

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 19 September 2024

Early data on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and innovative methods. These are official statistics in development.

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# 1 . Main points

- Overall retail footfall in the week to 15 September 2024 was broadly unchanged when compared with both the previous week and the equivalent week of 2023; meanwhile, retail park footfall increased when compared with the previous week but decreased when compared with the equivalent week of 2023 (MRI OnLocation). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The seasonally adjusted total Direct Debit failure rate increased by 1% in August 2024, when compared with the previous month; however, this is 12% higher than the August 2023 failure rate (Vocalink). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The number of firms reporting an increase in turnover in August 2024, when compared with the previous month, was broadly equal to the number of firms reporting a decrease (HM Revenue and Customs Value Added Tax returns). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- The total number of online job adverts on 13 September 2024 was largely unchanged when compared with the previous week, but 14% lower than the equivalent period of 2023 (Adzuna). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- Approximately one in five (20%) trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in August 2024 when compared with July 2024, while less than 1 in 10 (6%) reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold; these are the lowest proportions reported since these response options were introduced in March 2022 ([final results from Wave 116 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#)).
- Both the System Average Price (SAP) of gas and the System Price of electricity decreased in the week to 15 September 2024 when compared with the equivalent week of 2023, down 6% and 30%, respectively (Elexon, National Gas Transmission). [Section 5: Energy](#).
- The daily average number of UK flights was broadly unchanged in the week to 15 September when compared with the previous week, but was 3% higher than the equivalent week of 2023 (EUROCONTROL). [Section 6: Transport](#).

These are official statistics in development, and we advise caution when using the data. The data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure they are representative and relevant, which may mean indicators change at short notice. Read more in [Section 9: Data sources and quality](#)

## 2 . Latest indicators at a glance

### Notes:

1. Card spending over time is pushed upwards by the impacts of both inflation on value of transactions and cash-to-card conversion.
2. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.
3. Indicators with SA in the title have been seasonally adjusted.

## 3 . Consumer behaviour

## Monthly Direct Debit average transaction amount and failure rate

The monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount are anonymised, and aggregated datasets made available to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by Pay.UK and Vocalink. The data are unadjusted for inflation and reflect economic activity in nominal terms.

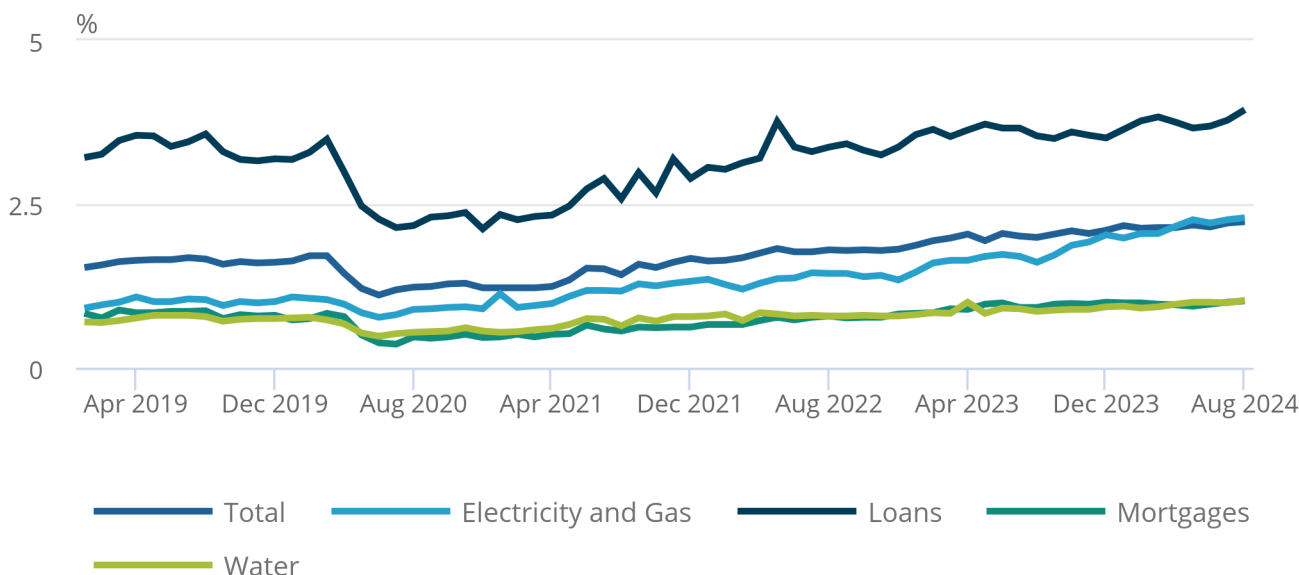
For further details on what is covered within this indicator, see our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

**Figure 1: The total Direct Debit failure rate increased by 1% in August 2024 when compared with July 2024, and increased by 12% when compared with August 2023**

Direct Debit failure rate, seasonally adjusted, UK, January 2019 to August 2024

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Direct Debit failure rate, seasonally adjusted, UK, January 2019 to August 2024



Source: Pay.UK and Vocalink

Notes:

1. Data include both individual and business Direct Debit transactions.
2. The total series covers all Direct Debit failure, comprising data beyond the five categories published alongside.
3. The underlying failure rates are low, so month-to-month.

In August 2024, the seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit failure rate increased by 1% when compared with July 2024. This rise was a result of increases in failure rates for "Electricity and Gas" by 2%, "Loans" by 4%, "Mortgages" by 2%, and "Water" by 4%.

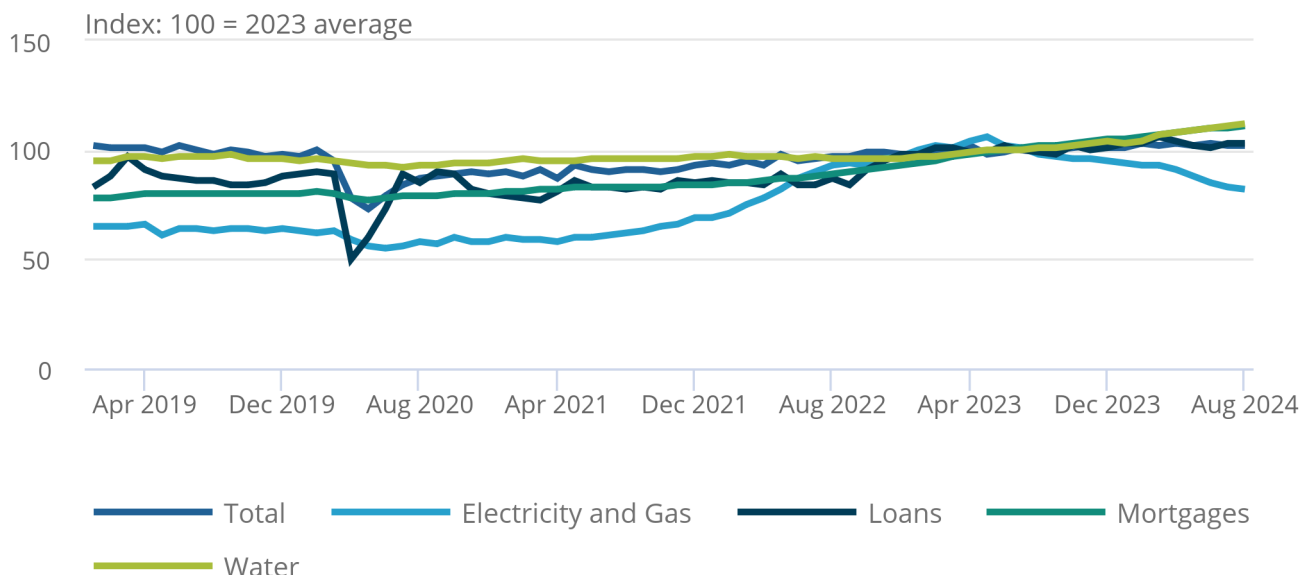
When compared with August 2023, the seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit failure rate rose by 12%. Year-on-year, the failure rate for "Electricity and Gas" increased by 43%, while "Loans", "Mortgages", and "Water" increased by 11%, 11%, and 20%, respectively.

**Figure 2: The total monthly Direct Debit average transaction amount increased by 2% in August 2024 when compared with August 2023**

Average Transaction Amount, seasonally adjusted, UK, January 2019 to August 2024

Figure 2: The total monthly Direct Debit average transaction amount increased by 2% in August 2024 when compared with August 2023

Average Transaction Amount, seasonally adjusted, UK, January 2019 to August 2024



Source: Pay.UK and Vocalink

Notes:

1. Data include both individual and business Direct Debit transactions.
2. The total series covers all Direct Debit transactions and is comprised of data beyond the five categories published alongside.
3. Data are not adjusted for inflation.

The total average Direct Debit transaction amount remained broadly unchanged in August 2024, after seasonal adjustment, when compared with July 2024. However, this average was 2% higher than in August 2023.

In August 2024, by category and after seasonal adjustment, the average transaction amount for "Loans" remained broadly unchanged when compared with the previous month, while "Electricity and Gas" decreased by 1% and "Mortgages" and "Water" both increased by 1%. When compared with August 2023, the average for all categories had increased, except "Electricity and Gas" which had decreased by 17% year-on-year. The largest increase was for "Water", which was 11% higher, while "Mortgages" and "Loans" were 9% and 4% higher, respectively.

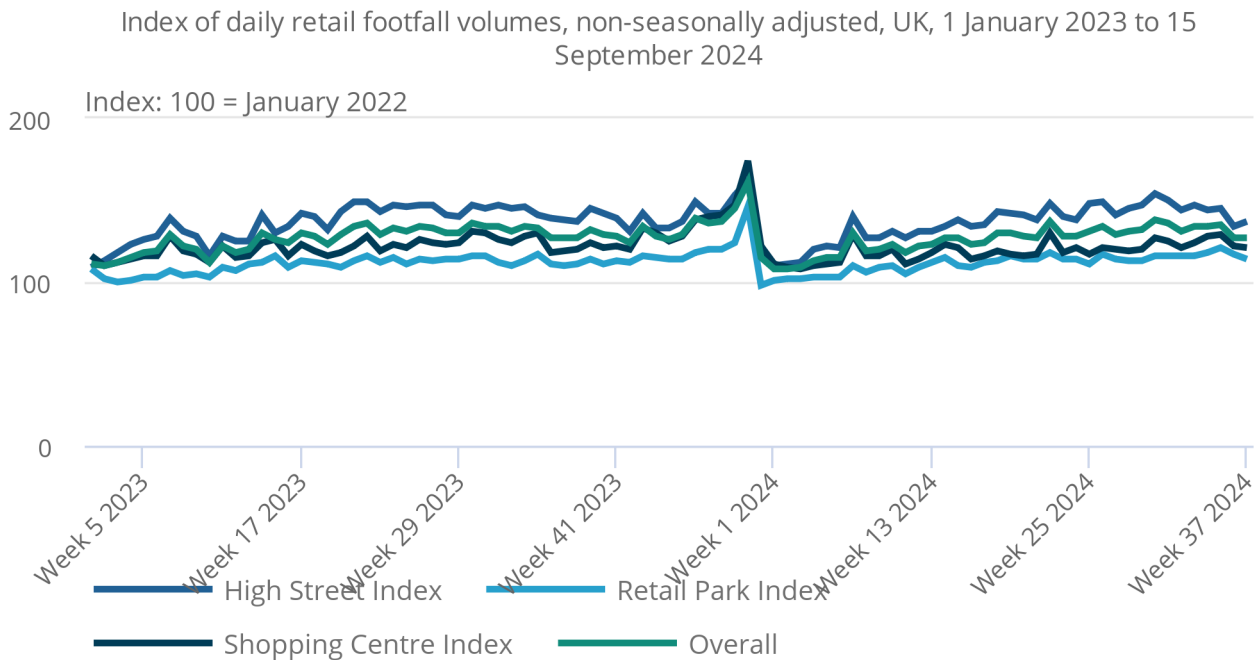
Our accompanying [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#) is available.

## National retail footfall

**Figure 3: Overall retail footfall in the week to 15 September 2024 was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week and when compared with the equivalent week of 2023**

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 15 September 2024

Figure 3: Overall retail footfall in the week to 15 September 2024 was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week and when compared with the equivalent week of 2023



**Source: MRI OnLocation**

**Notes:**

1. Peaks in footfall correspond to bank holidays and school holidays. For the previous 12 months, they are: Week 51, 2023 Christmas bank holidays and school holidays; Week 7, 2024 February school half term; Week 15, 2024 Easter bank holidays and school holidays; Week 21, 2024 late May bank holiday and school half terms; Week 21, 2024 late May bank holiday and school half term.

Retail park and shopping centre footfall increased by 4% and 1%, respectively, when compared with the previous week. Meanwhile, high street footfall decreased by 2%. When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, high street footfall rose by 2%, while shopping centre and retail park footfall fell by 2% and 3%, respectively.

Overall retail footfall increased in 6, was broadly unchanged in 3 and decreased in 3 of the 12 UK countries and English regions, when compared with the previous week. The largest increase was in Northern Ireland, where retail footfall increased by 3%.

When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, overall retail footfall increased in 3, decreased in 5, and remained broadly unchanged in 4 of the 12 UK countries and English regions. The largest year-on-year increases were seen in the North East and Scotland, which rose by 2%, while the largest year-on-year decreases were seen in the East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, South East and East Midlands where retail footfall fell by 2%.

## 4 . Business and workforce

### Online job adverts

**Figure 4: The total number of online job adverts on 13 September 2024 was largely unchanged when compared with the previous week, but 14% lower than the equivalent period of 2023**

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 13 September 2024

#### Notes:

1. These estimates of online job adverts are provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine and are an indicator for the demand of labour.
2. Week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage-point changes. Percentage-change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage-point changes observed in the chart and in our [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).
3. Further category breakdowns are available in our [Online job advert estimates dataset](#), and more details on the methodology are in our [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies: Experimental Statistics methodology](#).

#### Download the data

The total number of online job adverts on 13 September was 14% lower than the equivalent period of 2023. Adverts in all UK countries and English regions, except Northern Ireland, were lower than the equivalent period of 2023, with the largest year-on-year decrease occurring in Scotland, at 32%.

Because of additional sources of job vacancy data being added by Adzuna, there is a step-change increase in the number of Northern Ireland adverts. This is reflected in the 30 August 2024 snapshot, onwards.

The total number of online job adverts was lower in 24 of the 28 job categories when compared with the equivalent period of 2023. The categories with the largest year-on-year decreases were "Admin, clerical and secretarial" and "Wholesale and retail", which were 45% and 42% lower, respectively. The categories with the largest year-on-year increases were "Part-time/weekend" and "Education", which were 29% and 27% higher, respectively.

Our accompanying [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) is available.

### Value Added Tax flash estimates

Turnover diffusion indices are an aggregate measure used to track whether most firms are reporting an increase or decrease in turnover in their Value Added Tax (VAT) returns. They are calculated as the percentage of firms with increasing turnover, minus the percentage of firms with decreasing turnover.

These estimates have been weighted according to each industry's contribution to the economy. As services have the greatest contribution, they have a greater contribution to the total index.

The indices are constructed to lie between 1 and negative 1. An index of 0.05 means that 5% more firms reported an increase in turnover compared with the previous month than those reporting a decrease in turnover. Conversely, an index of negative 0.05 means that 5% more firms reported a decrease in turnover compared with the previous month.

## Figure 5: The number of firms reporting an increase in turnover in August 2024 when compared with the previous month was broadly equal to the number of firms reporting a decrease

Weighted Value Added Tax turnover diffusion indices, seasonally adjusted, UK, January 2020 to August 2024

### Notes:

1. These data are current price, so may reflect elements of inflation.
2. The shaded areas represent the 95% confidence limits.
3. The confidence limits are 1.96 standard deviations of the seasonally adjusted series, centred around zero. If a data point is outside of these limits, it is a statistically significant difference.

After seasonal adjustment, the number of firms reporting an increase in turnover in August 2024, when compared with the previous month, was broadly equal to the number of firms reporting a decrease. This is a decrease of 2 percentage points from July 2024, and within normal month-on-month variation.

The services sector, the largest contributing sector to total gross domestic product (GDP), also reported a broadly equal number of firms with increased turnover and decreased turnover in August 2024, when compared with the previous month. This is a decrease of 1 percentage point from July 2024 and within normal month-on-month variation.

The production sector saw the largest month-on-month decrease of 6 percentage points, with a net negative 2% of firms reporting increased turnover in August 2024, compared with the previous month. This latest figure is also within normal month-on-month variation.

A net 3% of firms in the construction sector reported an increase in turnover on the previous month, rising 1 percentage point from July 2024. This latest figure sits just above the upper limit of normal month-on-month variation. Meanwhile, a net 1% of firms in the agriculture sector reported increased turnover compared with the previous month, an increase of 1 percentage point from the previous month.

The data are seasonally adjusted. More information on the compilation and methodology of these estimates can be found in our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

For more information, our accompanying [VAT flash estimates dataset](#) is available.

## Advanced notification of potential redundancies

The number of potential redundancies in the week to 8 September 2024 was 56% lower than the equivalent week of 2023, calculated as a four-week rolling average. The number of employers proposing redundancies was 3% lower when compared with the same equivalent period.

Comparisons with the equivalent period a year ago help account for any seasonal impacts. For more information, our accompanying [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) is available.

## 5 . Energy

### System Average Price of gas

In the week to 15 September 2024, the System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 2% compared with the previous week, from a seven-day average price of 3.028 pence per kilowatt hour to 2.964 pence per kilowatt hour. This was 6% lower than the equivalent week of 2023, which had a seven-day average price of 3.167 pence per kilowatt hour.

Our accompanying [System Average Price of gas dataset](#) is available.

## System Price of electricity

The System Price of electricity decreased by 30% in the week to 15 September 2024 compared with the previous week, from a seven-day average price of 8.756 pence per kilowatt hour to 6.114 pence per kilowatt hour. This was 30% lower than the equivalent week of 2023, which had a seven-day average price of 8.781 pence per kilowatt hour.

Our accompanying [System Price of electricity dataset](#) is available.

## 6 . Transport

### Daily UK flights

In the week to 15 September 2024, the daily average number of UK flights was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week. However, this was still 3% higher than the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying [Daily UK flights dataset](#) is available.

## 7 . Data

### [Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 19 September 2024

Weekly snapshot of online job advert indices covering the UK job market. These are official statistics in development. Source: Adzuna

### [System Average Price \(SAP\) of gas](#)

Dataset | Released 19 September 2024

Daily data showing System Average Price (SAP) of gas, and rolling seven-day average, traded in Great Britain over the On-the-Day Commodity Market (OCM). These are official statistics in development. Source: National Gas Transmission.

### [System Price of electricity](#)

Dataset | Released 19 September 2024

Daily data showing the System Price of electricity, and rolling seven-day average, in Great Britain. These are official statistics in development. Source: Elexon

This section lists a selection of the data available in this publication. For the full list of available datasets, please see our [accompanying dataset page](#).

## 8 . Glossary

### Real-time indicator

A real-time indicator provides insights into economic activity using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or experimental estimates, which represent useful economic and social concepts.



## Seasonal Adjustment

Seasonal adjustment is the identification and removal of consistent and systematic variation in time series associated with the time of year. For more information on seasonal variation, and how we implement seasonal adjustment, see Section 2 of our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology article](#).

## 9 . Data sources and quality

### Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as "[official statistics in development](#)". Until September 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our [Guide to official statistics in development](#).

We are developing how we collect and produce the data to improve the quality of these statistics. Find out more in our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology article](#).

Once the developments are complete, we will review the statistics with the Statistics Head of Profession. We will decide if the statistics are of sufficient quality and value to be published as official statistics, or if further development is needed. Production may be stopped if they are not of sufficient quality or value. Users will be informed of the outcome and any changes.

We value your feedback on these statistics. If you would like to get in touch, please email [realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

### Dataset release dates and intended release frequency

Latest release dates and intended release frequency of our associated datasets are available in this section. Please note that there may be some change to the intended release frequency for a variety of reasons, such as data availability. If you would like further information about any of these datasets, or previous release dates, please email [realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

### Weekly data release

- The [UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset](#) was last updated on 16 May 2024.
- The [Revolut spending on debit cards dataset](#) was last updated on 1 February 2024.
- The [Automotive fuel spending dataset](#) was last updated on 12 September 2024.
- The [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [System Average price of gas dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [System Price of electricity dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [Weekly shipping indicators dataset](#) was last updated on 5 April 2024.
- The [Daily UK flights dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.

### Fortnightly data release

- The [Transactions at Pret A Manger dataset](#) was last updated on 12 September 2024.

## Monthly data release

- The [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [Value Added Tax \(VAT\) flash estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 19 September 2024.
- The [Renter affordability for new tenancies dataset](#) was last updated on 12 September 2024.

## Quarterly data release

- The [Sales and jobs in small businesses dataset](#) was last updated on 1 August 2024.

## Strengths and limitations

These statistics have been produced to provide timely indicators of the effect of developing world events on the UK economy and society, using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys, or official statistics in development.

The data presented in this bulletin are reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis. Indicators are swapped in and out of the publication based on their suitability and availability.

## Seasonality

Seasonal fluctuations are likely to be present in many of these indicators, so caution must be applied when interpreting changes in series that are not seasonally adjusted.

## 10 . Related links

### [GDP monthly estimate, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released monthly

Gross domestic product (GDP) measures the value of goods and services produced in the UK. It estimates the size of and growth in the economy.

### [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain](#)

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

Social insights on daily life and events, including important issues, cost of living, and artificial intelligence from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

### [Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#)

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) to deliver real-time information to help assess issues affecting UK businesses and economy, including financial performance, workforce, trade, and business resilience. These are official statistics in development.

## 11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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