A Statement of Healthcare Standards - Standards for NHS Care and Treatment in Wales

Consultation Document

November 2004
A STATEMENT OF HEALTHCARE STANDARDS -
STANDARDS FOR NHS CARE AND TREATMENT IN WALES
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
Foreword by the Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services

Earlier this year, I announced that I would be bringing forward proposals for a common framework of healthcare standards to support the NHS and partner organisations in providing effective, timely and quality services across all healthcare settings. This would be part of a package of measures including the establishment of a new Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and the setting up of an Advisory Board for Healthcare Standards in Wales.

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales became operational from April this year. Working closely with the new Healthcare Commission, HIW will conduct reviews and investigations into the provision of healthcare by and for Welsh NHS bodies. I am confident that it will soon establish itself as a key organisation in our drive to improve the safety and quality of the services we provide.

The Advisory Board for Healthcare Standards in Wales is made up of people drawn from a very wide range of organisations involved in the delivery of healthcare in Wales. Its first important task was to recommend to me a common framework of standards that would be easy for everybody to understand and apply. I now have the pleasure of presenting to you in this consultation document the Board’s proposals for this new common framework of standards. The Advisory Board will have a continuing role in the management of the standards framework, not least in considering the response to the consultation and in agreeing the detailed standards and assessment criteria that will underpin the new standards framework.

The standards themselves will be taken into account by all those providing NHS funded care directly, in the full variety of settings, those managing the health service, those commissioning health care and, most importantly of all, by every resident of Wales requiring NHS care and treatment. The standards will also apply to the independent and voluntary sectors where they provide care to NHS patients. In the longer term, the aim is to bring about greater level of alignment, rationalisation and harmonisation between standards, and the inspection and review mechanisms that apply...
across NHS organisations, social care services and the independent and voluntary health care sectors. This consultation document marks an important first step on that path.

Standards are fundamental to the quality agenda. They promote a framework for care based on shared values that can be adopted universally, ensuring that quality services are provided equitably, robustly and ethically across the full breadth of services we provide, no matter what the setting. They will also establish a basis for continuous improvement and help ensure that the additional resources I have been able to make available, deliver the improved levels of services the people of Wales have a right reasonably to expect.

I would very much welcome your support in helping to refine the proposals I have set out in this document. You will see how the intention is to simplify the complicated array of healthcare standards that apply to modern healthcare provision and how it is proposed that this new framework of high level standards will interface with the existing performance management systems.

The consultation period will run until early in the New Year and I will launch the final standards framework at the second Wales Quality Forum to be held in March 2005. I would urge you to let me have your views on this important new initiative so that together we can progress successfully towards the vision for better health in Wales we all want to see.

Jane Hutt AM
Introduction

‘Improving Health in Wales - A Plan for the NHS and its Partners’ published in January 2001 set out the Assembly’s plan for regeneration of the NHS in Wales. It acknowledged that the additional resources being provided could not alone deliver the improvement to health services that the people of Wales had a right to reasonably expect. Better performance is the key to top class services, and we need to focus more sharply on performance systems. The plan provided a clear outline of the performance management frameworks already in place, and where improvements should be made to strengthen those systems.

The Wanless Review of Health and Social Care in Wales, published in June 2003, stated that national standards for health and social care provision were needed, so that both health and social care could become national services, delivered locally. The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 provided the Assembly with the opportunity to put into place a framework for healthcare standards. Through the publication of a Statement of Standards, the Welsh Assembly Government will, for the first time, be better able to support healthcare professionals to identify those national healthcare standards that directly contribute to the delivery of locally improved services.

The purpose of this consultation document is:

- to explain the principles that will underpin the Statement of Standards;
- to set out how it is intended to present the Statement to the NHS in Wales and how the Statement of Standards will be reviewed; and
- to demonstrate the relationship between healthcare standards, the performance improvement framework and the role of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW).
**Principles**

In taking this work forward, the Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services has agreed certain fundamental principles that will underpin the development and publication of the Statement of Standards for use by the NHS in Wales.

The four main principles are as follows:

1. **Simplify the complicated array of Standards that exist**

   The Welsh Assembly Government appreciates the concerns expressed by some that there are too many standards that are perceived to increase the burden of bureaucracy and undermine the clinical judgement of health professionals and those involved in the commissioning process. The development of the new high level standards proposed in this document represent the first step toward simplifying and rationalising the expectations on the service for both providers and commissioners.

   The aim is to produce an effective tool to support the service by minimising duplication and simplifying the current complicated array of healthcare standards. It is not intended to add another layer of standards, but to progressively reduce the burden of unhelpful standards and guidance on the NHS over time.

2. **All Healthcare settings to be included**

   It is important for the Statement of Standards to be directly relevant to the full range of care and treatment services provided by, and on behalf of the whole of the NHS in Wales.

   The standards will therefore be taken into account by all those providing NHS funded care for the people of Wales, no matter what the setting, by those managing the health service, by those commissioning health care and, most importantly, by the general public.
3. The Statement of Standards must be Flexible

In accordance with the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, the Welsh Assembly Government must ensure that the Statement of Standards is reviewed to ensure that the standards therein remain consistent with best clinical practice and continue to be relevant in response to local needs and priorities. The standards should be comprehensive but at a level of detail that allows scope for local flexibility and accountability on how each standard is to be implemented and delivered.

4. There should be four Domains

Like the Department of Health in England, the Welsh Assembly Government believes that the healthcare standards should be organised into domains. This will help to improve clarity and focus on the purpose of the standards. We believe that standards can be organised into four domains as follows:

- the Patient Experience;
- Clinical Outcomes;
- Healthcare Governance; and
- Public Health

Patient focus and safety issues are addressed within these four domains.

Views about the appropriateness of these domains will be particularly welcome. In its consultation document ‘Standards for Better Health’, the Department of Health in England has suggested seven domains for the Statements of Standards. These are:

- Safety;
- Clinical and Cost Effectiveness;
- Governance;
- Patient Focus;
- Accessible and Responsive Care;
Question 1: Do you agree with the four principles that underpin the publication of the Statement of Standards?
If not, please give the details of the principles with which you do not agree and why.

Who is the Statement of Standards for?

It is intended that the Statement of Standards will be used as a tool by all health professionals and managers commissioning and providing care and treatment on behalf of the NHS in Wales. This includes organisations in England and elsewhere who provide care funded by the NHS in Wales. The standards will therefore apply to the provision of all NHS services in the full variety of settings, including the voluntary and private sectors insofar as they provide care to NHS patients. Although healthcare professionals will be the primary audience, it is important that the Statement is presented in such a way as to be easily understood by both patients and members of the public so that there is clarity in relation to the standard of care they can expect to receive.

Following the implementation of the NHS Wales structural change programme in April 2003, there has been a requirement for our Local Health Boards to work in close partnership with Local Authorities and other stakeholders in the delivery of healthcare services. The publication of the Statement of Standards will therefore need to be taken into account by Local Health Boards in the preparation of their health and well-being strategies and in their commissioning plans.

Inspection against the standards

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 made provision for the Assembly to conduct reviews of, and investigations into, the provision of healthcare by and for Welsh NHS bodies. These functions have been delegated to a new Assembly unit, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW).
As a National Assembly for Wales inspectorate, HIW will implement a programme of reviews in relation to quality, application of national clinical standards and patient safety. There will be a focus on clinical governance, patient care across agencies and sectors and the strengthening of public involvement.

The Statement of Standards will form the basis of the reporting approach that HIW will use when undertaking its reviews and investigation of NHS bodies in Wales.

Through the duty of co-operation between HIW and the Healthcare Commission, implementations of the Standards by English providers will be assessed by the Healthcare Commission. HIW will also assess against the Department of Health’s standards for care provided to English patients by Welsh providers.

**Presentation of the Statement of Standards**

The Statement of Standards will not contain all healthcare standards to which the NHS and its partners are expected to work. Rather, the Statement document will establish a common framework of quality and safety requirements and act as a 'signpost' to those guidelines, appraisals, National Service Frameworks and other strategic documents that contain standards relevant to each of the domains.

**Domains**

We believe that all healthcare standards can be accommodated within the four domains that are being proposed. Issues of safety and accessibility are universal to all standards. However, in the light of this consultation, the number of domains may increase, or decrease as necessary. Under each domain heading, there will be a short statement providing a high level description of the purpose of the domain.

**Question 2:** Do you consider that the four domains suggested for the Statement of Standards in Wales are sufficient for the full range of standards to be organised?

If you do not, what are the domains you think should be added or removed, and why?
Standards
Each domain will include a series of standards statements. These are not new standards, but a summary of the standards that already apply to NHS bodies in Wales. They will provide healthcare professionals with a strategic overview of the level of service to be achieved and are largely based on the strategic standards contained within 'Standards for Better Health' published by the Department of Health in England.

The standards proposed for each of the domains is at Annex A.

Terminology
The Department of Health found during the consultation on its own Statement of Standards that there was a need to establish a common language so that terms such as ‘standards’ and ‘targets’ have a clearly understood, shared meaning. From now on, the Department of Health will define the most frequently used terms in the following way:

Standards
Standards are a means of describing the level of quality that healthcare organisations are expected to meet or aspire to. The performance of organisations can be assessed against this level of quality.

Quality Requirements
Quality requirements will be established through the National Service Frameworks. They describe the care which clinicians and others will use to guide their practice.

Criteria
Criteria are ways of demonstrating compliance with, and performance relevant to, a standard. They establish specific, objective expectations, drawing on such evidence and indicators [as the Welsh Assembly Government, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and partner organisations may establish].
Targets

Targets refer to a defined level of performance that is being aimed for, often with a numerical and time dimension. The purpose of a target is to encourage improvement in the specific area covered by the target over a particular timeframe.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks are used as comparators to compare performance between similar organisations or systems.

The Welsh Assembly Government agrees that there is a need to achieve greater clarity over the use of such terms. It also believes it important to maintain a level of commonality in the use of such terms with healthcare organisations in England while reflecting different approaches adopted in Wales. However, we would welcome views on the suitability of the definitions used in England as part of the consultation.

Question 3: Do you think that the Department of Health’s definition of important terms like ‘standards’ and ‘targets’ would be suitable for use in Wales?

Implementation

The Statement of Standards will come into effect from 1 April 2005. In accordance with the terms of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, the standards set out in the Statement of Standards are to be taken into account by every Welsh NHS body in establishing, running and commissioning services from the date of their publication. Some of the standards will be seen by some as ambitious and challenging. The standards will, however, offer greater clarity about how services are to be developed and commissioned in the future.

The Welsh Assembly Government, working closely with the Advisory Board for Healthcare Standards in Wales, will develop the detailed assessment criteria to be applied to each of the high level standards set out in the Statement of Standards. This will determine whether the standard is ‘core’ or ‘developmental’ and will form the basis of reviews undertaken by HIW. The Welsh Assembly Government believes that there is a need to make a distinction between the standards of care that should be available to everybody in Wales now, and the improved standards of service that we can all look forward to in the future.
The assessment of compliance with the standards, by the HIW, will not come into full effect until criteria have been established following a further extensive public consultation exercise. The duty placed on NHS organisations to take account of the healthcare standards from 1st April 2005 will mean that they will be in a strong position when HIW's review programme is fully rolled out.

**Question 4: Do you agree that there should be a distinction between 'core' and 'developmental' standards?**

### Reviewing the Statement of Standards

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 places a requirement on the Assembly to keep the standards under review, and publish amended statements whenever it considered appropriate. To manage this process, we have set up an Advisory Board for Healthcare Standards in Wales, whose primary function is to co-ordinate and develop advice about standards to be included in the Statement of Standards, and the associated quality requirements and assessment criteria.

### Performance Management

The Performance Improvement Framework will continue to be the principal means by which the Welsh Assembly Government will assess and manage the performance of healthcare bodies.

Performance against the standards set out in the Statement of Standards will be managed and monitored through the performance improvement framework and externally reviewed and assessed principally by HIW.

### Consultation

**What format will the consultation take?**

Stakeholders are encouraged to let us know their views about our plans for a Statement of Standards by completing the consultation response form provided at Annex B in the document.
The Welsh Assembly Government will also be holding a series of workshops across Wales to discuss these proposals and answer any questions stakeholders may wish to ask. Details of these workshops can be found at www.wales.nhs.uk/hcsw

**Where should comments be sent?**

Completed consultation response forms should be sent to:

Taryn Ramsay  
Healthcare Standards Consultation  
Healthcare Standards Branch  
Health and Social Care Department  
Welsh Assembly Government  
4th Floor East Wing Government Buildings  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

You may also send in your responses electronically to:

Taryn.Ramsay@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

**When does the consultation end?**

The consultation period will end on 3 February 2005, and your comments should be sent to arrive at the above address by this date.

**Confidentiality**

In accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government’s policy on public access to information, we would like to publish any responses received during this consultation exercise. Whilst no guarantees can be given that contributions will not be made public, respondents are invited to indicate if they would prefer that any comments that they submit will be treated as confidential and not published automatically.
Annex A

Domain Title - The Patient Experience

Standards to support the provision of Healthcare in partnership with patients, their carers and relatives, will be designed around decisions, which respect their diverse needs and preferences. Care will be provided in environments that promote patient (and staff) wellbeing and respect for patients’ needs and preferences in that they will be designed for the effective and safe delivery of treatment.

Standard 1

The full range of views of patients, their carers and others will be sought and taken fully into account in designing, planning, delivering, reviewing and improving health care services.

Standard 2

The planning and delivery of health care by health care organisations and practices will reflect the views and health needs of the population served and are based on nationally agreed evidence or best practice, and:

- strive to meet patient preferences;
- ensure access (including equity of access) to services through a range of providers and routes of access; and
- use locally agreed guidance, guidelines or protocols for admission, referral and discharge which accord with the latest national expectations on access to services. All such documents should be impact assessed for legal compliance.

Standard 3

Health care will be provided in well-designed environments that:

- promote patient (and staff) well-being;
- communicate respect for patients’ needs and staff concerns;
have been designed with regard to the safety of both patients and staff; and

promote the effective control of healthcare associated infections.

Standard 4

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of patients and visitors and all others who are affected by the activities of the organisation.

Standard 5

Healthcare organisations and practices, recognising different language needs, will make timely and suitable information available to patients and the public on their services, provide patients with information on the care and treatment they receive and, where appropriate, inform patients on what to expect during treatment, care and after-care.

Standard 6

Patients and service users, particularly those with long-term conditions, will be helped to contribute to the planning of their care and will be provided with opportunities and resources to develop competence in self-care.

Standard 7

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that:

• staff treat patients, their relatives and carers with dignity and respect;

• appropriate consent is obtained when required, for all contacts with patients and for the use of any confidential patient information;

• staff treat patient information confidentially, except where authorised by legislation to the contrary; and

• staff themselves are treated with dignity and respect for their differences.
**Standard 8**

Healthcare organisations and practices, recognising different language needs, will ensure that patients, their relatives and carers have information about, and clear access to, systems and procedures to register formal complaints and feedback on the quality of services, and are assured that organisations act appropriately on any concerns and, where appropriate, make changes to ensure improvements in service delivery.

**Standard 9**

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that patients are provided with a choice of food which is prepared safely and provides a balanced diet; and patients’ individual nutritional, personal, cultural and clinical dietary requirements are met, including any necessary help with feeding and access to food 24 hours a day.

**Standard 10**

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that people accessing health care are not unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

**Standard 11**

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that patients with emergency health needs are able to access care promptly and within national timescales set annually by the Welsh Assembly Government.
Domain Title - Clinical Outcomes

Healthcare decisions and services will be based on what appropriately assessed research evidence has shown will provide an effective outcome for patients’ individual needs. Patients will receive services as promptly as possible, and will not experience unreasonable delay at any stage of service delivery or of the care pathway.

Standard 12

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that:

• clinical care and treatments are carried out under appropriate clinical supervision and leadership;

• clinicians continuously update skills and techniques relevant to their clinical work including peer reviews; and

• clinicians participate in regular audit and review of clinical services.

Standard 13

Patients will receive effective treatment and care that:

• conforms to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) technology appraisals, takes account of NICE clinical guidelines and the recommendations of the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG), and, where it is available, nationally agreed best practice, particularly as defined in National Service Frameworks, national plans and agreed national guidance on service delivery;

• meets patients physical, social and psychological needs and, where appropriate, offer choice in meeting needs;

• is well co-ordinated to provide a seamless service across all healthcare and other organisations that need to be involved, especially social care organisations; and

• is delivered by healthcare professionals who make clinical decisions based on evidence-based practice.
Domain Title - Healthcare Governance

Providers of NHS funded care for the people of Wales will have in place systems that support both managerial and clinical leadership and accountability. Working practices will be in place to enable probity, quality assurance, quality improvement and patient safety to be the central components of all routines, processes and activities.

Standard 14

Healthcare organisations and practices will have systems in place:

- to identify and learn from all patient safety incidents and other reportable incidents, and demonstrate improvements in practice based on local and national experience and information derived from the analysis of incidents; and

- to ensure that patient safety notices, alerts (including National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) Patient Safety Alerts) and other communications concerning patient safety which require action are acted upon within required time-scales. Incidents should be reported to the NPSA’s National Reporting and Learning System in line with existing guidance.

Standard 15

Healthcare organisations and practices will comply with national child protection guidance within their own activities and in their dealings with other organisations. Standard healthcare organisations protect patients by following NICE Interventional Procedures guidance.

Standard 16

Healthcare organisations and practices will have planned and prepared, and where possible practised, an organised response to incidents and emergency situations, which could affect the provision of normal services.
Standard 17

Healthcare organisations and practices will:

- apply the principles of sound clinical and corporate governance to ensure the achievement of their objectives;
- actively support all employees to promote openness, honesty, probity, accountability, and the economic, efficient and effective use of resources;
- undertake systematic risk assessment and risk management (including compliance with the Welsh Risk Pool standards); and
- have systems in place to ensure financial management achieves economy, effectiveness, efficiency, probity and accountability in the use of resources.

Standard 18

Healthcare organisations and practices will support their staff through:

- having access to processes which permit them to raise, in confidence and without prejudicing their position, concerns over any aspect of service delivery, treatment or management that they consider to have a detrimental effect on patient care or on delivery of services; and
- organisational and personal development programmes which recognise the contribution and value of staff, and address, where appropriate, under representation of minority groups.

Standard 19

Healthcare organisations and practices will have a systematic and planned approach to management of records to ensure that, from the moment a record is created until its ultimate disposal, the organisation maintains information so that it serves the purpose it was collected for and disposes of the information appropriately when no longer required.
Standard 20

Healthcare organisations and practices will undertake all appropriate employment checks and ensure that all employed or contracted professionally qualified staff are registered with the appropriate bodies; and require that all employed professionals abide by relevant published codes of professional practice.

Standard 21

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that staff concerned with all aspects of the provision of health care:

• are appropriately recruited, trained and qualified for the work they undertake;

• participate in mandatory training programmes; and

• participate in further professional and occupational development commensurate with their work throughout their working lives.

Standard 22

Healthcare organisations and practices, which either lead or participate in research, will have systems in place to ensure that the principles and requirements of the research governance framework are consistently applied.

Standard 23

Integrated governance arrangements representing best practice will be in place in all health care organisations and practices and will be integrated across all health communities and clinical networks.

Standard 24

Healthcare organisations and practices will work together to:

• ensure that the principles of clinical governance are underpinning the work of every clinical team and every clinical service;

• implement a cycle of continuous quality improvement; and
• ensure effective clinical and managerial leadership and accountability.

**Standard 25**

Healthcare organisations and practices will work together and with social care organisations to meet the changing health needs of their population by:

• having an appropriately constituted workforce with appropriate skill mix across the community; and

• ensuring the continuous improvement of services through better ways of working.

**Standard 26**

Healthcare organisations and practices will use effective and integrated information technology and information systems, which support and enhance patient care, and service planning.

**Standard 27**

Healthcare organisations and practices will work to enhance patient care by providing best practice in human resources management and continuously improving staff satisfaction.
Domain Title- Public Health

Standards will support healthcare organisations and practices, will provide leadership, and collaborate with relevant local organisations and communities to ensure the design and delivery of programmes and services, which will tackle health inequalities and help people to live healthy and independent lives. Healthcare environments will be well maintained and will be cleaned to optimise health outcomes.

Standard 28

Healthcare organisations and practices will ensure that:

- the risk of healthcare acquired infection to patients, staff and visitors is minimised; with particular emphasis on high standards of hygiene and cleanliness, achieving year-on-year reductions in healthcare acquired infections. They should take part in all best practice initiatives such as the NPSA’s cleanyourhands programme;

- all risks associated with the acquisition and use of medical devices are minimised;

- as far as reasonably practicable, all reusable medical devices are properly decontaminated prior to use and that the risks associated with decontamination facilities and processes are well managed;

- medicines are handled appropriately to ensure quality and safety and security issues are addressed; and

- the prevention, segregation, handling, transport and disposal of waste is properly managed so as to minimise the risks to the health and safety of staff, patients, the public and the safety of the environment.

Standard 29

Healthcare services will be provided in environments, which promote effective care and optimise health outcomes, by being:

- well maintained and kept at acceptable national levels of cleanliness;
Standard 30

Healthcare organisations and practices will promote, protect and demonstrably improve the health of the community served and reduce health inequalities by:

- collaborating and working in partnership with each other and with local authorities in the preparation of health and well being strategies;
- ensuring that needs assessment and sound public health advice informs their policies and practices.

Standard 31

Healthcare organisations and practices will have:

- systematic and managed disease prevention and health promotion programmes, which meet the requirements of the National Service Frameworks, national plans and health promotion and prevention priorities;
- plans in place to mobilise resources to protect the public in the event of significant infectious disease outbreaks and other health emergencies; and will
- identify and act upon significant public health problems and health inequality issues, with Local Health Boards taking the leading role; implement effective programmes to improve health and reduce health inequalities; and protect their populations from identified current and new hazards to health; and will
- take fully into account current and emerging policies and knowledge on public health issues in the development of their public health programmes, health promotion and prevention services for the public, and the commissioning and provision of services; and should
- achieve the Corporate Health Standard, the national quality mark for workplace health, moving to a higher level on reassessment.
Annex B

Consultation Response Form

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Professor/Other)

First Names

Surname

Address

Postcode

E-mail address

Please give details if you are replying on behalf of a group or organisation

Name of organisation

Address if different from above

Postcode

E-mail address
Question 1: Do you agree with the four principles that underpin the publication of the Statement of Standards?
If not, please give details of the principles with which you do not agree and why.

Question 2: Do you consider that the four domains suggested for the Statement of Standards in Wales is sufficient for the full range of standards to be organised?
If you do not, what are the domains you think should be added or removed, and why?

Question 3: Do you think that the Department of Health’s definition of important terms like ‘standards’ and ‘targets’ would be suitable for use in Wales?
Question 4: Do you agree that there should be a distinction between ‘core’ and ‘developmental’ standards?

Question 5: Are there any Standards that you feel should be removed, and if so which ones and why?

Question 6: Do you feel that additional Standards should included, and if so for what area of healthcare?

Question 7: Do you believe that the National minimum standards for independent healthcare should converge with this framework for healthcare standards? Please explain why.
Please indicate whether you are happy with the Standards as they are presented in the consultation document?

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Please contribute any other comments you may wish to make in the box below
Please send your consultation responses to:

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Healthcare Standards Branch
Health and Social Care Department
Welsh Assembly Government
4th Floor East Wing Government Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
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