

A
SPORT TO
BE PROUD
OF



FOREWORD

Over the last 50 years, tennis has played a visible role in advancing LGBTQ+ inclusion and diversity, with trailblazers like Billie Jean King paving the way for athletes to thrive as their authentic selves.

We are proud of being part of that progress and of the fact that we know from our data that virtually all of the audience we measure across tennis and padel – from colleagues, to coaches, and down to players – are reflective of this diversity. We recognise, though, that the experience of all LGBTQ+ individuals in tennis and padel, especially where that intersects with other under-represented communities, is not the same and challenges remain. We are committed to listening, learning, and working together with LGBTQ+ communities to ensure that tennis and padel continue to be seen as open and inclusive for all as well as ensuring that everyone's experience is truly in line with the ambition set out in our EDI Plan, to foster a sense of belonging for all communities.

Over recent years, we have strengthened our efforts to reflect the diversity of the communities around us and to demonstrate that tennis and padel are welcoming spaces for all. We have worked closely with representative groups, in particular Pride in Tennis, to celebrate LGBTQ+ visibility with pride at our Major Events; to co-create the 'Rally Allies' programme for tennis and padel venues providing greater understanding of how to foster LGBTQ+ inclusive environments across tennis and padel; and to discuss the content of this plan to ensure we are addressing the right issues.

As we move forward, we will continue our work to ensure that tennis and padel are welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals, spaces where

they can thrive and develop within the sport as their authentic selves, and spaces where there is no room for discriminatory behaviour. We will continue to listen to and work with LGBTQ+ communities to ensure everyone feels they can belong in our sport.

Scott Lloyd
Chief Executive



OUR AMBITION



**TO ENSURE EVERYONE
CAN BRING THEIR
AUTHENTIC SELVES TO
TENNIS AND PADEL,
IN AN ENVIRONMENT
WHERE THEY FEEL
SAFE, RESPECTED AND
ABLE TO BELONG.**



OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

In just a few years, working with the LGBTQ+ community, we've moved from setting intent to delivering visible, meaningful action across the sport.

Launch of the LTA's first-ever Inclusion Strategy, explicitly championing LGBTQ+ communities as a core part of our commitment to create a culture of inclusion.

Inception of Friday Pride Days at LTA Grass Court events, starting with Queen's Championships, Nottingham Open and the Eastbourne International.

Developed 'Rally Allies' training in collaboration with Pride in Tennis and Leap Sport Scotland.

Support provided to deliver the inaugural Pride Tennis Cup at the Lexus Nottingham Tennis Centre.

LTA Tennis Foundation funds Pride in Tennis to deliver the Rally Allies programme across Counties, Venues and Workforce.

Friday Pride Days at LTA Grass Court events fully integrated, in partnership with the LTA Tennis Foundation, raising funds for projects supporting under-represented communities.



2021

2022

2023

2024

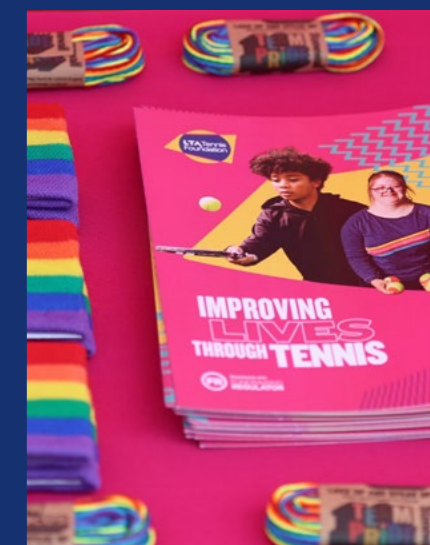
2025

Launch of Pride in Tennis at the National Tennis Centre during LGBTQ+ History Month.



Venues start to host their own LGBTQ+ Pride events to create safer and more welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ tennis communities.

At the annual LTA Awards, Pride in Tennis co-founder, Ian Pearson-Brown received the LTA President's Award and Finsbury Park – Access to Sports won 'Park Venue of the Year' for their LGBTQ+ job-sters sessions.



STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Tennis is widely considered one of the most gay-friendly sports, frequently ranked as the most welcoming to LGBTQ+ players and spectators in surveys. It is known for its high level of lesbian, gay, and queer representation, particularly in the women's game, and has a history of high-profile, out role models such as Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova.

Tennis is seen as one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly sport, with 10% of our player base being LGBTQ+.

Lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to play tennis than other women, though participation is slightly lower among gay and bisexual men compared to other men.

Studies show that visible allyship and representation (e.g., Pride in Tennis initiatives, visible safe spaces) build trust and encourage participation.



Ten of the twelve audience groups we measure and report the diversity of through our EDI Plan – including coaches, volunteers, officials and colleagues – show LGBTQ+ representation at or above the level of the Census data for LGBTQ+ people in the population.

A 2019 “Pride in Our Workforce” study found that LGBTQ+ communities care less about the qualifications of a coach than that they are approachable, inclusive, and safe. Inclusion is fully integrated into our workforce learning pathway at all levels.

LGBTQ-specific sports clubs – such as the one highlighted in our case study, the North London Lob-sters – significantly improve psychological well-being, self-esteem, and social connectedness, countering stress for under-represented groups.

FURTHER TO GO

We want to build on these foundations to ensure that tennis and padel remain the most inclusive sports for LGBTQ+ communities. There are some key factors we need to take into account though in working towards this goal. These include:

20% of sport fans think anti-LGBTQ+ language is harmless if it's just meant as banter.

33% of LGBTQ+ people who participate or follow sport are not out to anyone in their sporting life.

While there are numerous players on the WTA and ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tours who are openly part of LGBTQ+ communities, only a very small number of players on the ATP Tour have felt comfortable to come out.

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ youth participate in sports at much lower rates (20–29%) compared to their peers (68%), largely due to fear of discrimination, unsafe environments, and lack of visible representation.



Nearly 80% of young people who identify as LGBTQ+ are not out to their sports coach, and 11% report feeling unsafe in changing spaces.

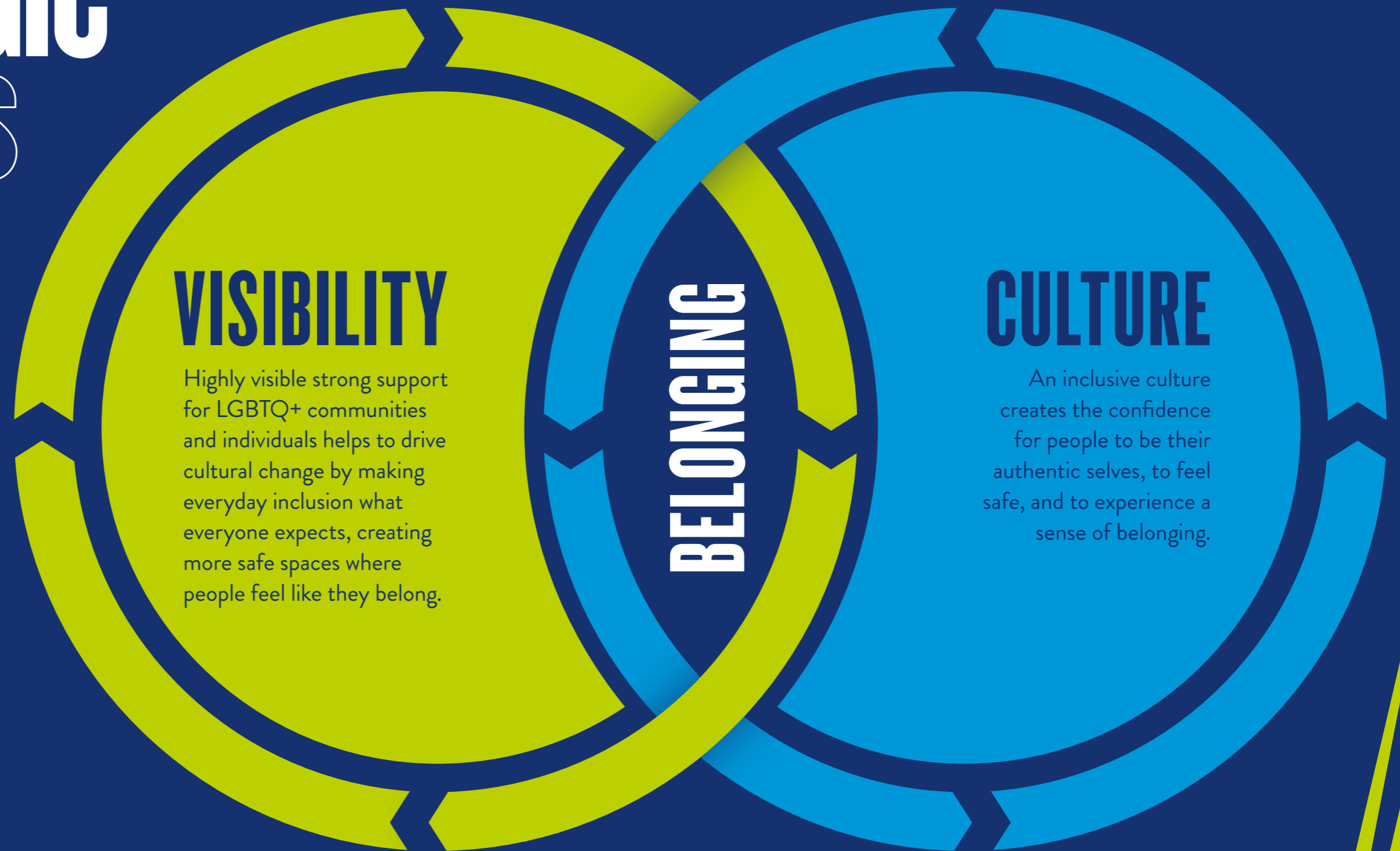
We know that the changes we made to our Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals Policy, and the broader changes happening across government and sport, mean that some Transgender and Non-Binary players will feel less able to enjoy tennis and padel than they did before.

While the Policy is necessary to ensure competitive fairness, we want to continue to work with them to ensure that Transgender and Non-Binary players always feel that they have a place in tennis and padel, and feel like they belong.

STRATEGIC THEMES

To keep tennis and padel at the forefront of making sport more LGBTQ+ friendly, we are going to concentrate on two key areas:

- Ensuring our support for LGBTQ+ communities and individuals is **VISIBLE AND UNEQUIVOCAL**.
- Ensuring the **CULTURE OF TENNIS AND PADEL** is welcoming and inclusive for LGBTQ+ communities and individuals.



WHERE THE PLAN FITS

<p>VISION</p>	<p>TENNIS OPENED UP</p>				
<p>MISSION</p>	<p>TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TENNIS</p>				
<p>INCLUSION AMBITION</p>	<p>Everyone in our sport understands that inclusion is central to our Vision and they confidently choose to be inclusive every day</p>		<p>People playing, working and volunteering in, and watching our sport will reflect the diversity of our communities and feel a sense of belonging</p>		
<p>CROSS CUTTING THEMES</p>	<p>Enabling a culture of everyday inclusion and belonging</p>	<p>Understanding and connecting communities to tennis and padel</p>		<p>Driving a more diverse and inclusive workforce</p>	
<p>COMMUNITY PLANS</p>					
<p>VALUES</p>	 <p>EXCELLENCE</p>	 <p>PASSION</p>	 <p>INCLUSION</p>	 <p>INTEGRITY</p>	 <p>TEAMWORK</p>



VISIBILITY

We will ensure our support for LGBTQ+ communities and individuals is visible and unequivocal by:

1

CONTINUING TO USE OUR MAJOR EVENTS,

and always looking for new opportunities across the tennis and padel landscape, but also outside it, to ensure visible support for LGBTQ+ communities through the celebration of Pride.

2

ENSURING LGBTQ+ FOCUSED STORIES ARE GIVEN GREATER VISIBILITY

across LTA media, communication and social platforms throughout the year, celebrating role models, highlighting lived experiences, and showcasing progress within tennis and padel.

3

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LGBTQ+ FOCUSED ORGANISATIONS

within and outside tennis and padel, including the growing number of LGBTQ+ clubs and the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance (GLTA), to grow LGBTQ+ focused participation and competitive opportunities.

4

CONTINUING TO WORK WITH PRIDE IN TENNIS

and venues to identify opportunities to build long-term partnerships with local LGBTQ+ focused organisations, in order to bring communities together and create more visible, specifically LGBTQ+ friendly venues.

5

ENSURING WE HAVE IN PLACE APPROPRIATE AND VISIBLE SUPPORT FOR PERFORMANCE PLAYERS,

if they choose to come out publicly, making sure players know that we will always support their choices in relation to their sexuality.

6

IMPROVING THE VISIBILITY WITHIN THE LTA AND WITH MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF OUR WORK TO SUPPORT LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES,

both to help attract, recruit and retain workforce from LGBTQ+ communities, and to improve knowledge and understanding of issues affecting those communities.

CASE STUDY - VISIBILITY

NORTH LONDON LOB-STERS

The LTA Tennis Foundation invested nearly £100k over three years into Access to Sport's "Tennis for All" initiative.

Part of this project was the progression of the North London Lob-sters LGBTQ+ tennis group. Its mission is simple yet powerful and fits perfectly with the LTA's overarching EDI Plan and the intent behind this LGBTQ+ Plan: to create a safe, welcoming space where LGBTQ+ players and allies can enjoy tennis without fear of judgment. What began as a small grassroots effort has grown into a thriving community with over 400 registered players and multiple weekly sessions catering to all skill levels. The group emphasises inclusion, friendship, and mental well-being, making tennis accessible to

those who may feel otherwise unwelcome in traditional sports club environments.

Beyond regular coaching and social play, the Lob-sters have become a visible force for change across tennis in London. They host inter-club tournaments with other LGBTQ+ tennis groups such as the Brighton based group, BLAGS, participate in Pride in Tennis events, and recently competed in the Pride Tennis Cup, showcasing how sport can better connect LGBTQ+ communities. Their efforts were recognised nationally by the LTA when they were winners of



the "Connecting Communities" Award in 2023, an achievement celebrated with a visit from Paralympic medallist wheelchair tennis player, Lucy Shuker, who is herself a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

LTA Tennis Foundation support for the project has enabled the impact of the Lob-sters to extend far beyond the court. Members speak of finding confidence, friendship, and a sense of belonging—particularly those who previously avoided mainstream clubs due to fear of discrimination. By prioritising fun and social connection over competitiveness, the group lowers barriers and encourages participation from beginners and seasoned players alike.



Coming and seeing initiatives that are being set up and getting everyone playing no matter where you're from, what ethnic background, what sexual orientation - I just think it's awesome to see things happening and getting more people in tennis.

Lucy Shuker, GB Women's Wheelchair Tennis Player



CULTURE

We will ensure the culture of tennis and padel is welcoming and inclusive for LGBTQ+ communities and individuals by:

1

CONTINUING TO CREATE SAFE, WELCOMING, AND INCLUSIVE SPACES

across tennis and padel by embedding inclusion as a core standard, supported through training, resources, and a network of venues specifically championing LGBTQ+ inclusive best practice.

2

EQUIPPING LEADERS ACROSS THE SPORT TO EMBED A ZERO-TOLERANCE APPROACH

to anti-LGBTQ+ behaviour, in all its forms.

3

DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF AND ENGAGEMENT WITH LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

by conducting further research into perceptions of our sport, motivations to play and be part of the workforce, and barriers to accessing all elements of tennis and padel. Also ensuring we learn from other sports and sectors, developing a clear picture of what best practice looks like.

4

WORKING WITH REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS AND PARTNERS SUCH AS PRIDE IN TENNIS

to co-create targeted LGBTQ+ specific initiatives where they will help drive participation by and inclusion of LGBTQ+ communities.

5

ENHANCING OUR DATA COLLECTION

on sexual orientation, gender identity and other intersecting characteristics, wherever possible, to identify gaps in LGBTQ+ representation in tennis and padel.

6

STRENGTHENING OUR EDI TRAINING FRAMEWORK

for coaches, officials and volunteers by integrating co-developed LGBTQ+ focused inclusion training.



CASE STUDY - CULTURE

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO ENABLE A CULTURE OF INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Rally Allies – educating stakeholders in tennis and padel on LGBTQ+ inclusion in tennis.

In 2023, we identified a knowledge gap around how tennis and padel venues and organisations could meaningfully engage with LGBTQ+ communities. To address this, we developed a new educational workshop aimed at shifting perceptions, building confidence, and equipping our Member Associations and venues to create welcoming and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ people.

Working in collaboration with Pride in Tennis and LEAP Sports Scotland, and supported by funding from the LTA Tennis Foundation, we launched Rally Allies, an initiative designed to help County Associations, tennis and padel

venues, and their workforce embed LGBTQ+ inclusion into everyday practice.

Through education on key issues – such as the barriers LGBTQ+ people face in accessing tennis and padel, and the practical steps to become an LGBTQ+ ally – the programme empowers tennis and padel stakeholders to take visible, positive action. This includes hosting Pride Days and other inclusive events which signal to the local communities that tennis and padel is a sport where everyone belongs.

With over 150 venues already having completed the training, our goal is now to scale this further and increase the number of venues showing visible support for LGBTQ+ communities, creating safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for people accessing tennis and padel opportunities.



Kent Tennis delivered the Rally Allies training at its Venue Coffee Morning in June 2025, sparking a stronger focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion for 2026. The county is now supporting clubs with small grants to run local Pride events, including an LGBTQ+ evening at Margate LTC and a new intergenerational Pride event in Sheppey, bringing together Over 60s and youth groups. This is Tennis Opened Up in action.

Nigel Jordan, Chair of Kent Tennis





LTA

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