

A scenic sunset over a lake with a fence and trees in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water and sky. A black metal fence runs across the middle ground, and a large tree trunk is visible on the right side. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and some clouds.

south manchester
credit union

YOUR ANNUAL

REPORT 2023

Photo taken by Francesca

WHO ARE WE?

Our mission and values

We are a member-owned organisation that works within South Manchester's communities to provide affordable loans and convenient savings. Being run by like-minded local people, we treat our members as individuals, not overcharging those with a poor credit history and keeping our community-first ethos at the front of everything we do.

Our Mission

We are here to provide a secure and professional service that encourages saving and offers loans to our members. We are different because we:

- Run the credit union ourselves and are here for everyone in our community
 - Keep local money within our local economy
 - Reach out to people who need us the most
- Work with financially vulnerable people to find financial wellbeing
 - Focus particularly on our young people

Quality



Excellence is our goal

Cooperation



Local people helping local people

Ethics



Trustworthy, open and fair

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

A timeline of the last financial year



October 1st

October 2021 saw the launch of the first ever Credit Union Awareness Month. Our #HowsYourBalance campaign aimed to get people talking about money and credit unions.



May 14th

We went on a team trip to the WOW event in Blackpool. After all, who doesn't love the seaside.



July 5th

Our very own Sheenagh was invited to the House of Commons to speak about credit unions.



July 18th

From South Manchester to Glasgow! We made a trip up to the World Council of Credit Unions conference.



September 9th

We love seeing how creative our members can be in our competitions, so a music competition was always on the cards. You didn't disappoint when we asked for your favourite song and why.

February 11th

In February, we honoured our credit union pioneers. Our pioneer celebration event took place at Cloud 23, where we treated them to afternoon tea.



May 19th

Later in May, we took a trip across to Ireland to visit our friends at Donore Credit Union. We love working with other credit unions.



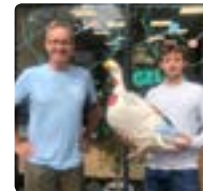
July 7th

After 17 years of dedicated service to the credit union world, Sandra retired. Good luck Sandra and all the best in your future endeavours.



August 30th

A surprise new member of the credit union family joined us in August - everyone's favourite goose, Bella.



SAVE WITH YOUR CREDIT UNION

Open Savings

- Give yourself financial peace of mind knowing you have extra money tucked away
- Grow your savings with a limit of one withdrawal per month
- Regularly deposit into your account through standing order or one-off deposits
- Easily access your savings through our mobile app, Nivo

Locked Savings

- Build these savings during your credit union journey
- You pledge these savings towards your loan
- Your locked savings are invested back into the community to provide fair and affordable loans to the people of South Manchester

PrizeSaver

- Win up to £5,000 just by saving every month
- There are also 20 prizes of £20 every month
- We are one of just 15 credit unions that offer this savings account



Christmas Club

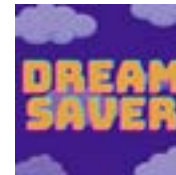
- A savings account that will help you spread the cost of Christmas
- You can withdraw your Christmas Club savings from 1st November, right up until the big day
- You are entered into a yearly Christmas Club draw with a top prize of £50

Young Saver

- A Young Saver account is for members up to the age of 16
- This account helps children understand the value of saving
- Young Savers receive a free piggy bank when they open an account

Dream Saver

- Hold onto your dreams and work towards them with our all new Dream Saver account
- Set your goal and tell us what you're saving for, and lock these savings until you've made your dream come true
- We can help you manage your goals and deposits along the way



DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Teresa's Story

Here at South Manchester Credit Union, there have been dreams and aspirations in the air ever since the launch of our latest savings account, Dream Saver. The account is designed to help you reach your dreams, but what of the dreams that have already come to life? Well this is one of those stories; this is a story of love, heat, and cars.

New Beginnings

Teresa and Kenneth met, and soon after, Kenneth asked Teresa to join him on a holiday to Florida. On the way home, Kenneth was delighted to hear Teresa ask if they were booking again for next year.

From then on, it was written in the stars, and the couple returned to Florida in 2013, this time leaving as newlyweds. The holiday kicked off with a bottle of champagne on the plane - only right! The day of the wedding saw Teresa's daughter shuttling people from where they were staying to the picturesque location of their wedding.

They were wed under a beautiful gazebo surrounded by friends, family, and show cars. However, the trip wasn't always smooth sailing, with the Florida sun causing Teresa to suffer with sun sickness; they did not let this get them down.

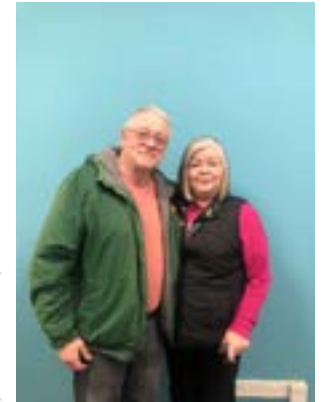
Both Teresa and Kenneth are long-time members here. Teresa first heard of us in 2010, through her previous role as a housing officer for Southway Housing Trust.

"Credit unions are a good way out of trouble situations such as debt and arrears"

Being a member here was an important factor for the couple achieving their dream wedding.

"We couldn't have done it without low priced loans where you can save at the same time. It was fantastic"

It makes us so happy to see and hear about the impact our credit union can have on people. You will be glad to hear that the story hasn't ended yet, as Teresa and Kenneth are returning to Florida next year. We hope the weather is good for them and that many new memories will be made.



BORROW FROM YOUR CREDIT UNION

Welcome Loan

- You can apply to borrow between £150 and £700
- Your first Welcome Loan application will be assessed within 2 working days
- Interest is charged at APR 42.6%

Family Loan

- This loan is for members who receive Child Benefit
- You can apply to borrow between £300 and £700 depending on how much Child Benefit you receive
- The interest is set at APR 42.6%.

Saver Loan

- For our loyal members, who have been with us for a year, we reward you with a lower rate of interest at APR 26.8%
- Borrow up to your bespoke credit level (up to £3,000)
- Apply to refinance up to 4 times a year between 1st October and 30th September



Scan the code to apply over
our messaging app, Nivo

Smart Loan

- You can apply to borrow between £1,000 and £15,000
- Applications are processed within five working days
- Interest is charged from 14% APR
- This is a popular alternative to car finance for members wanting to own their car from day one.

Southway Solutions Loan

- This loan is for members who are tenants of Southway Housing
- You can apply to borrow up to £300
- The interest is charged at APR 42.6%

Green Loan

- Apply to borrow up to £15,000 to make sustainable changes to your life
- Interest is charged from 10.5% APR
- For every loan, we'll plant a tree locally
- Save energy and make your lifestyle greener and more sustainable

T&Cs apply to all loan products

All loan interest is charged daily on the reducing balance

THE FINAL JOURNEY

Lisa's Story

Lisa came to us because her brother had taken his own life, suffering from mental health and becoming a victim of his mind. Lisa didn't have the finances for a funeral and desperately needed financial support to say goodbye to him, otherwise, Lisa's brother would have a pauper's funeral where no one could attend.

"When my mam and dad passed I didn't care about anything"

Belonging to a close family, losing both of her parents had a huge impact and sent Lisa into a downward spiral, along with her finances. Debt mounted up and she was soon threatened with eviction; her choices resulted in a crippled credit score – hurting her accessibility to safe credit.

Thankfully, Lisa was able to start to get her life back on track. She set up payment plans and was able to avoid eviction. Although Lisa was moving forward, it meant that her disposable income had decreased due to repaying her debt.

Lisa lost herself in depression, coming close to taking her own life, but the thought of leaving her little girls behind saved her, and she was strong enough to seek help and get into a better mental space. Although Lisa had a clearer mind, finances



were still an obstacle; she was unable to receive the support she truly needed.

"The credit union was like my guardian angel"

Lisa had skimped some funds together but it wasn't enough. Having already asked for an advance on her benefits, and due to her credit score, she thought there was nowhere else to turn. When it seemed all hope was lost, Lisa's friend told her about the credit union and said that we may be able to help.

After learning about Lisa's situation, we were able to look beyond her past and see the person. Lisa's loan relieved a lot of stress and meant that she could continue bettering her financial position, as well as having a funeral for her brother.

We were able to work quickly to ensure Lisa could say goodbye to her brother. She was overjoyed that she was able to provide her brother with a funeral. Lisa joked, "You'd have thought I was going to a party not a funeral".

With the funds from the loan and the perseverance of Lisa, her brother was surrounded by those who loved him for his final journey.

CHRISTMAS COMPETITION 2022

Winner and photo gallery

Winter is one of the most picturesque times of the year, and you've proven us right, with your entries to this year's winter photo competition blowing us away.

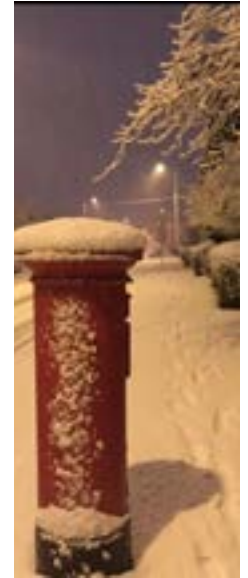
From wintry views to children in the snow, from the beauty of South Manchester to Christmas fun! Finding a winner took a lot of consideration and it wasn't easy.

It was Edyta's photo (below) of the deer wandering through Tatton Park on a snowy morning that won us over. It's not just Edyta's magical wintry morning photo you'll get to see here though. We've put together two mini galleries, to the

right and on the back cover, so you can take a look at some of the other fantastic entries into this competition; even the front cover of this very report was an entry.

This competition was a true reflection on what South Manchester and the winter season has to offer. It displayed to us what this time of year means to people, whether it be looking out onto the frosty scenery, or spending quality time with loved ones. We hope everyone enjoys these photos as much as we did!







Neil Martin
Local Guide · 16 reviews

★★★★★ 9 months ago

Great service from SMCU and Harry in particular really felt treated like a person rather than just a number on a computer screen. It feels like the sort of service you used to get in banks years ago. 10/10 would recommend and look forward to dealing with them again



Tracey O'Neill
3 reviews

★★★★★ 9 months ago

Fabulous! If there were 10 stars they would achieve them all! Been a fabulous service to me - from the first time I applied, then today they have enabled me to deal with a personal nightmare within 2 hours - excellent service and staff ❤️ Yet again SMCU have helped me out, just wish they could help with the weather 😊👍 thank you!



Urs Marley
1 review

★★★★★ 1 month ago

I have been with credit union for over 12 months now and I cannot give them enough praise and credit for how much they have helped make my situations that much easier, especially in these more difficult times that a lot of us are experiencing. I have nothing but admiration and good things to say, regarding the help that they offer to me and anyone that finds they need a bit of support, at last I have some decent savings put aside during the not so stable times that may be ahead. Thank you all at SMCU!



Maggie Whitham
3 reviews

★★★★★ 8 months ago

Extremely helpful staff. Make everything so easy and stress free. Very quick responses to any queries I have.



John Gilgram
Local Guide · 236 reviews

★★★★★ 10 months ago

Excellent way of saving the smallest amount regularly or every now and then. Good way of being able to afford those bigger items that are out of reach at an easy affordable rate. Keeps the sharks away from your door.



Kelsey Howell
1 review

★★★★★ 1 month ago

Excellent and reliable service I've had my account with South Manchester Credit Union for nearly 13 years now it helps me out so much! The staff have always been so friendly. The app is great and so quick and easy to use... highly recommended 🙌

C Charlene Hamilton
1 review

★★★★★ 4 months ago

I have been a member with credit union for a while now. Being a member of a union can help you save money and enable you to better understand and manage your finances. They keep you up to date with all financial news, and how best to help yourself and family. Not only that but they have loans that are affordable, easy to understand and manage, with no hidden surprises.

The team are fantastic, very friendly, understanding, efficient and very knowledgeable.

I would highly recommend to all who have not yet used them.

C Chloe White
2 reviews

★★★★★ 2 months ago

Staff are always warm and friendly, and genuinely seem to care about your plans and goals.

They're always looking for ways to help the community too. I've been with them for 8 years, and I'm so glad.

b Benjamins180
Local Guide · 60 reviews

★★★★★ 8 months ago

Excellent service from start to finish, a genuine not for profit organisation run with the perfect mixture of care and professionalism.

L Lee Calver
3 reviews

★★★★★ 6 months ago

I couldn't be happier with my experiences with South Manchester Credit Union. I was able to explain the reason for my loan (moving home and a change of career) and myself and the staff were able to come to a repayment scheme that is manageable and fair. I am in a better position thanks to them, and recommend them wholeheartedly!

H Herfa Miller
Local Guide · 54 reviews

★★★★★ 3 months ago

South Manchester Credit Union is my life line (can't have ALWAYS banded to in many most difficult times. From my son was in nursery (now in uni), times of bereavement, divorce, redecoration, get away...I know I can always turn them when in need 🙏🙏🙏




OUR CREDIT UNION NUMBERS

As at 30th September 2022

Active members

4,582



 Christmas club members **187**

Young savers **151**
Young savings
£119,957

Member loans

£2,764,708

60.5%



Of members borrowing

Adult savers

4,104

Adult savings

£3,888,166



We've supported our community with over £27,500,000 in loans since 2000.

OUR CREDIT UNION NUMBERS

During financial year 2021-22



651 New members

Loans Issued

4,840



Amount lent

£2,725,835

Total income

£572,551



Total expenditure

£538,965

Savings deposited

£3,018,298



Adult savings growth

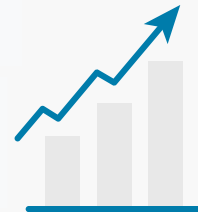
1.8%

Loan book growth

16.5%

Adult member growth

5.7%



BOARD REPORT

Mike Connolly, Chair

Often, small groups of local people working together achieve remarkable things. Your credit union Board of Directors are one such small group of volunteers. We like to make things work and we want this credit union to work in our community.

My role as chair, is to help steer the credit union through the cost of living crisis. We lend your money to local people at fair and affordable rates. This helps them have personal control in their lives. We compete for attention with predatory lenders who exploit and bully people in South Manchester. This inspires us to help people just for the pleasure of being a part of the solution. We also love our loyal members: they pay their loans back. Which is all we ask.

Please spread the word.

The credit union could help twice as many people.

I still like to remind myself that we agreed to:

- Run the credit union ourselves for everyone in our community
- Keep local money within our local economy
- Reach out to the people who need us most
- Work with financially vulnerable people to find financial well-being
- Focus particularly on our young people

This year I want particularly to thank our former Treasurer Roland Fox for his many years of free service to our Board of Directors. He has decided to retire and we wish him very well. We are a more competent Board because of Roland. The credit union is in good shape and I salute our directors and our staff team which is led carefully and determinedly by Sheenagh Young. If you think that you can contribute to our board and volunteer to become a director, then please contact us.

CEO REPORT

Sheenagh Young, CEO

In this challenging time of rising prices and uncertainty, it's been another year of solid growth for our credit union. I thank members for their loyalty and for placing their trust in us. We want our members to look towards the future with confidence, no matter their income level. We love to see people thrive and find financial peace of mind through belonging to our credit union.

Proactive community solutions to finance worries are needed now more than ever and I am happy to lead our credit union response in partnership with Mike and our directors.

Our new marketing team asked members what else we could offer through the winter months and when the answer was monthly competitions with a £150 cash prize, we designed challenges including music playlists, photos and money saving hacks. We also developed a Cost of Living Support page on our website and a new Manc Money Matters newsletter with information and tips.

In July, we said goodbye to a long serving staff member, Sandra, and paid tribute to her contributions from 2005. It was also sad to lose Ryan Cusack, Beck, Harry and Charlotte to new roles but we have been pleased to welcome Lisa, Ryan Quinn and Sam.

Dream Saver has been launched this year following feedback from members looking for a credit union savings account to build a fund for their future hopes and goals; everything from owning their own home to a special holiday. Our Green Loan is growing in popularity and has been used for heat source pumps, electric scooters, bikes and insulation to save energy costs. We plant a tree for each loan to mark

the difference it can make in saving the planet as well as saving people money.

I have had many opportunities to represent us this year, including at the House of Commons, on BBC MoneyBox, meeting with John Glen MP and the Bishop of Manchester and I always spread the word about the power of credit unions.

Dublin's fair city was our destination in May when we went to visit Donore Credit Union to find out more about the Irish approach. Our twinning with Donore is bringing mutual benefits and learning. The credit union world conference was close to home in Glasgow this year so I was able to attend and it was refreshing to be reminded that we are part of a worldwide movement of more than 393,870,000 people from 118 countries.

Our GM Consortium of community credit unions, known as SoundPound, has gone from strength to strength this year. We recently held a roundtable event with GM Mayor, Andy Burnham, and we are getting ready to launch a new loan to help people across Greater Manchester in the current crisis. We have been working with GMCVO on an initiative to lend to social enterprises and grow the social economy across GM.

The dedication of our staff team is unique and deserves praise; we breathe life into the values we share and enjoy serving members every day here on Fog Lane. We now have nearly 600 five star Google reviews and the comments in members' own words inspire us to keep going.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30th September 2022

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Assets		
Bank and cash balances	2,027,073	2,290,482
Loans and advances to members	2,511,974	2,169,720
Tangible fixed assets	5,391	24,811
Receivables	9,201	10,599
	4,553,639	4,495,612
Liabilities		
Member's deposits	4,008,123	3,931,558
Other loan capital	17,241	18,554
Payables	56,194	106,736
	4,081,558	4,056,848
Retained earnings	472,081	438,764
	4,553,639	4,495,612

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30th September 2022

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Loan interest income	487,399	453,152
Interest paid (dividend)	-9,321	-3,747
Other Income	94,473	93,888
Total income	572,551	543,293
Staff cost	-265,162	-240,269
Impairment losses on loans to members	-108,749	-119,210
Office costs	-59,135	-52,879
Insurance	-19,424	-17,793
Marketing	-23,090	-18,861
Depreciation	-19,420	-24,025
Other Overheads	-43,985	-22,562
Total Overheads	-538,965	-495,599
Surplus before Corporation tax	33,586	47,694
Corporation tax	-269	-176
Distributable surplus	33,317	47,518

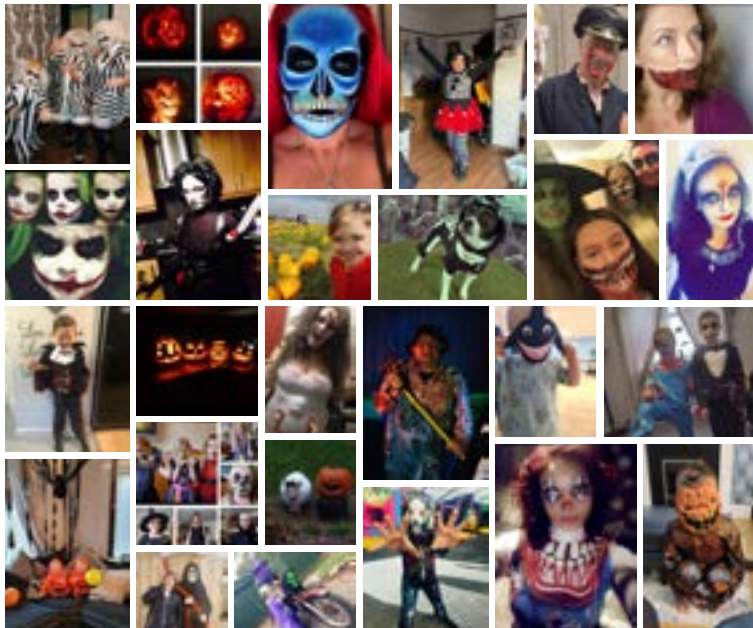
COMPETITIONS

Some of our favourites

Spooky South Manchester



For Halloween, we asked the people of South Manchester to send us their spookiest photos. Whether it was a creepy costume, mysterious makeup, or crazy pumpkins, none of the entries disappointed. Take a look at a collection of some of our favourites.



"I know my savings are being used to help people in my community"



"Because it is the one, for help and savings, my favourite place bar none"

Sounds of

In September, we asked for your meant to you. Scan the QR code to





I Love My Credit Union

For Valentine's Day, we asked our members to send us a video of why they love their credit union. You can scan the QR code below to see what they had to say.



"They never judge me and they are always willing to listen"

"You give me security and a peace of mind"



"Without you as an organisation, families like us would struggle"

"In times of need, they are there to help"

South Manchester

favourite songs and what they listen to the playlist of all the entries.



Listen to our Sounds of South Manchester playlist

Watch the Love Your Credit Union video on Facebook



COST OF LIVING EMERGENCY PLAN

The 5 step plan

The Cost of Living crisis has affected our lives for some time now. As a credit union, we are always here to help, so back in November, we launched our Cost of Living Emergency Plan. We outlined 5 key steps everyone can take, no matter your income or financial situation, to pull through the crisis and work towards long term financial security for yourself and your family.

The 5 Steps

1. Maximise Your Income

You may not be able to earn more, but there may be ways to maximise your income. Could you upskill yourself to create more earning potential? Start your own business? Investing a small amount in new equipment could create new income opportunities. Are you accessing all the benefits you are entitled to? Our online benefits calculator will help you access your benefits. Did you know 36,000 eligible households in Greater Manchester are not claiming their Pension Credit? That's a third of those who are eligible (source: GMCA).

2. Simplify Your Expenses

Take a look at your expenses and identify your key bills. Are you prioritising the right ones? We'll help you work out what you really want to spend on and ensure you prioritise them.

3. Kickstart a Savings Habit

No matter what your income, saving is a habit that you can create and, once you do, it can become very addictive. Are you encouraging your children to save too? Your credit union can help you create a savings plan to create some financial stability for your family's future. Our new Dream Saver product will help you to hold on to your dreams through the current crisis and plan well ahead for a wedding or future holiday.

4. Repair Your Credit Profile

Did you know that repairing your existing credit will help you access more affordable credit? Your credit union can help you to prepare for difficult times by refining what you have spent in the past. If you have a historic problem that is causing you stress and worry, we can help you overcome it by working with you one to one. We will work with you to look at your current financial situation and create a way forward which helps you save first and then borrow in an affordable and structured way.

5. Take Good Care of Your Mental Health

It's always important to understand you can overcome any challenge. We have resources that can help you take care of your financial anxiety. Our Wellbeing Hub and Cost of Living Support page offer support and advice, as well as details for other organisations that can help you through tough times.

COST OF LIVING EMERGENCY PLAN

What our members had to say



Winston is retired from Withington

"I always feel secure knowing my money is being looked after by the credit union as they only ever do what's best for me. They have given me complete financial peace of mind"

"The credit union has supported me through some very tough times and is now helping me to start saving for the first time. They have been my guardian angels through this cost-of-living crisis"



Lisa is a single-parent on benefits from Ardwick



Hichem is a cargo agent

"The credit union's consolidation loan meant I was able to combine all of my loan repayments from other providers into one simple package. Their helpfulness, professionalism, and positivity have made navigating this cost-of-living crisis much more straightforward"

"The credit union has been a lifeline for me. I've been able to get two car loans, as well as save up for my rainy days. They help you into a better financial position and equip you with the money management skills you need"



Kimberley is a student and working single-parent from Burnage



Joe runs his own business

"The credit union always provides a professional, friendly, five-star service. They have always showed an interest in me and my business, helping me to get a new work van to give my business the best chance at reaching it's potential, and securing my family's financial future"

MEET THE TEAM



Aimee



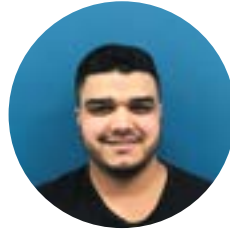
Andrea



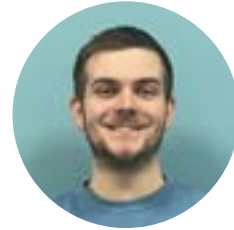
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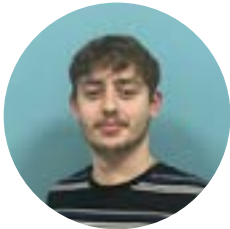
John



Raqeeb



Ryan



Sam



Sheenagh



Trish

AFFILIATIONS



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South Manchester Credit Union is authorised by the Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA) and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and the Prudential Regulation Authority. FRN 213666



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