not received BSL access from a young age.</p> <p>Language deprivation may result in behaviour difficulties due to frustrations.</p> <p>The child requires curriculum access in BSL to develop a second language in written English.</p> <p>Other needs may become apparent which cannot be fully attributed to the hearing</p>	<p>cannot access many or all of the speech sounds.</p> <p><i>The young person's first language is sign language or the young person may not yet have a first language.</i></p> <p><i>The young person may not have any access to language either signed, spoken, or written.</i></p> <p>The young person's deafness and language mode impacts on their ability to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The young person's language impacts on their ability to communicate with non-signing peers.</p> <p>The young person will be unable to access information presented orally.</p> <p>Text based comprehension and inferential skills will be severely delayed if they have not received BSL access from a young age.</p> <p>Language deprivation may result in behaviour difficulties due to frustrations.</p> <p>The young person requires curriculum access in BSL to develop a second language in written English.</p>
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Exceptional Support		loss/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.	Other needs may become apparent which cannot be fully attributed to the deafness/deafness, for example, autism, learning difficulties, dyspraxia. Please consider other descriptors, for example C&A, C&L, SLCN.
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