



in association with



**St. Peter's
Bournemouth**

The Civic and Parish Church of Bournemouth

BTCP VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Child Protection Policy dated:

18th July, 2021

Name: Bournemouth Town Centre Parish (hereafter, "The Church")

Church Address: Parish Office, St Peter's Church, Hinton Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2EE.
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INTRODUCTION

Definitions of Terms

The term “**vulnerable adult**” refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Please note that some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility. As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

Some factors that increase vulnerability include:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Dementia
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Failing faculties of old age
- Those who are homeless
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma

These factors may not exist in isolation; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia; or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.



WHAT CAN THE CHARITY & PARISH EXPECT FROM A DIOCESE?

Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance

The diocese is responsible for supporting parishes in implementing the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. This includes arrangements to monitor the quality of safeguarding arrangements in parishes.

Safeguarding Advice and Support

The diocese has DSA/s who are experienced safeguarding professionals who offer safeguarding advice and support to parishes. The parish **must** report any safeguarding concerns or allegations to the DSA within 24 hours of a concern arising. DSAs will advise on how to respond well. They will manage all concerns or allegations against church officers. The diocese offers an out of hours service for any safeguarding concerns or allegations that arise outside normal office hours.

Safeguarding Training

The diocese is responsible for the provision of safeguarding training.

Safer Recruitment Support

The diocese is available for advice on all aspects of safer recruitment, including applications for a DBS check, mostly via a commissioned DBS provider. The DSA is also the person who risk assesses any blemished DBS checks.

External Scrutiny of Safeguarding

The diocese has a group of senior clergy, church officers and external safeguarding professionals, independently chaired by an external safeguarding expert. The group is responsible for overseeing the implementation of policy, training and the effectiveness and quality of safeguarding arrangements. Details of the group can be found on the diocesan website¹.

Complaints Procedure

The diocese has a complaints procedure for those wishing to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues.

Whistleblowing²

The diocese is available for advice and support on whistleblowing. This is when a paid church officer decides to pass on information concerning a wrong doing, that they consider is in the public interest. This means it must affect others, e.g. the general public. This includes failure to adhere to health and safety requirements that place others in danger, a 'cover up' by someone and/or a criminal offence. It does not cover personal grievance or complaints.

¹ Please note that the group is called a number of different names in dioceses e.g. the Diocesan Safeguarding Group, Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel.

² For information please see the [government's advice on whistleblowing](#) or the safeguarding section of your diocesan website.



ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF ADULTS³

All adults, including vulnerable adults, have a fundamental human right to choose how and with whom they live, even if this appears to involve a degree of risk. They should be supported to make those choices, to live as independently as possible and treated with respect and dignity.

Who Abuses Adults?

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the vulnerable person include husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is the main carer.
- Neighbours.
- Paid carers.
- Workers in places of worship.
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service.
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.

Relatives who are Main Carers

Carers can experience considerable stress, exhaustion and frustration without respite or support. This can lead to unintended poor care or abuse. Relatives who are the main carers may also be subject to abuse by those for whom they are caring. This abuse is often endured for long periods and unreported⁴.

Institutions

All people living in institutions are more likely to have a degree of vulnerability. The Care Quality Commission⁵ in England has responsibility for inspecting and regulating the quality of care in institutions such as residential care homes, domiciliary care services and hospitals. In addition, the Local Government Ombudsman⁶ deals with complaints that relate to adult social care. The HM Inspectorate of Prisons⁷ in England inspects prisons. Some members of the parish may be visiting adults in institutions - hospitals, prisons and residential homes. If, as part of these responsibilities, they have concerns about the care being given and/or the way that someone is being treated, the DSA should be contacted. You can also refer directly to the institution or raise concerns with the appropriate inspection and/or complaints body.

Definitions of Adult Abuse

The UK central government document "Care and Support Statutory guidance" categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

- Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

³ Further information is available in the [Type of Abuse Fact Sheet](#).

⁴ Further information is available from the [Carers Trust](#).

⁵ [The Care Quality Commission \(CQC\)](#). Also note that [The Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman \(PHSO\)](#) deals with complaints that relate to the NHS, including GP services.

⁶ [The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

⁷ [The Prison and Probation Ombudsman](#)



- Sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.
- Psychological abuse including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- Financial or material abuse including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect or acts of omission including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- Domestic abuse that is usually a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.
- Organisational abuse including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- Modern Slavery including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment²⁵.
- ²⁵ The Clewer Initiative is currently supporting parishes to recognise and raise awareness of all aspects of modern slavery. For additional further information see anti-slavery partnerships at Unseen.



SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy states that the Church 'will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse.'

The [Training and Development Framework](#) outlines the core safeguarding training that is available from the diocese.

C0 - Basic Awareness	Recommended for anyone who needs a basic level of awareness of safeguarding. This module is also a pre-requisite for attendance at any other core training module.
C1 - Foundation	Required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities/ contact with children and/ or vulnerable adults.
C2 - Leadership	Required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities and/or leads activities involving children and/or vulnerable adults.
C3 - Clergy and Lay Ministers	Those holding a license, commission, authorisation, permission to officiate from a bishop, ordained or lay.
C4 - Senior Staff	Senior staff who have key roles in safeguarding policy, strategy and practice.
C5 - Refresher	To be undertaken every three years by those

SAFER RECRUITMENT

A keyway of protecting children and adults from harm is to ensure the careful recruitment of those working with them. The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy states 'The Church will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church'. See the [House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance](#) for further information.

<p>The PCC is responsible for the appointment of those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, paid or unpaid. Often the responsibility is delegated to the incumbent. At least two individuals (which could include the incumbent) must be responsible for recruitment. All those involved in recruitment must be capable and competent, trained in safer recruitment and able to keep personal matters confidential.</p>		
1.	<p>Job/Role Description Construct a clear and accurate job description and person specification, or for an unpaid role, a role outline, which sets out what tasks and responsibilities the applicant will undertake, and the skills and experience required. This will include what level of DBS check is required.</p>	<p>Model Parish Safeguarding Officer Role Description DBS Eligibility DBS Frequently Asked Questions</p>
2.	<p>Advertise Advertise unpaid roles within parish notices and paid roles more widely.</p>	
3.	<p>Application Form Ask all applicants to complete an application form for all paid roles (a Curriculum Vitae may be used for voluntary roles, but an application form is good practice and is recommended). Always ask for, take up and check two references.</p>	<p>Model Application Form</p>
4.	<p>Confidential Declaration Form (CDF) Ask applicants to complete a Confidential Declaration Form.</p>	<p>Confidential Declaration Form</p>
5.	<p>Shortlist (Paid posts) Shortlist, carefully examining the application forms. Identify any gaps in employment/personal history and ensure those shortlisted have met the requirements of the person specification. Shortlist (Unpaid roles) Review any interest from volunteers and assess suitability against requirements.</p>	
6.	<p>Interview Have a face-to-face interview (or informal discussion if unpaid) with pre-planned and clear questions to assess applicants' suitability for the role. Seek explanations for gaps in employment/personal history. It may also be appropriate to ask the individual to complete a test or presentation if applicable. Check identification and the Confidential Declaration Form (CDF).</p>	<p>Model Interview Questions</p>



7.	<p>Offer the role Decide whom to offer the role to. This decision will be made by the interviewing panel. This is subject to completion of all checks to the satisfaction of the PCC. No role can commence until satisfactory checks have been completed.</p>	
8.	<p>Checks Once the applicant has been offered the role, subject to satisfactory checks, ask the applicant to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) application²⁷ (online or paper depending on the diocese's process). Any blemished DBS checks or information of concern on the CDF must be risk assessed by the DSA. Please note if someone has either never lived in the UK or spent a period of time overseas (i.e. lived abroad), the person making the appointment should request an additional check and ask the applicant to obtain criminality information from the country where he/she was resident²⁸. It is also recommended to undertake an occupational health check for paid roles where possible.</p>	<p>Model Reference Request Letter</p>
9.	<p>Appoint Once all checks are satisfactory and support the interview decision, the person can be formally appointed. It is recommended to add an end date to unpaid roles. This can always be extended but helps set expectations for both parties.</p>	<p>Model Appointment Letter</p>
10.	<p>Probation Period Have a period of probation²⁹ for any paid role (or a settling in period for unpaid) and review throughout, as well as at the end of this period.</p>	
11.	<p>Induct, Train and Support Induct new unpaid and paid workers. This should include expectations in relation to behavior (a Code of Conduct³⁰). Ensure supervision/support is in place and arrange for attendance on the Church of England safeguarding training (see section 6).</p>	



RESPONDING TO THOSE THAT MAY PRESENT A KNOWN RISK TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS.

The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy 2017 states 'The Church, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community whom may present a known risk'.

This means that there are likely to be those with criminal convictions for sexual offences and other forms of abuse attending church. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are sound reasons for considering that they still might pose a risk to others. Where people may pose a risk to others, their position in a congregation will need to be carefully and sensitively assessed to decide whether they pose a present risk to others and to put in place arrangements to ensure that these risks are mitigated. In these circumstances, it is not only about monitoring individuals but offering support to lead a fulfilled life. As such, the Church has an important role in contributing to the prevention of future abuse.

Some examples of the risk that individuals may pose to children, young people and adults are:

- Sexual offences – against both adults and children: This includes accessing indecent images of children on the internet.
- Financial abuse: targeting of vulnerable adults for financial gain, for example, asking for money, the acceptance of large 'gifts' or offering to do a job for someone at an extortionate rate of pay.

Take action

Always contact the DSA as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, if you learn that any of the following people worship in your church:

1. Anyone placed on the sex offenders register, with a violent offence or conviction and/or who is barred from working with children or adults by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
2. Anyone who admits to being an abuser including non-recent abuse.
3. Anyone who is subject to an investigation for suspected abuse, including possession of indecent images of children, and/or is suspended from their usual role.
4. Anyone who may pose a risk to other church members due to their behaviour, irrespective of their criminal status.

Category (4) above may include a person in relation to whom:

- An allegation of abuse against a child or adult has been investigated, but the matter has not proceeded to court, or the person has been acquitted, or the matter is currently the subject of proceedings in the criminal or civil courts but the person may still pose a risk.
- A complaint or grievance has been received alleging inappropriate behaviour, which is not criminal.
- There have been concerns about the person's alleged abusive behaviour to a previous or current partner.

If the DSA is made aware by any other source of any person in the above categories who is intending to or is worshipping at a local parish church, s/he will notify the Parish Safeguarding Officer/ incumbent in the first instance.

The DSA will determine the appropriate action to be taken to best safeguard the parish and its congregation, based on the particular facts and circumstances of each case. They will undertake a



risk assessment and the formation of a risk management plan known as a Safeguarding Agreement.

This will involve the respondent and usually the incumbent, churchwarden, Parish Safeguarding Officer and, if involved, statutory agencies e.g. police, National Probation Service and Children's Social Care. Who is involved will depend on the case.

If a person is assessed as posing a risk to children or adults, the DSA, together with any statutory agencies involved, will support the parish to:

- Form a small group of people to offer pastoral support, friendship and to monitor the respondent.
- Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child or vulnerable adult.
- Agree with the respondent that he/she worship elsewhere if his/her victim or their family worship in the same church.
- Ensure the respondent is never offered any official role in the church or position of responsibility where he/she may be trusted by others, for example that of church warden, worship leader or any in which a child or vulnerable adult may, as a result, place trust in that person.
- Consider whether, with the person's agreement and that of any statutory authorities involved, the congregation should be informed.
- Meet with the respondent to draft a Safeguarding Agreement, setting out the parameters of his/her behaviour in the church setting.
- The Safeguarding Agreement may include the following elements:
 - Attend designated services or meetings only.
 - Sit apart from children.
 - Stay away from areas of the building where children or vulnerable adults meet.
 - Attend a house group where there are no children or vulnerable adults.
 - Decline hospitality where there are children or vulnerable adults.
 - Never be alone with children or vulnerable adults.
 - Never work or be part of a mixed group with children or vulnerable adults.
 - Take no role or office in the church which gives him or her status or authority as others may deem that person to be trustworthy.

The church wardens should be involved in the drawing up of the written agreement with the respondent. Church wardens can direct parishioners where to sit and have a duty to maintain good order at divine service. If necessary church wardens can eject a person creating a disturbance and in certain circumstances have the power of arrest, although such power should be exercised with extreme caution⁵⁶. If a "disturbance" is anticipated the police must be notified.

The Safeguarding Agreement will be monitored and reviewed at least annually.



ACCEPTABLE TOUCH

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- Always ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church officer.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- ✓ You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- ✓ You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- ✓ You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- ✓ You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- ✓ You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Ensure that church officers at all levels must take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be encouraged to challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.



VISITING ADULTS

Visiting vulnerable adults in their homes is an essential element of many church officers' roles. Many parishioners will be well known to the church officer and where there have been no previous concerns the level of risk to the church officer or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a church officer at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour.

Unfortunately, case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from a church officer. For these reasons it is very important for parishes to ensure their church officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in the manner in which church officers engage in lone working or visits to homes.

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a church officer:

- If possible undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person. If there are any concerns or risks known before a visit is made, you are advised always to undertake a risk assessment (see [Model Risk Assessment Checklist for Home Visiting](#)). In these circumstances, consider whether the visit is necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another church officer. In addition, visiting in pairs may be advisable, especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/ support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer "over the counter" remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.
- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well. They will report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSA if they are not available.



USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media sites enable users to create and share content and keep in touch with other users. They include maintaining a profile page on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person; taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards. For many, especially young people, using social media is an extension of physical face to face relationships. It is therefore important that churches also engage with their community and worshippers through these platforms. However, this must be done safely to avoid the risk of:

- Forming inappropriate relationships.
- Saying things you should not, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments.
- Blurring the boundaries between public work/ministry and your private life.
- Grooming and impersonation.
- Bullying and harassment.

The Role of the PCC

The PCC must approve the use of social media and mobile phones by the church. Where there are Facebook or similar online groups set up on the church's behalf, the PCC must ensure there is a named person to whom all workers are accountable.

The named person must be a church officer, who should be a colleague or supervisor, and should be aware of the account name and password so that they can at any time log on to the account to monitor the communications. The named person should be proactive in fulfilling this role.

Communications must be shared with the named person. Church officers remain bound by professional rules of confidentiality. Where there is concern that a young person or adult is at risk of abuse, or they themselves pose a risk of abuse to others, safeguarding procedures must always be followed.

Guidance for Church Officers

DO

- ✓ Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
- ✓ Maintain the upmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children, young people and adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- ✓ Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the PSO and the DSA.
- ✓ Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
- ✓ Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church account/s and profiles separate from your personal social media account/s e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life.
- ✓ Always ask parents/carers for written consent to:
 - o Use and store photographs of children/young people from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.



- o Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people.
- o Young people connecting to the church's social media pages.

- ✓ Only use an approved church/ministry account to communicate with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. The named person should be able to access this and review conversations, and the account should be visible to young people and their parents. Young people must be made aware that any communication will be viewed by all users. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the named person of your exchange when required.
- ✓ Avoid one-to-one communication with a child or young person.
- ✓ Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
- ✓ Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the named person, PSO, incumbent or, if appropriate, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- ✓ Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

DO NOT

- Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Add children, young people or vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts.
- Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).
- Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.
- Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.
- Use visual media (e.g. Skype, Facetime) for one to one conversations with young people, use only in group settings.

In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements.
- Breaches of copyright and data protection.
- Material of an illegal nature.
- Offensive sexual or abusive references.
- Inappropriate language.
- Anything which may be harmful to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or which may bring the church into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

Mobile Phones

Wherever possible, church officers should be supplied with a mobile phone dedicated for work purposes. This allows for the phone to be switched off outside working hours, and for usage to be accountable. This means that the work phone number is the only number that young people or adults are given, and the church officer's personal number can remain private. Texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the named person or the PSO/incumbent (or if unavailable the DSA).



FURTHER HELP AND GUIDANCE

Helplines

- **Action on Elder Abuse** helpline - **0808 808 8141**
- **24-hour National Domestic Violence** helpline - **0808 2000 247**
- **Cruse** bereavement helpline - **0808 808 1677**
- **Family Lives** support and advice on **family issues** - **0808 800 222**
- **MACSAS** for people who have been abused by church officers - **0808 801 0340**
- **Samaritans** for people struggling to cope and needing someone to talk to - **116 123**

Some sources of support for victims and families of abuse

- THE SURVIVORS TRUST
<http://thesurvivorstrust.org/>

- SAFELINE

<https://www.safeline.org.uk/what-can-friends-and-family-members-do-to-support-survivors-of-sexual-abuse/>

- SUPPORT LINE

http://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape_sexual-assault.php

- VICTIM SUPPORT

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/childhood-abuse>



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