

**MKM OF MKM**  
**POLICY FOR**  
**Employee Wellness**  
**Programme**

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## **MAKHUDUTHAMAGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

### **EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP)**

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**“Case Manager”** - a professionally qualified person who will be assigned to manage the situation and progress of specific cases of individuals who are participating in the

Programme

**“Employee Wellness Programme” (EWP)** - a planned, systematic programme designed to provide professional assistance to all employees and their immediate families who may be experiencing among others alcohol, drug, emotional or personal crises or problems (for example health, marital, family, stress, financial, traumatic other personal concerns and/or legal) which interfere with their job performance.

**“Employee Wellness Programme Managers/Practitioners/Coordinators”**

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employee(s) in the Employee Wellness Unit who will play a proactive role in liaising

with the other MKMs and in co-ordinating project activities from within the MKM.

**“Employee Wellness Programme Professional”** - a professionally trained person, performing EWP specific related tasks, for example therapy, counselling, marketing and evaluating.

**“Eligible Employees”** – shall mean all employees where the of MKM act as employer

**“Immediate Families”** - shall mean the spouse or partner and all children who are dependant on the employee or are below the age of 18.

**“Services”** - shall mean the provision of an Employee Wellness Programme.

**“Unit”**-shall mean Employee Wellness Sub-Directorate

**OF MKM**  
**EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP)**

**1. PREAMBLE**

1.1 Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality (MKM) recognises that problems of a personal nature can have an adverse effect on an employee's job, health and feelings of wellness. Therefore, an Employee Wellness Programme (EWP) has been established to address problems in the workplace, improve productivity, service delivery and improve the general health and wellness of all employees

1.2 This policy does not alter or replace existing administrative policies or contractual agreements of MKM.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

2.1 The Employee Wellness Programme recognises that short-term personal and psychological related problems may adversely affect an employee's wellbeing and ability to function on the job. Involvement in the programme will not jeopardise an employee's job security, compensation, promotional opportunities and/or reputation. If there is any victimisation or discrimination by the employer or colleagues as a result of involvement in the programme, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Employee Wellness Programme Manager, and dealt with accordingly.

2.2.1 The Employee Wellness Programme is available to all employees of the Free of MKM and their immediate families.

**3. VISION**

It is the vision of the FSDE to improve the quality of life of all employees of the of MKM through the provision of a quality, sustainable and lifelong wellness programme.

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**4. MISSION**

It is the mission of the FSDE to operate an efficient and effective Employee Wellness programme that works towards the holistic development and support of all employees in a Professional and confidential manner

## **5. AIM**

It is the explicit aim of the Employee Wellness Programme to improve the quality of life of all employees by providing support and assistance to alleviate the impact of everyday work, personal and family challenges. Employee Wellness offers new and exciting prospects to assist in the well being of employees. At the same time it increase the effectiveness of the Municipality and maximise service delivery and capabilities within the Municipality.

## **6. PURPOSE**

6.1 The purpose of the Employee Wellness Programme is to:

- Offer confidential assistance to employees and their immediate families who are affected or who have the potential to be adversely affected in the performance of the functions by personal problems;
- Enhance productivity; and
- Enhance social functioning.

6.2 The programme is designed to provide employees and their immediate families with professional assistance in dealing with a broad range of human relations problems. This is done by identifying and resolving productivity problems associated with employees who are impaired by personal concerns, including but not limited to:

- Abusive relationships;
- Childcare and eldercare issues;
- Emotional or behavioural disorders;
- Family and marital discord;
- Family violence;
- HIV and AIDS;
- Legal problems;
- Marital, family and relationship problems;
- Personal debt and financial management problems;
- Psychological problems;

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- Stress (family, social, job);
- Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, prescription medication) and other addictive behaviour such as gambling
- Work-related problems such as job burnout, poor relationship and poor

work performance.

## **7. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Employee Wellness Programme are to:

- Assist managers and supervisors to deal appropriately with the difficulties/challenges that confront employees in the workplace
- Assist employees to seek professional help for the challenges that impact on their work and interpersonal relationships at work
- Provide appropriate mechanisms of intervention and confidential counselling for employees who seek to address challenges that they face in the workplace
- Promote co-operation, motivation and improve employee morale in order to improve productivity and workplace efficiency
- Reduce absenteeism, staff turnover, interpersonal conflicts, grievances and work related accidents in the Department of MKM
- Provide employees with life skills, awareness and educational programmes that promote healthy lifestyles and coping skills.

## **8. EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES**

8.1 The Department of MKM's Employee Wellness Programme delivers a service to:

- The organisation as a whole;
- Supervisors/managers; and
- Employees and their immediate families.

8.2 The activities of the Employee Wellness Programme include the following for:

8.2.1 Employees and their immediate family members:

- Direct, confidential and unlimited access to a 24-hour personal support service.

- Up to, six face-to-face counselling sessions per person per year (per

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condition) for each person entitled to use the scheme for whom shortterm psychological counselling is appropriate, and a further 2 sessions at the discretion of the Counsellor. Each session will last approximately one hour. All counselling is to be provided by fully qualified and registered professionals. All those requiring face-to-face counselling will be

contacted telephonically by the Counsellors within 24 hours of referral and the first consultation will take place within one week of referral.

- Direct, confidential and unlimited access to a 24-hour Life Management Service comprised of legal, financial and family care services. The legal service includes legal advice, the provision of precedents and pro-formas as well as referrals to appropriate legal services and bodies; the financial service should help those employees who require financial management skills; and the family care service assists employees to cope with the pressures of caring for their family members (including children with special educational needs and older or disabled relatives) by providing information and guidance on a wide range of childcare, eldercare and disability issues.
- Life Skills group training programmes and interventions would be provided to employees where there are specific needs identified.
- Although legal service includes information and assistance on a range of legal matters, legal information on Labour Law issues is excluded. This is so as not to complicate internal advisory services or complicate prevailing LR issues.
- A Critical Incident service offering prompt and professional trauma debriefing and counselling services to employees exposed to incidents of trauma. The service will provide a critical incident response as in the case, for example, of an employee involved in an armed robbery. Critical Incident services will be provided within 48 hours of the traumatic incident.
- HIV AND AIDS services including: HIV AND AIDS policy development and review; business impact assessment; information sessions for 8 employees around HIV and AIDS disclosure and progressively provide Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing (VCCT) and treatment where possible.

#### 8.2.2 Managers and Supervisors:

- Comprehensive initial briefing for managers and HR staff regarding the content of the service.
- EWP briefing and training for all supervisors and managers in the

of MKM's Head Office as well as in the District Offices.

- Basic counselling skills training for selected Human Resource Staff (Human Resources Management, Organisational and Human Resource Development and LR), as they are often the point of first contact for the troubled employee.
- Individual Managerial Consultancy for managers. This is a flexible response service to give in depth support to managers in their existing relationship with employees. In addition to its consultancy function, the service includes a formal managerial referral service for employees whose performance is impaired by personal problems as well as the provision of conflict resolution and mediation services. These components may, by agreement between managers and employees, be provided in conjunction with in-house resources ensuring their continued involvement whenever appropriate.
- Participation in inter-governmental activities e.g. World AIDS Day, Breast Cancer Week etc.
- An Executive Wellness Programme for senior managers will provide services as detailed below:
  - o All above mentioned services
  - o Executive Medical evaluation
  - o On-line health advisory service
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  - o Executive Consulting service
  - o HIV AND AIDS MKM and support service
  - o Monthly newsletters on relevant topics such as "Stress Management"
  - o Bi-monthly presentations on business related skills such as "Listening Skills for Executives"

## **9. PRINCIPLES OF THE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME**

### **9.1 Confidentiality**

A primary principle of the Employee Wellness Programme is to maintain confidentiality throughout every level of the programme. An employee accessing the Employee Wellness Programme needs confidence in the



privacy of this relationship. The Employee Wellness Programme recognises the employee's right to privacy. The objective of the of MKM is to assist employees and not to interfere in their private lives. Legally, "confidentiality" refers to the obligation to refrain from willingly disclosing information that has been received in confidence and not to situations in which a court or statute compels a person to disclose information.

Whereas a manager and/or supervisor has a right to know where his/her subordinate is, he or she does not have the right to know what the problem is, or which psycho-social support service the employee is attending and/or receiving.

## 9.2 Protection

Any employee who seeks assistance will not jeopardise his or her job security, compensation, promotional opportunities and/or reputation. No information obtained from, or about an employee as a result of his/her participation in the Employee Wellness Programme shall be made available to be used for any purpose. To this end the employee's right to privacy and confidentiality shall be strictly protected.

All records and discussions regarding an employee's work or personal problems will be handled in a confidential manner. Case records are to be kept by the clinician. General feedback reports are to be kept by the Employee Wellness Programme Manager. Breach of confidentiality is regarded in a serious light. Disciplinary action may be taken against an employee who breaches confidentiality. Employee Wellness Programme

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case records and general feedback reports should be kept for at least six (6) years.

An Employee Wellness Programme Manager/Coordinator may be required to divulge information under the following conditions, for example:

- Where public life and the safety of other employees and/or individuals are endangered (obligation to warn the intended victims);
- Fraud and Child abuse.

Written consent from the employee concerned is required in situations other than those mentioned above, where confidentiality needs to be breached.

An Employee Wellness Programme Manager/Coordinator who is subpoenaed to surrender records, reports or to testify in a court is not in breach of his or her confidentiality obligations.

Confidentiality should not be confused with anonymity.

All persons involved with the Employee Wellness Programme (e.g. Professionals, Coordinator, Managers, Supervisors, employees) are bound by conditions of strict confidentiality.

### 9.3 Discipline

The Employee Wellness Programme is not a substitute for the discipline of employees. Rather, the programme may be used before, or in conjunction with disciplinary actions where appropriate. The Employee Wellness Programme does not alter management's responsibility to maintain discipline or the right to take disciplinary measures as per the policies within the

The Employee Wellness Programme is not designed to assist in "conflict resolution" between employees, managers and/or supervisors. These matters should be resolved through established procedures. The Employee Wellness Programme may however assist employees, managers and/or supervisors to deal with personal consequences of conflicts which may be work related.

No one should manipulate the Employee Wellness Programme by:

- Trying to avoid disciplinary action; and
- By justifying inappropriate work conduct or insubordination.

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### 9.4 Accessibility

Depending on the identification, Employee Wellness Programme is open to:

- All employees; and
- Their immediate family members:
  - Spouse or partner;
  - Dependant children or children below the age of 18

### 9.5 Voluntarism

The Employee Wellness Programme encourages employees to voluntarily seek help (self-referral) for personal problems. The Employee Wellness Programme is strictly voluntary.

Employees who voluntarily seek help from the programme are taking responsibility for their problems. Voluntarism should therefore be encouraged.

Employees cannot be forced to go to the Employee Wellness Programme, even though the acknowledges that it is a strong motivating lever, as the consequences of not seeking help could ultimately result in disciplinary actions.

## **10. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **10.1 Job Performance**

10.1.1 If a supervisor and/or manager experiences problems with the job performance of an employee it should be addressed by intervening and addressing the reasons for non-performance. The Employee Wellness Programme may be used to support the employee and supervisor and/or manager in addressing reasons for non-performance. However, normal good management principles and disciplinary action (if necessary) should be applied if non-performance continues.

### **10.2 Employee's rights and responsibilities**

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- Personal information concerning employee participation in the Employee Wellness Programme is maintained in a confidential manner. No information related to an employee's participation in the programme is entered into the personnel file.
- Participation in the Employee Wellness Programme shall not jeopardize an employee's job or prejudice any opportunity for promotion or advancement.
- Leave and time off should be granted in accordance with the MKM's standard policies and procedures for professional assessment, counselling and treatment.
- It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain satisfactory job performance. In the event that personal problems cause deterioration of work performance, the employee has a responsibility to obtain the necessary help to bring job performance up to an acceptable level. The Employee Wellness Programme offers a means to obtain this help.

### **10.3 Managers' and supervisors' responsibilities**

- Address work performance problems through normal supervisory procedures.
- Be consistent and treat employees fairly.
- Make employees aware of the agreed job performance standards, Labour Relations Policy and/or Employee Wellness Programme in instances where declining job performance has been determined.
- Do not attempt to diagnose personal problems of the employee or offer a personal opinion.
- Ensure early identification, management and referral of troubled employees.
- Provide follow-up and support to employees upon return to work, if appropriate.
- Do not require the employee to divulge the nature of the problem when requesting leave or time off for an appointment with Employee Wellness Programme Professional/s. If necessary, the employee can provide verification of attendance through the Employee Wellness Programme Manager/Coordinator.
- Maintain a strict level of confidentiality with all cases.

#### 10.4 EWP Manager/Coordinator's responsibilities

- To correctly position the EWP within the MKM in order to optimise its benefit.

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- Ensure continued promotion and awareness of the Employee Wellness Programme within the MKM and all its divisions and sites.
- Develop action plans in conjunction with the relevant components in the MKM, for the implementation and acceptance of the programme within the MKM.
- Coordinate and maintain a strong working alliance between supervisors, staff representatives, employees and the Employee Wellness Programme.
- Interpret all the utilisation statistics and design and implement appropriate proactive intervention action plans.
- Coordinate the training of supervisors and managers in the identification, management and referral of employees.

- Ensure that the Employee Wellness Programme continues to meet the needs of the employees within all divisions/departments/sites of the organisation and that the Employee Wellness Programme develops over time to reflect the changing needs of the MKM.
- Facilitate the regular review of the Employee Wellness Programme services to enable evaluation in terms of efficiency, professionalism and outcome.
- Be aware of organisational issues and themes, which may affect the Employee Wellness Programme (e.g. a restructuring of the organisation is pending) and their implications for the business.
- Monitor and coordinate the Employee Wellness Programme budget to ensure value for money.
- Submit written reports on the progress and activities of the Employee Wellness Programme.

#### **11. EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME GUIDELINES**

11.1 Employees or their immediate families are encouraged to approach the Employee Wellness Unit if they realise that they have personal problems that could be addressed through the assistance of the Employee Wellness Programme.

11.2 Managers, supervisors, co-workers and family members are urged to encourage others to use the programme, but an individual's participation is voluntary.

11.3 The Employee Wellness Programme is a company benefit. There is no charge to employees for making use of the programme. Employees will be

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responsible for the long-term treatment such as rehabilitation. The Employee Wellness Programme will make every effort to assist those needing help.

11.4 If costs are to be incurred for rehabilitation, these costs will be the responsibility of the employee. The Employee Wellness Programme Coordinator

will notify the employee or immediate family member in advance if it is anticipated that the referrals will incur additional costs.

11.5 Employees and their immediate families will be eligible for face to face consultation after an initial needs assessment has been conducted by the

Employee Wellness Professional. The assessment will determine the appropriate interventions, which may include a maximum of six (6) face-to-face consultations per case.

#### 11.6 Prevention of Abuse of EWP

Employees and participating parties as well as management should not abuse the programme. An employee, who defaults, refuses to comply with counselling or does not keep appointments, may be removed from the programme and the costs of therapy or treatment incurred by the MKM will be recovered from the concerned employee. Participation in the EWP will not affect the employee's employment or career development. On the other hand, employee's participation in the programme will not protect the employee from disciplinary action for continued poor work performance or misconduct. Supervisors and managers should not, under any circumstances prevent employees from utilizing the services of EWP.

#### 11.7 Early identification of potential challenges

Early identification of the following symptoms by the manager/supervisor/colleagues/family or friends can be of importance. Such symptoms might be:

- Absenteeism: Mondays and Fridays, poor timekeeping, unplanned leave, long tea and lunch breaks
- Frequent sick leave with no sick note
- Irregular work performance, carelessness, forgetfulness
- Emotional outbursts, aggression, over reaction to criticism
- Social withdrawal
- Missing deadlines and appointments
- Frequent accident or injury reports
- Rigid resistance to change

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## **12. THE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME REFERRAL PROCEDURE**

12.1 Access to the Employee Wellness Programme can either be self-initiated or employer initiated. The decision to seek assistance through the Employee Wellness Programme is always voluntary.

12.2 The contact details of the Employee Wellness Coordinator/counsellor can be

obtained from the Employee Wellness Unit

12.3 Internal referrals:

There are three (3) internal referral systems:

- Voluntary referral;
- Informal referral; and
- Formal manager and/or supervisor referral.

12.3.1 Voluntary referral (self initiated)

An employee recognizes that a problem exists and seeks assistance by calling the Employee Wellness Programme Co-coordinator/Counsellor directly. This may have resulted from a process of self-realization or from a family member, friend or co-worker sharing concern for the employee and informally suggesting the use of the Employee Wellness Programme. The employee has the right to seek assistance or information for his/her concern through self-motivation or self-recognition.

Procedure for voluntary referral:

The employee in this category can contact the Employee Wellness Unit to arrange for an appointment. The employee needs to notify in advance his or her immediate manager and/or supervisor of his or her whereabouts.

12.3.2 Informal referral (employer initiated)

An employee may bring a personal or emotional issue to the supervisor or manager's attention (either explicitly or implicitly). The supervisor and/or manager is not equipped to handle the situation appropriately and must encourage employees to get appropriate professional support to resolve the issue/s. These referrals are treated with strict confidentiality. The employee's

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manager or supervisor will not be informed of the nature of the problem unless the employee requests this to happen. The employee is responsible for obtaining approval for any required time -off associated with the use of the Employee Wellness Programme.

Procedure for informal referral:

- Ask the employee what help or assistance you as a supervisor or manager can render to assist him/her.

- Ask the employee what help or support he/she currently has with their issue.
- Remind him/her of the Employee Wellness Programme and its benefits and why it may be appropriate for him/her to call. The manager or supervisor is not required to call the Employee Wellness Unit or Service Provider, but should ask the employee to tell the Employee Wellness Coordinator/Counsellor that their supervisor or manager has recommended the service.

### 12.3.3 Formal manager/supervisor referral (employer initiated)

The manager or supervisor is responsible to address with the employee deteriorating work performance, motivation or behavioural relationship and provide guidance to help the employee improve work performance. By means of the formal referral, the employee is encouraged to seek help with and resolve the issue so that it will not continue to undermine performance. An employee accepts responsibility for keeping job performance at a preestablished acceptable level. If job performance does not improve or shows continuing deterioration, then the manager or supervisor may initiate a formal offer of assistance.

This is a referral where a personal and/or work related problem has affected job performance and disciplinary action may be pending. With reference to this form of referral, the Employee Wellness Programme does not aim to replace discipline but it is a supportive method of correcting poor performance at the workplace.

Procedure for formal referral:

- Before speaking to the employee, the supervisor or manager must discuss first with the Manager/Coordinator EWP regarding the appropriateness of making a formal referral and how it links with the organisation's policies and procedures.

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- The supervisor or manager should also discuss the pros and cons of making formal referral. The Manager/Co-coordinator will provide guidelines on how to proceed with the formal referral.



- Once it has been determined that a formal referral would be an appropriate intervention, the manager/supervisor must set aside time to have a private interview with the employee.
- The manager/supervisor must explain to the employee that a formal referral will be made. Discuss the reasons for the formal referral and agree with the employee that the formal referral is acceptable.
- The manager/supervisor must explain the feedback process to the employee. It is important to explain that the referrer will receive limited feedback i.e. the referrer will not be entitled to get any content feedback, unless the employee consents to the sharing of this information.
- The manager/supervisor should call the Employee Wellness Unit/Service Provider to make the formal referral.
- The counsellor who answers the phone will note the supervisor's or manager's details and information about the employee and the formal referral.
- A case is opened under the employee's name. The supervisor's or manager's details will be captured as the referrer's details on the same case.
- The referral form (Annexure A) should be faxed to the Co-ordinator and marked clearly for the attention of the counsellor, the supervisor or manager spoke to earlier.
- A case number will be given to the supervisor or manager as a reference number.
- The manager/supervisor should then inform the employee that the formal referral has been made. Provide the employee with the case number, which must be quoted when the employee makes contact with the Employee Wellness Unit/Service Provider.
- The manager/supervisor should explain to the employee that he/she is given seven (7) days in which to make contact with the Employee wellness Unit. The employee's decision to make contact with the Employee Wellness Unit centre/Service Provider remains voluntary.
- If the employee calls the Unit or Service Provider, the referral number must be quoted. An assessment will be done and the case will be handed over to a case manager. The case manager will arrange

counselling for the employee and advise the supervisor or manager that the employee has contacted the Unit/Service Provider.

- If the employee does not call within seven days, the case manager will contact the supervisor or manager to inform him/her thereof. The case will then be closed.

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- Once the therapy process is complete, the case manager will contact the supervisor or manager to provide him/her with the process information about the intervention that was undertaken with the employee and a report will be forwarded to the supervisor or manager.

#### 12.4 External referrals:

À Unions may also recommend informal referral of employees who are faced with challenges, however Employee Wellness does not replace the responsibilities of the Unions.

#### 12.5 Take note:

- Remember contacting the Employee Wellness Unit remains a voluntary act on the part of the employee.
- Using the formal referral cannot be used against the employee for any disciplinary measure.
- The informal and formal referral does not replace the requirements and responsibilities for sound management practices and principles to be demonstrated.

### **13 STAKEHOLDERS**

The following constitute the stakeholders for the EWP:

À Management

À Supervisors

À Employees

À Union Representatives

À Employee Wellness Practitioners

### **14 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

The directives in this Policy derive their mandate from the following:

À The Constitution of South Africa

À The Public Service Act, 1994

À The Labour Relations Act, 1995

À The Employment of Educators Act, 1998

À The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1998

À The Employment Equity Act, 1995

À The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993

À The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Disease Act, 1993

À The PSCBC Resolution 12 of 1999

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À The Domestic Violence Act, 1998

À The Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act

À The Constitution and Principles of the Employee Assistance Professional Association Board (EAPA-SA)

À The Code of Conduct for the Public Service

## **15. FEEDBACK AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

15.1 The Employee Wellness Co-ordinator will give quarterly feedback to the organisation.

## **16. IMPLEMENTATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

16.1 This policy is implemented on the date of approval.

### **RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED**

DIRECTOR: OHRD

DATE:

### **RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED**

CHIEF DIRECTOR: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

DATE:

### **RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED**

ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

DATE:

### **APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED**

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

DATE:

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