



# Millie Dodd

**Senior Communications Manager**

Just Build Homes/Shared Voice

HBF Future Talent Conference, 2025



# My path into housing

Department for Work and Pensions  
2020–2022

How can young offenders integrate back into society without safe and secure housing?



**Access to housing is the  
foundation of all of our lives**



# The housing crisis is getting worse

**151,630**

children homeless and in temporary accommodation

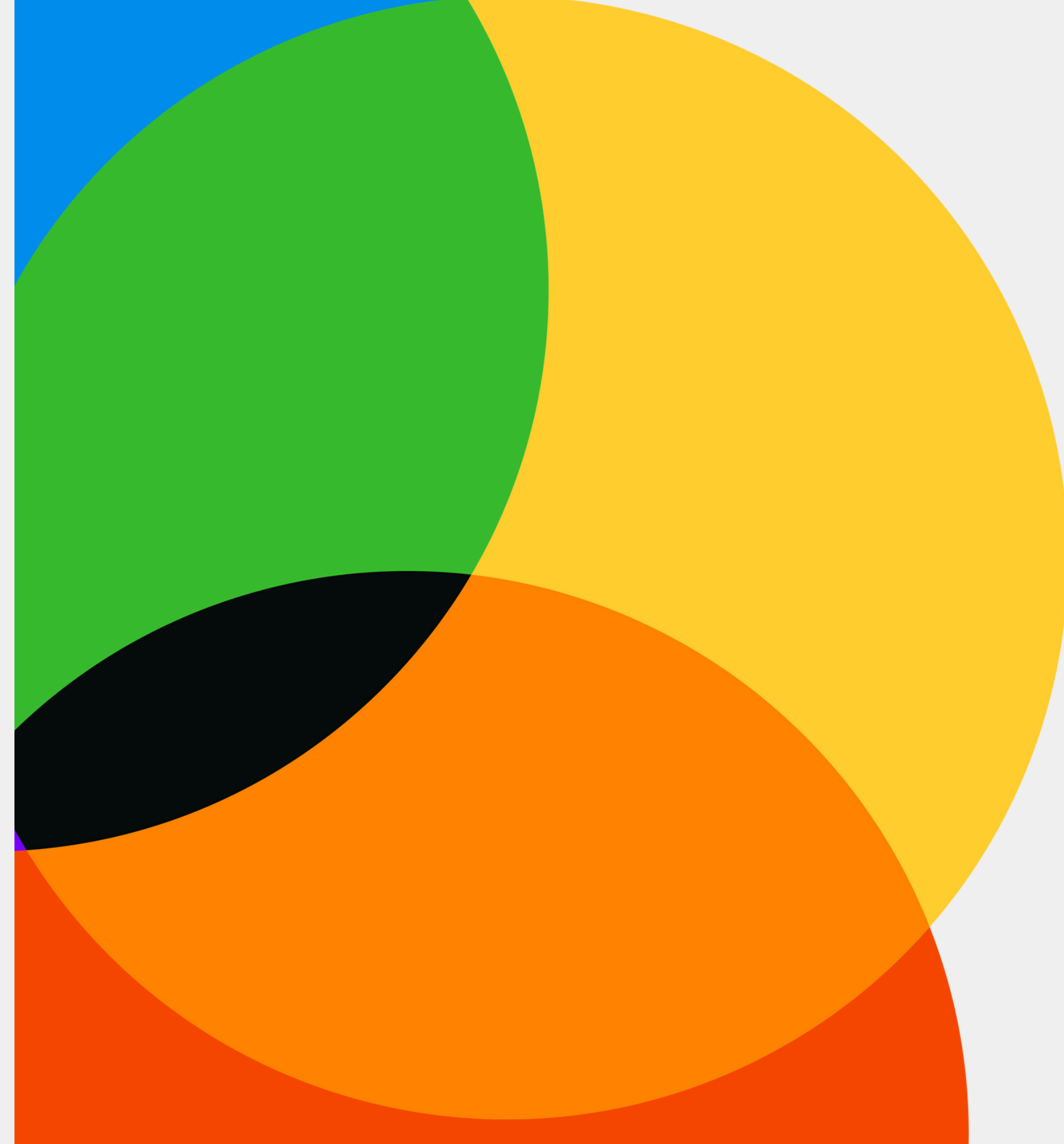
**8,860**

homeless families living in emergency accommodation such as B&Bs and hostels

**117,450**

homeless households living in temporary accommodation in England

Source - Shelter



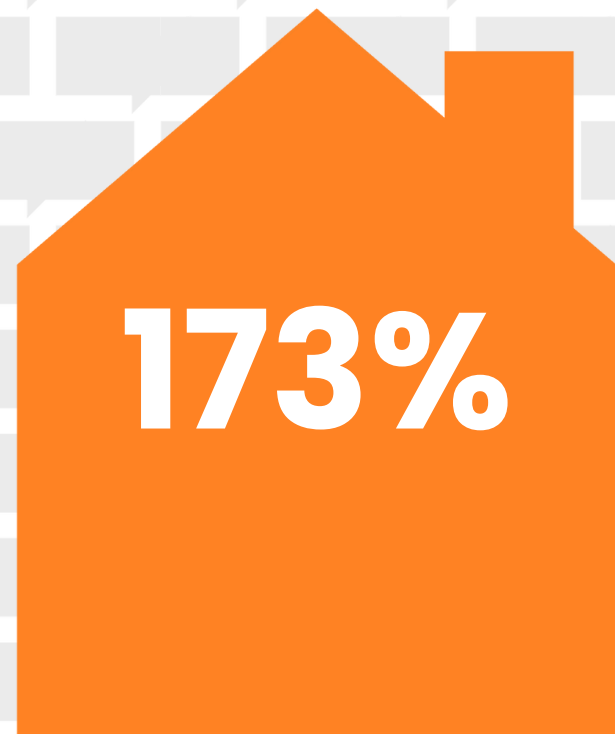


# The effect of the housing crisis on our generation

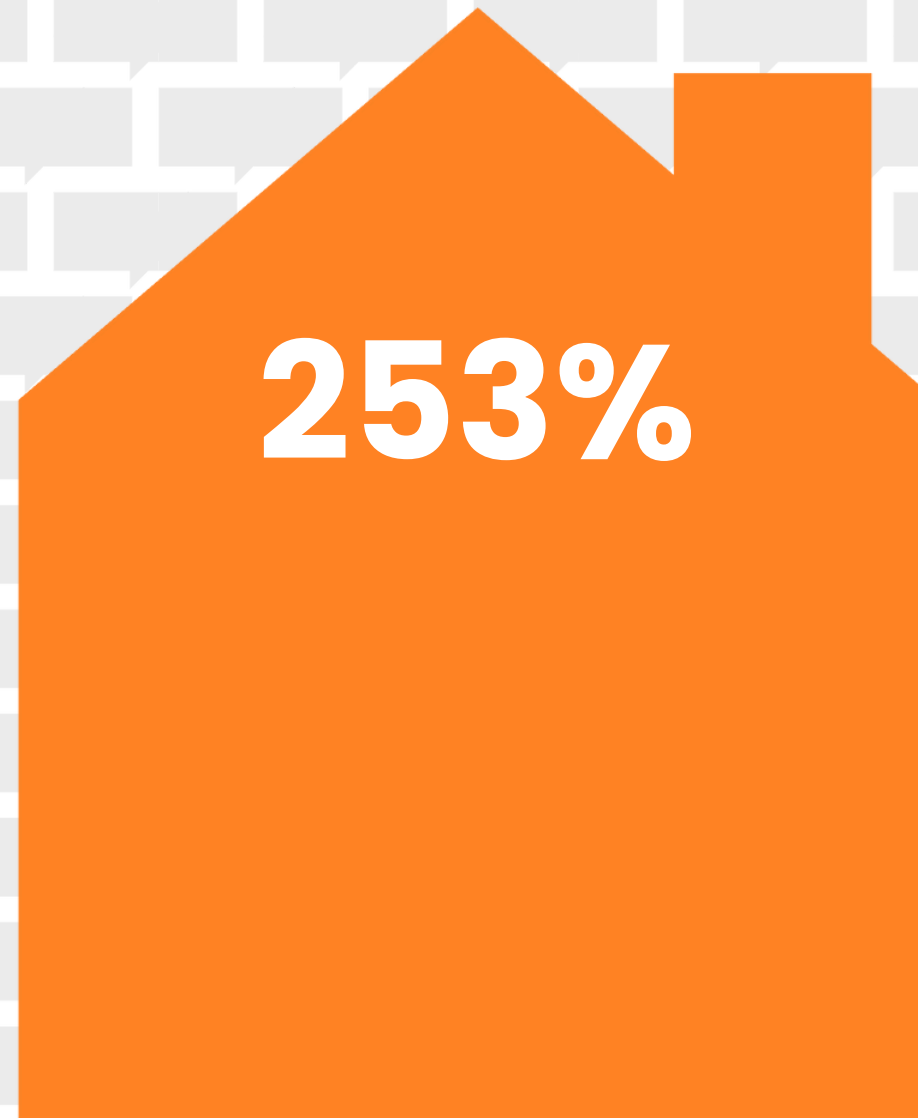
- 🏠 Delayed adulthood
- 🏠 Large proportion of earnings spent on housing
- 🏠 Access to the housing ladder

# The effect of the housing crisis on our generation

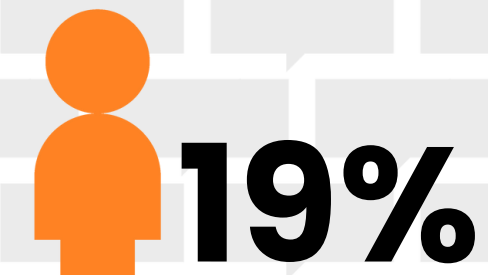
Source - House of Lords, Housing needs of young people report.




Average property price in England since 1997



Average property price in London since 1997



Increase in real income since 1997 for 25-34 year olds



**Are you concerned  
about the effects of  
the housing crisis?**



# Then why is the narrative around new homes so **negative**?



## Finchampstead locals object to 'undesirable' 40-home build

Developers have proposed a total of 40 homes, with at least 28 being affordable, amounting to 70 per cent. They would have a mixture of one to four bedrooms.

As well as the formal complaints, locals have mobilised on Facebook, delivering leaflets through letter boxes, and have set up a meeting on July 23 at Finchampstead Memorial Hall.



**Have you ever written a letter of support for a scheme in your local area?**

# The problem

Collectively, the property sector spends millions on communications.

**But, decision makers only ever hear from the objectors.**



**2 MILLION**

The infographic features a central white speech bubble containing the text. The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping circles and shapes in orange, purple, green, and yellow. The number '2 MILLION' is rendered in a large, bold, orange font.

Objections to planning applications  
in the last three years.

Source: Direct Line

The majority of people  
support building more  
homes in their **own** area

Source: British Social Attitudes Survey, 2023



# How the traditional planning system caters to objectors

Stance: \*

Object  Support  Neutral

Reason for comment:

- Detrimental impact on tree(s)
- Loss of light
- Noise
- Not in Keeping with the area
- Not Specified
- Not submitted via the PA Register
- Obtrusive by design
- Over Development
- Overlooking
- Residential Amenity
- Risk of Flooding
- Traffic or Highways

Why are you commenting on this application?

- Object to this application
- Do not object to this application
- General comments about this application



The **only** communications agency that finds genuine, local supporters to build the homes, clean energy & infrastructure we need.





# What we do differently



Waitrose, West Bromley  
**353 homes**  
**103 supporters**

JOHN LEWIS  
PARTNERSHIP



East Grinstead  
**550 homes**  
**105 supporters**

 WELBECK LAND





# Amplifying the voices of supporters



[View the video here](#)



# Why your voice is important



Being a local struggling to find **my own place**, the promise of **affordable homes** hits close to home. It's the hope of finally getting onto the **property ladder**, either through buying or renting.

**Matt Wilkins, Living with Family & Friends in Burgess Hill Victoria, Aged 23.**



I endorse the scheme as it promises to **enhance our local community**, particularly by addressing the pressing issue of **affordable housing** for young people. Personally, I'm also experiencing difficulties in accessing the property market due to high costs, making the prospect of **homeownership seem unattainable.**

**Natasha Furminger, Living with Family & Friends in Burgess Hill St Andrews, Aged 27.**



# Challenging the status quo





# Taking opportunities

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

## I'm a yimby, come and build in my back yard

Young activists are taking on their elders at planning meetings to build more homes



Millie Dodd works at Just Build Homes, a tool that alerts people to new planning applications in their area  
RICK FINDLER

Move over nimbies, there's a new acronym in town. The battle to climb on

**LIVE**



► **MILLIE DODD | SPOKESWOMAN, JUST BUILD HOMES**

**TALK** **HOUSE PROUD**  
GOVT TO BUILD 12 NEW TOWNS OF 100K PEOPLE AFTER 100 AREAS APPLY

11:54 ► **JULIA HARTLEY-BREWER**



**Affordable Housing: New partnership models for delivery**

15:00 - 15:45

in association with **MUSE** **MORGAN SINDALL**

Headline media partner **FINANCIAL TIMES**

Headline partners: **JLL**, **Places for London**, **SOVUS**, **WPA/CPA**

Panelists: Alexandra Notay (chair), Richard Dobson, Morgan Sindall, Millie Dodd, Just Build Homes, Elizabeth Oliveira, MUSE.





# Taking opportunities



## Developers the locals

## Property Week

### Grassroots campaign supports development on the home front

In an age of instant social media ire, campaign group Just Build Homes has emerged to give a voice to those members of the public who are pro-development.

“Objectors dominate the planning system and it is getting worse,” says Just Build Homes spokeswoman Millie Dodd. “For many young people, the only way we hear about new developments is from local Facebook groups explaining how to object and what to say.

“The existing narrative around development is negative. Just Build Homes is out to change that by connecting supporters of housebuilding with the planning process.”

The group believes objectors have used social media to create “the false perception that development is unpopular”, says Dodd. She adds: “We know that across the UK, the majority of people support building more homes in their area; they are just not reached in the traditional planning process. If decision-makers only hear from those who oppose building new homes, they can be influenced to make decisions according to politics rather than addressing the urgent housing needs in their area.”

Dodd says she has seen letters of support for developments classed as objections on the planning portal, and calls for a major rethink of the planning consent process.

“At the very least, the planning system should encourage those who need new homes to contribute to decision-making,” she says.

“For many people, the system is too complex and full of jargon. The government is looking at digital solutions, and we would like to see this develop in a way that makes it easier for everyone to contribute.”

**The majority of people support building more homes in their area**

Millie Dodd, Just Build Homes



## Rise of the YIMBYs: engaging younger people in the planning process

**LDS BOOST**

With her experience running Just Build Homes, a digital platform for engaging supporters of housebuilding with the planning process, Millie Dodd is on the front line of the YIMBY (which stands for Yes In My Back Yard) movement.

We caught up with Millie, the 26-year-old Communications Manager at Just Build Homes, to get her views on mobilising supporters of housebuilding to engage in the planning process in order to get the homes we need approved and built.

It's harder than ever for young people to get on the housing ladder. Homeownership is the lowest it's been for 50 years. Millions of people in their 20s and 30s are still living with their parents, unable to afford rising rents. Those who do rent have little left over to save for a deposit. As a result, a whole generation is stuck in housing limbo.

However, access to safe and secure housing is a necessity, not a luxury. Over 17 million people are impacted by the housing emergency, according to the Land Promoters and Developers Federation (LDPF). So, where are the millions of angry younger people demanding more homes to be built? Just Build Homes knows that in every area of the UK there is a majority who support building more homes in their local area, but they are not being reached in the traditional planning process. This audience do not care about planning arguments, height or density. They care about having access to secure housing near their family, friends, and community ties.

The planning process, unfortunately, has been dominated by objectors with lots of time on their hands. Traditional planning consultations tend to be centred around appeasing these objectors, who are never going to change their mind about new developments. “As a young person myself, the only exposure to new developments in my local area, prior to my work at Just Build Homes, would be local people posting on Facebook groups about how to object and what to say,” says Millie. This is compounded by the complexity of the planning system, according to Millie. “Planning portals are complex and full of jargon – and in some cases they don't even consider the idea that there could be support. They only ask ‘do you object or not object?’”

Just Build Homes is at the forefront of the YIMBY movement and is helping supporters be heard. It is bridging the gap between housebuilding supporters and the official planning process, making it simple and easy to comment on planning applications in their local areas. Millie explains: “We are giving a voice to the silent majority, who are in favour of building new homes in their own area but rarely have their say in the debate. We believe that the voices of people who want to get on the housing ladder and have a decent home are as important as those already on it. It's time to change the narrative around development. From our experience, when the playing field is levelled and supporters of housebuilding are engaged, decision makers will take notice and make their decisions based on the merits of the scheme, not the politics.”

Just Build Homes is able to engage with younger people effectively because it talks to them directly where they are, on social media, giving them the opportunity to speak about their personal experiences of the housing crisis, changing the story around development and increasing supply as part of the solution to the housing crisis. The Just Build Homes team has set up a nationwide digital platform for supporters, [www.justbuildhomes.co.uk](http://www.justbuildhomes.co.uk), which is free for anyone to use. The team also works directly with developers to help engage and mobilise these supportive, harder-to-reach audiences. They have worked on over 50 projects nationwide so far and have built a community of around 8,000 people who want to see more homes of all types built.

The government has recognised that the current planning system needs to be made more user-friendly and inclusive, launching the Digital Planning Programme through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It has also consulted with Just Build Homes for their digital expertise and insights into on engaging with supporters of housebuilding.

**Just Build Homes**

To get in contact with Millie, email [millie@justbuildhomes.co.uk](mailto:millie@justbuildhomes.co.uk).

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Millie Dodd, Communications Manager at Just Build Homes



# Questions

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[www.sharedvoice.co.uk](http://www.sharedvoice.co.uk)

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