



Connect Health

South Tyneside Community Musculoskeletal Service
Patient feedback – March 2024

healthwatch

Brief

Connect Health has been a leading provider of NHS community services since 1993, including musculoskeletal conditions, chronic pain, orthopaedics and rheumatology.

The South Tyneside Community Musculoskeletal Service brings together specialist musculoskeletal clinicians to assess, diagnose and manage conditions at six venues across the borough: Cleadon Park Primary Care Centre; Flagg Court Primary Care Centre; Harton Sports Centre; Haven Point Leisure Centre; Hebburn Central and The Glen Primary Care Centre.

The team includes specialist clinicians covering all musculoskeletal areas, who can provide a comprehensive assessment and a range of treatments and management plans in a community setting. They treat MSK conditions involving bones, joints and soft tissues.

More information about South Tyneside Community Musculoskeletal Service can be found [here](#).

Healthwatch South Tyneside was asked to conduct a patient survey to obtain feedback on the service and supply a report on its findings.



Methodology

Healthwatch South Tyneside staff and volunteers attended South Tyneside Community Musculoskeletal Service clinics at Cleadon Park Primary Care Centre on January 16 from 11am to 4pm and February 27 from 10am to 4.30pm. They also attended a clinic at Flagg Court Health Centre between 1pm and 4pm on January 9.

We met patients and asked if they would be willing to take part in a short survey in the form of a written questionnaire to provide direct feedback on their own experience of the care they have received.

32 patients* agreed to take part – 20 at Cleadon Park and 12 at Flagg Court – and this report summarises their responses.

* One patient only answered the first question about which centre they attended.

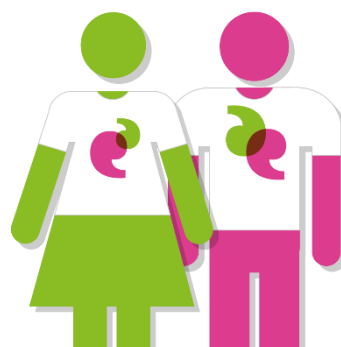


Respondent profile

Gender

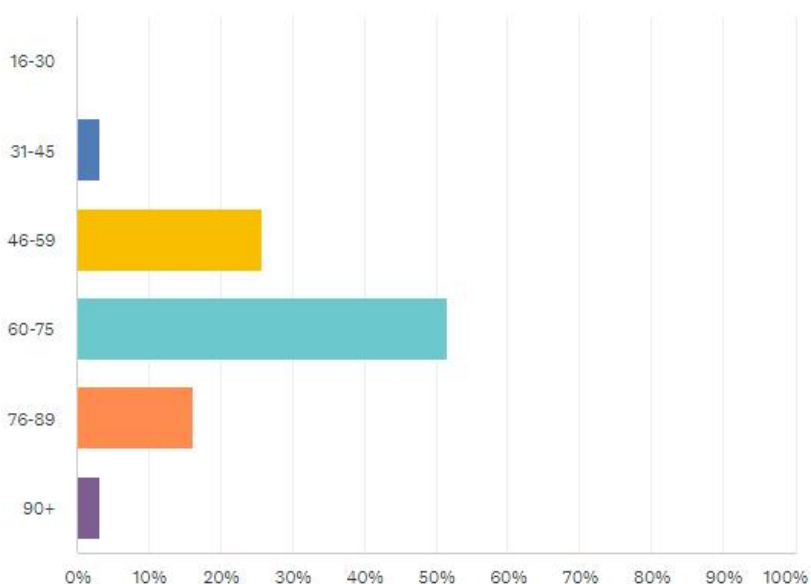
Female 71% (22)

Male 29% (9)



What is your age ?

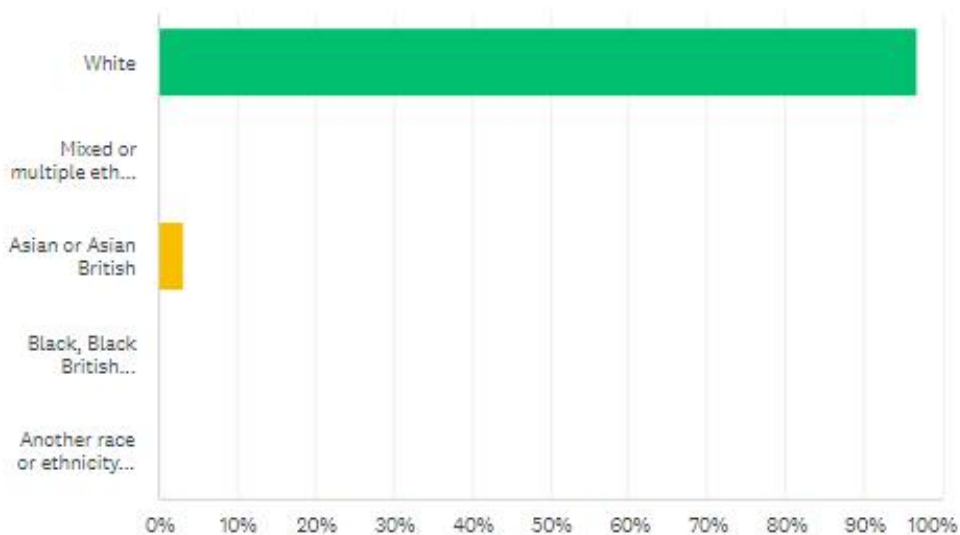
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ 16-30	0.00% 0
▼ 31-45	3.23% 1
▼ 46-59	25.81% 8
▼ 60-75	51.61% 16
▼ 76-89	16.13% 5
▼ 90+	3.23% 1
TOTAL	31

What is your race or ethnicity?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 1

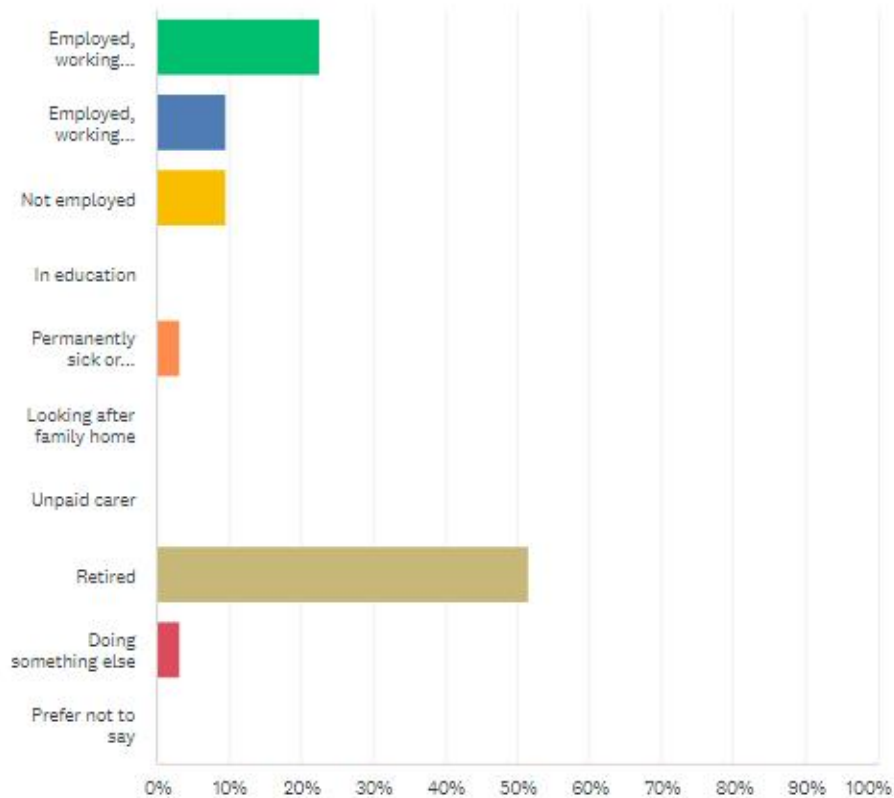


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
White	96.77% 30
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0.00% 0
Asian or Asian British	3.23% 1
Black, Black British Caribbean or African	0.00% 0
Another race or ethnicity, please describe below	0.00% 0
TOTAL	31



Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 1

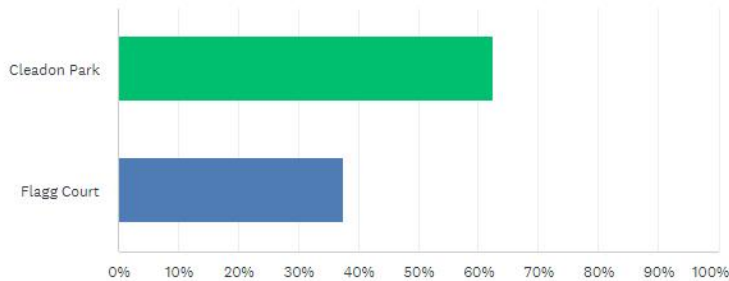


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Employed, working full-time	22.58% 7
Employed, working part-time	9.68% 3
Not employed	9.68% 3
In education	0.00% 0
Permanently sick or disabled	3.23% 1
Looking after family home	0.00% 0
Unpaid carer	0.00% 0
Retired	51.61% 16
Doing something else	3.23% 1
Prefer not to say	0.00% 0
TOTAL	31

Responses

Which venue are you attending for your treatment ?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Cleadon Park	62.50% 20
▼ Flagg Court	37.50% 12
Total Respondents: 32	

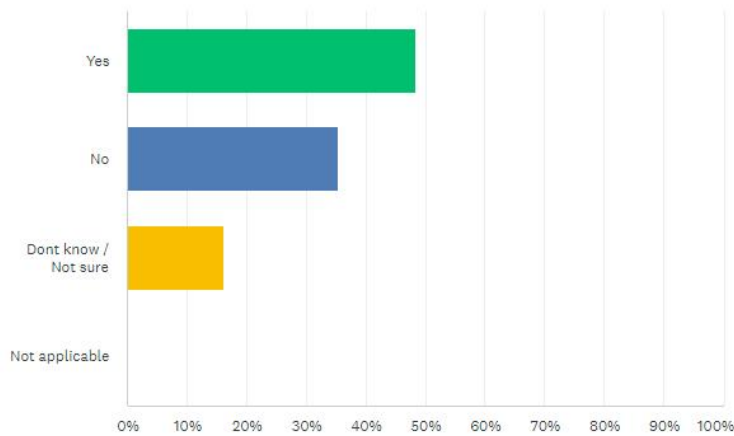
How did you hear about Connect Health's Musculoskeletal service?

- GP 71.875% (23)
- Physio 6.25% (2)
- Self-referred 6.25% (2)
- Friend 3.125% (1)
- Physiotherapist 3.125% (1)
- Spire Hospital 3.125% (1)
- Physician 3.125% (1)
- Did not answer 3.125% (1)



Were you aware that you can self-refer to this service via telephone/online?

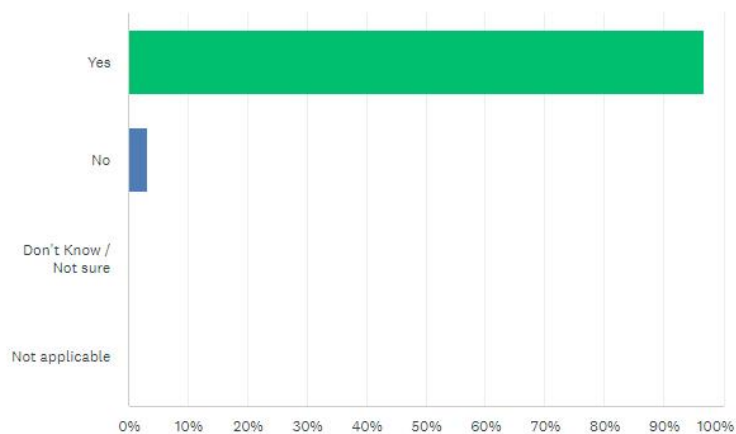
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	48.39% 15
No	35.48% 11
Dont know / Not sure	16.13% 5
Not applicable	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 31	

When you arrived for your appointment did you find it easily accessible? (e.g. Stairs, lifts, access needs met for wheelchair users / those using walking aids).

Answered: 31 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	96.77% 30
No	3.23% 1
Don't Know / Not sure	0.00% 0
Not applicable	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 31	

Comments about accessibility on arrival:

"Was not aware I had to register at main reception downstairs, I went upstairs and sat for a while before someone told me I had to go back downstairs - good job there is a lift."

"The clinic should be on ground floor as I don't like using lifts and the lift has been out of order at times."

"I knew where I was going but the system has changed and you now have to register at main reception on ground floor. Reception on first floor is not open now, there should be a sign advising patients they need to register down stairs or you could be sitting there for ever."

"Not obvious that you need to register at main reception before going upstairs."

"Did get lost, the building is like a maze, could do with more signage - I used the lift."

"Walk from car park more difficult than in building - I have a blue badge but there are not enough spaces."

"Straight in - no problem at all."

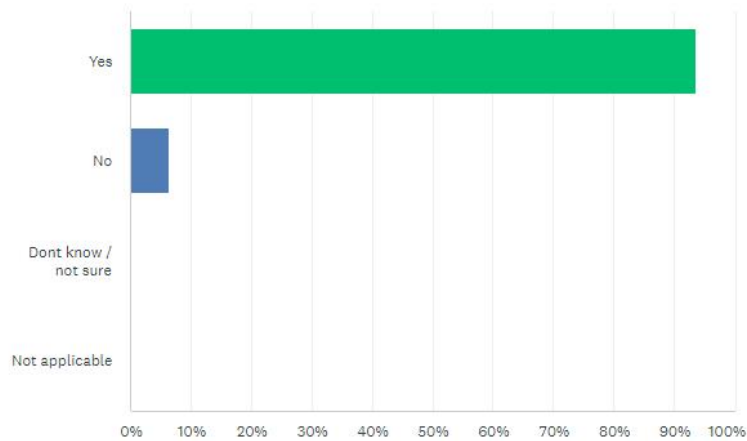
*"Just came straight through.
Good that it's all on one level."*

"Cleaddon Park very accessible."



Could you get an appointment at a time that was suitable for you?

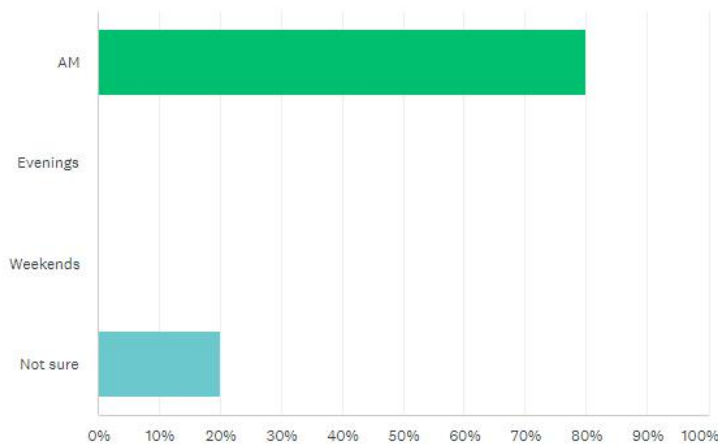
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.55% 29
No	6.45% 2
Dont know / not sure	0.00% 0
Not applicable	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 31	

If no, what is your preferred appointment time?

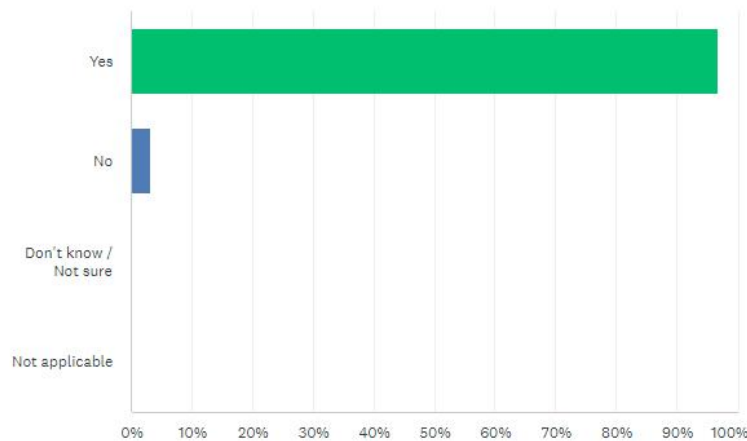
Answered: 5 Skipped: 27



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
AM	80.00% 4
Evenings	0.00% 0
Weekends	0.00% 0
Not sure	20.00% 1
Total Respondents: 5	

Did the appointment meet your expectations?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	96.77% 30
No	3.23% 1
Don't know / Not sure	0.00% 0
Not applicable	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 31	

Further comments:

"Very happy, felt listened to and agreed the way forward."

"Clinician very insightful; met my expectations and more."

"I was expecting the treatment I was given today; process agreed earlier is being followed."

"I was given exercises and a lot was explained to me, which was helpful."

"Prompt, professional and personable physio."

"Happy with what has been done and how quickly."

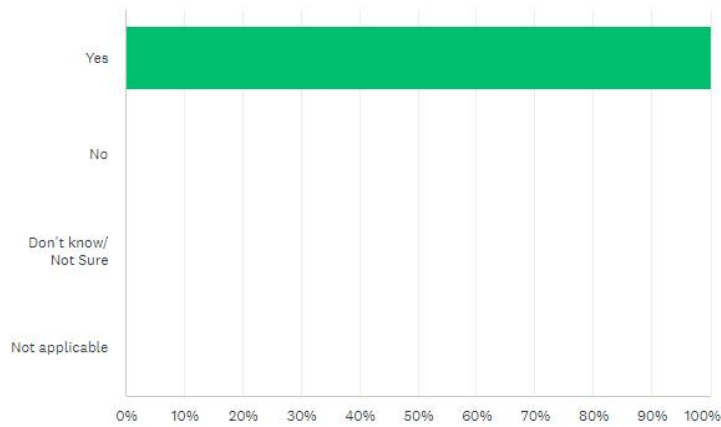
"Very informative, caring and empathetic."

"Yes, also received an info sheet for ACTS to attend classes."

"I thought it was just physiotherapy but it was more than that. More information was given."

Did you feel you were given all of the treatment options and information you needed to help you make the best decision regarding your care?

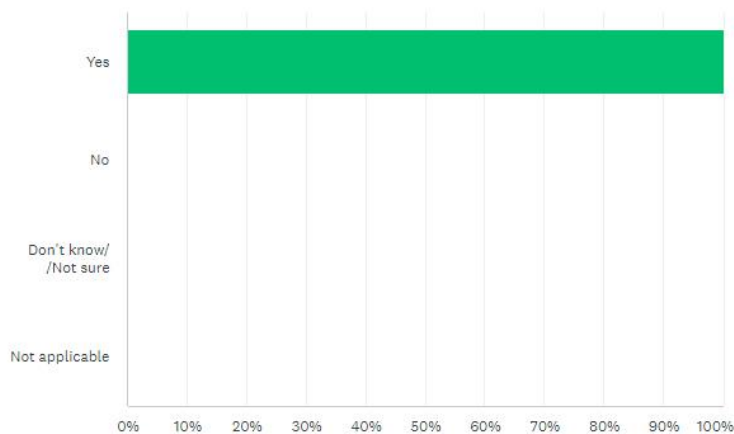
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	100.00%	31
▼ No	0.00%	0
▼ Don't know/ Not Sure	0.00%	0
▼ Not applicable	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 31		

Do you have a clear plan to help you move forward with your symptoms/issues?

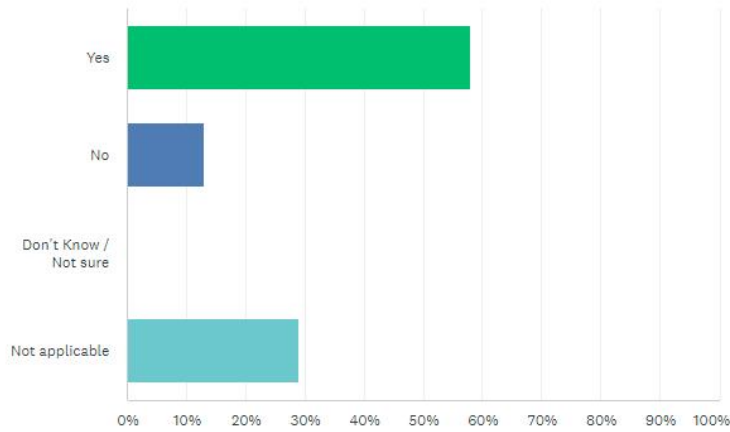
Answered: 31 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	100.00%	31
▼ No	0.00%	0
▼ Don't know/ /Not sure	0.00%	0
▼ Not applicable	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 31		

If appropriate, did you have a discussion with the person treating you about other self-help information or services that can support your overall wellbeing? (This may include support with care at home, mental health, weight and wellbeing, smoking cessation or exercise. (Services- Escape pain, First Contact Clinical, Talking Therapies, Flippin' pain))

Answered: 31 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	58.06% 18
No	12.90% 4
Don't Know / Not sure	0.00% 0
Not applicable	29.03% 9
Total Respondents: 31	

Answers and other comments:

"Discussed menopause and possible link to current condition."

"I also got additional information for activities and Healthy Lives."

"Informed of other groups which I could attend. I was told that I had to go through the doctor and that I couldn't self refer at Talbot Medical Centre."

"I was told about escape pain and also about exercise classes at Age Concern."

"Was given lots of information."

"Given a list of classes to attend."

"I was given different exercises to move into the right direction which I am quite happy with."

Key observations

The overall response to the patient survey was very positive, with the Musculoskeletal Service being seen as a very good service.

Clinicians were identified as very insightful, informative, caring, empathetic and easy to understand who listen to their patients. Appointments were described as relaxed, informative and friendly.

Those patients spoken to seemed to appreciate a face-to-face appointment.

Most patients were referred by their GP. On one occasion when the GP gave details to enable the patient to self-refer, this was seen as a quicker process.

Slightly less than half were aware that they could self-refer.

The majority found the health centre building to be accessible, though the suggestion of moving the service to the ground floor was raised to enable better access for those with poor mobility or those using mobility aids.

The free parking is seen as being helpful though it was not always clear whether or not this is free to some patients at both Cleadon Park Health Centre and Flagg Court. Blue Badge holders commented that there were not enough spaces for them to access at Cleadon Park Health Centre.

A number of patients were not aware that they had to register at the main reception on the ground floor prior to attending their appointment on the first floor. This included new patients and those who were not aware that the system had changed. This meant sitting in the waiting area for long periods of time.

A high proportion of patients were retired.

The majority of patients were able to get an appointment which suited them, though a small number mentioned long waiting times to be seen by a clinician.

All patients felt that they were given treatment options and consulted to identify a clear plan of treatment going forward.

The service was described as “more than just physio” when describing additional information received alongside that to support their condition.

Other patients mentioned additional classes and groups they could attend, pain clinic and ways of keeping healthy.

Recommendations



1. Ensure all frontline staff of referral services into MSK are aware that patients can self-refer and share details of how to do this.
2. Better signage on entry to Cleadon Park Primary Care Centre to direct patients to where to attend for the MSK Service. This will prevent patients getting lost, and to notify that they must register at the main reception before going upstairs.
3. Notify patients of free parking arrangements.
4. Consider making additional car parking arrangements for Blue Badge holders (Cleadon Park Health Centre).

We'd like to thank all the health centre staff and MSK service users who assisted us with this report. The patient responses and our recommendations will be shared with the service commissioners to assist future service planning.



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