

# FIND OUT WHAT 14-17 YEAR OLDS THINK ABOUT...

HOODIES

DRINKING ALCOHOL

HAPPY SLAPPING

18 RATED MOVIES

sounding  
Out

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# INTRODUCTION

The views of 14-17 year olds are often difficult to obtain through traditional research methods.

With information collected through the Sounding Out research network, a product of QA Research, this report presents the findings of research undertaken in June 2005 with over 200 14-17 year olds at Ikon nightclub in Bolton.

## BACKGROUND

QA Research has a proven track record in consulting with young people and we know the difficulties and challenges of conducting research with this group. In response to the need and desire of our clients to engage with young people we have developed the Sounding Out research network.

### The Sounding Out network

The Sounding Out research network is based at 18 nightclub venues running monthly events across the UK. Up to 2,000 14-17 year olds attend each event.

The target audience is accessed in a social setting that is safe, controlled and fun. The events offer polished entertainment to an age group that has few social opportunities. Every event is staged in a high quality nightclub where the young people enjoy DJ-led music,

soft drinks and lots of room to chat and dance. Many venues will have appearances from chart bands and celebrity DJs.

Locations throughout the UK mean it is now possible to conduct research in a specific town or to carry out a national programme involving a high volume of responses and the chance to map regional variations. The attendees are a natural mix of the population by gender, socio-economics and ethnicity.

### Sounding Out in Bolton

Sounding Out is open to any organisation needing to communicate with or research the views of 14-17 year olds.

QA undertook its own study of 14-17 year olds at the Bolton Sounding Out venue - Ikon nightclub - on 27th June 2005 to provide insight into one of the ways in which the network can be used.

The research provided a snap shot of young people's views concerning four topical issues which impact on their social and family lives:

- Hoodies
- Alcohol Consumption
- Happy Slapping
- 18 Rated Movies

# RESEARCH METHODS

On the 27th June 2005 four researchers from QA Research visited an under-18's night at Ikon nightclub in Bolton.

Between 5.30pm and 7.30pm the researchers approached young people while they were queuing to get into the club.

208 questionnaires were completed during this two-hour period. 47% of the respondents were boys, 53% were girls.

Questions were predominantly quantitative, however two questions were qualitative in nature. Answers to questions were prompted but also allowed the young people to give an 'other' answer should the prompts listed not comply with their views.

The findings were analysed and inputted by QA Research using SPSS.

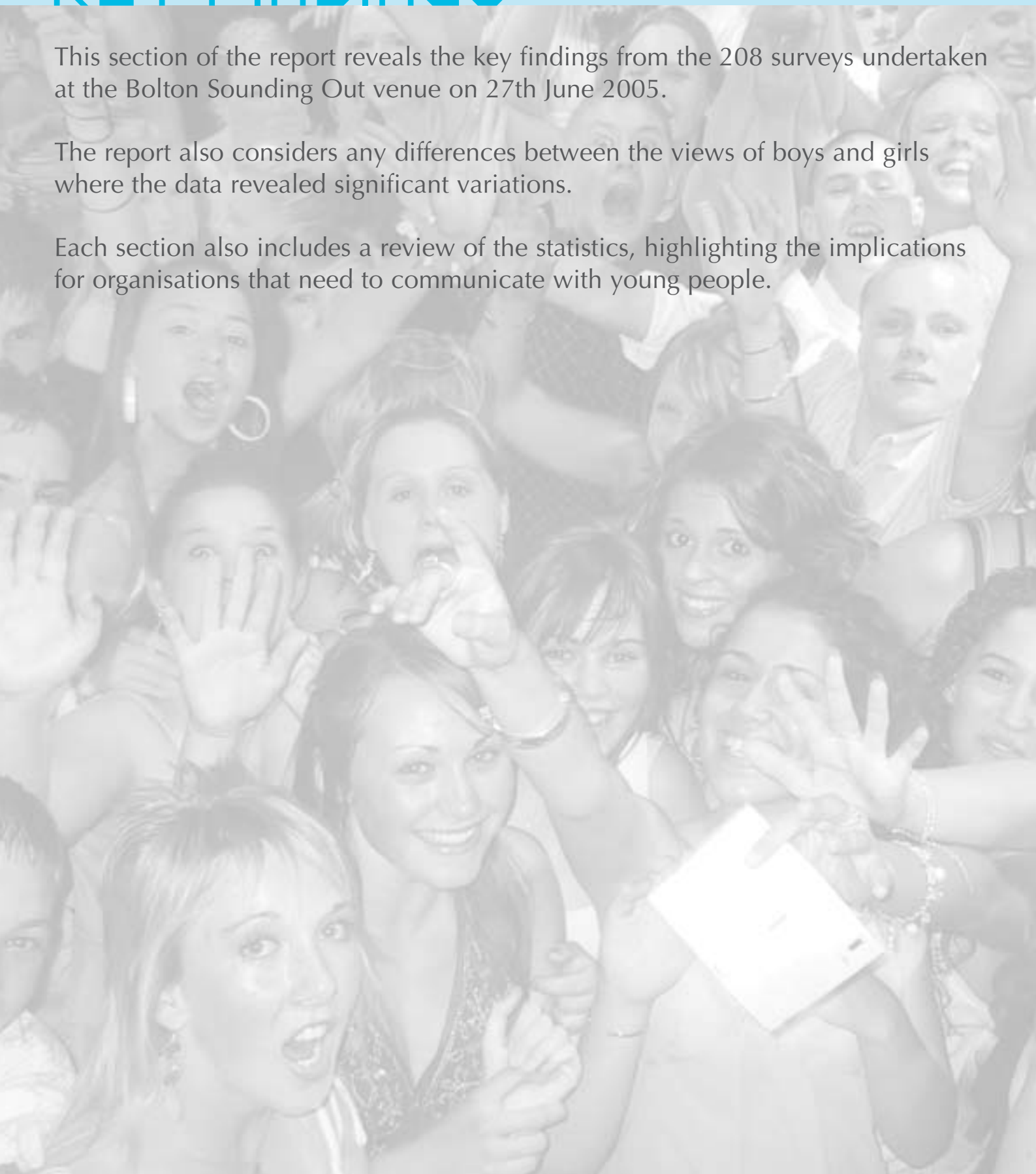


# KEY FINDINGS

This section of the report reveals the key findings from the 208 surveys undertaken at the Bolton Sounding Out venue on 27th June 2005.

The report also considers any differences between the views of boys and girls where the data revealed significant variations.

Each section also includes a review of the statistics, highlighting the implications for organisations that need to communicate with young people.



# KEY FINDINGS

## HOODIES

In a drive to reduce street crime and encourage community safety measures some local authorities are banning young people from wearing hoods and caps which can be considered threatening to others.

QA Research decided to ask 14-17 year olds what they felt about the recent 'hoodie' publicity.

This was an open question. Answers that were repeatedly given were counted and reported in percentage terms.

Over half of the young people (110 or 53%) felt that the publicity surrounding hoodies and caps was ill-judged and that they should be able to wear what they wanted without being labelled as threatening. Comments included:

- "It's a stereotype, they shouldn't be banned"
- "It's discrimination"

As illustrated by the following comments some young people had a different view:

- "It's a bit stupid, you should be able to wear what you want but I understand they can be intimidating"
- "It depends where they are. They are ok on the street but not in public places"



Overall, 25 young people (12%) felt that the publicity about hoodies and caps was a positive thing. For some this choice of dress can be intimidating and unnerving. For example:

- "People shouldn't wear them. When they put their hoods up they look scary"

A total of 23 young people (11%) reported that they were not bothered about the publicity; some felt that it was not particularly relevant to them.

Boys were more likely to state that they should be allowed to wear what they want. Girls were less concerned and more likely to understand the reasons behind bans being placed on hoodies and caps in some places.

### Further questions

The majority of young people felt that they were being discriminated against and believed they should be able to wear what they want. However, some responses indicate that young people are aware of the impact this type of clothing has on other people. This raises further questions:

Are the centres that are refusing entry to young people suffering as a result of recent negative

press towards anyone wearing hoods and caps?

To what extent are hoodies and caps directly linked to crime and the fear of crime?

To what extent do the brands of hoods and caps matter to buyers aged 14-17?

What influences 14-17 year olds to buy certain types of hooded tops and caps?

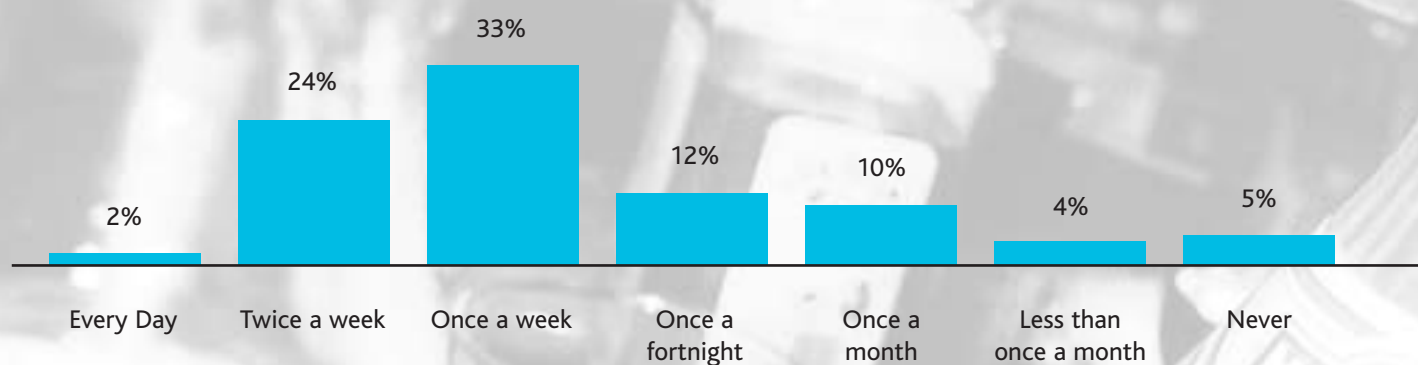
# KEY FINDINGS

## DRINKING ALCOHOL

Over the past 40 years the UK has seen the emergence of what is traditionally called anti-social yob culture behaviour. Excessive use of alcohol amongst young, often under-aged people, has been highlighted as one of the key factors contributing to this trend.

QA Research asked young people the extent to which they drink alcohol with their friends.

**Q. How often do you drink alcohol with your friends?**



The greatest proportion of young people (33%) reported drinking alcohol with friends once a week.

Just under a quarter (24%) drink alcohol twice a week. 2% (5 young people) said they were consuming alcohol every day.

Only 5% of the 14-17 year olds surveyed had never drunk alcohol with friends.

### Further analysis:

33% of girls were more likely to drink twice weekly, compared with only 13% of boys.

A quarter of the boys reported having never tried alcohol compared to only 6% of the girls.





# KEY FINDINGS

## DRINKING ALCOHOL (CONTINUED)

The young people were then asked what type of alcohol they would drink and how much they would consume in one session. This was an open question and was coded where answers were repeated.

Overall, 43% of young people cited that they mainly drank Vodka. This was usually consumed on its own during the same session or alongside several other types of alcohol such as cider and lager.

Of those who drank Vodka their comments suggested a majority would drink a quarter of a bottle to themselves.

Comments included:

- "I'll have quarter of a bottle of vodka and half a bottle of Lambrini"
- "Strongbow, WKD, Cider and Vodka, all mixed together and I'll have enough to get me drunk"

The next most popular choice of drink was Alcopops. Other popular beverages included:

- Cider
- Lager/Beer
- Lambrini
- Malibu and Bacardi
- Taboo

Comments included:

- "We would normally have WKD and then a bottle of Vodka between the five of us"

A number of young people revealed that they would drink any type of alcohol.

- "I'll have anything and enough to get me drunk"

Comments suggest that Lambrini is particularly popular amongst girls. Most drink around 2 litres at any one time.



### Further questions

The findings relating to alcohol use show that the majority of young people (59%) drink alcohol every week. They normally drink around one litre of cider/ Lambrini or a quarter bottle of Vodka, raising further questions:

Where do 14-17s get their alcohol from?

Do their parents know the extent of their drinking?

What messages are young people receiving about taking alcohol?

What is their behaviour like if they are drinking enough alcohol to get drunk?

Where are they drinking their alcohol? Is it at home or elsewhere and what are the possible implications of this?

When did they first start drinking alcohol? Why do they drink alcohol?

Why do they choose certain types of alcohol?



# KEY FINDINGS

## HAPPY SLAPPING

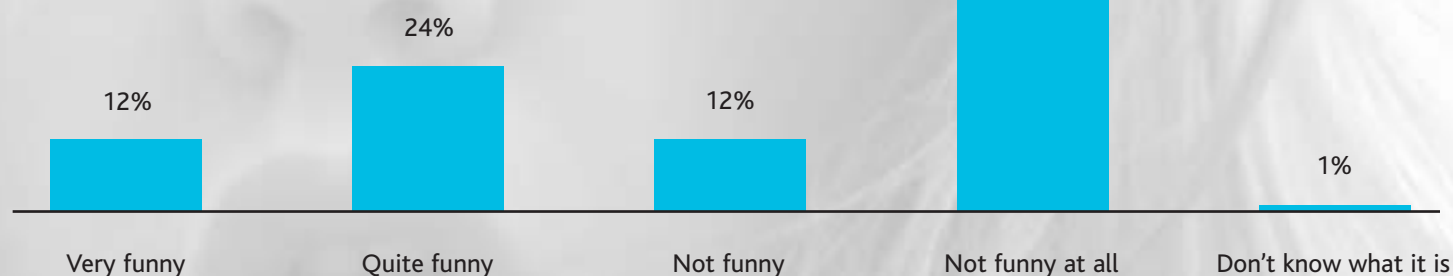
A recent craze amongst young people of secondary school age, happy slapping involves groups of people beating up random, innocent individuals and filming the footage on their mobile phones. The images are then sent to friends using mobile phone media messaging technology.

Respondents were initially asked whether they had received any footage of happy slapping on their mobile phones.

More than a quarter (28%) of respondents reported receiving images or video footage of happy slapping on their mobile phones.

Young people were then asked what they thought of happy slapping.

### Q. What do you think of Happy Slapping?



A total of 63% found happy slapping not funny or not funny at all. However, 36% described happy slapping as 'quite funny' or 'very funny'.

### Further analysis:

Over half of the boys (55%) found happy slapping quite or very funny compared to 18% of the girls.

### Further questions

The findings show that over a third of the young people surveyed found happy slapping quite or very funny. This finding could be of concern to those responsible for reducing anti-social behaviour and raises further questions:

Why do certain people aged 14-17 find happy slapping amusing?

What are the main reasons why certain young people engage in happy slapping?

What do young people feel should be done to eradicate happy slapping?



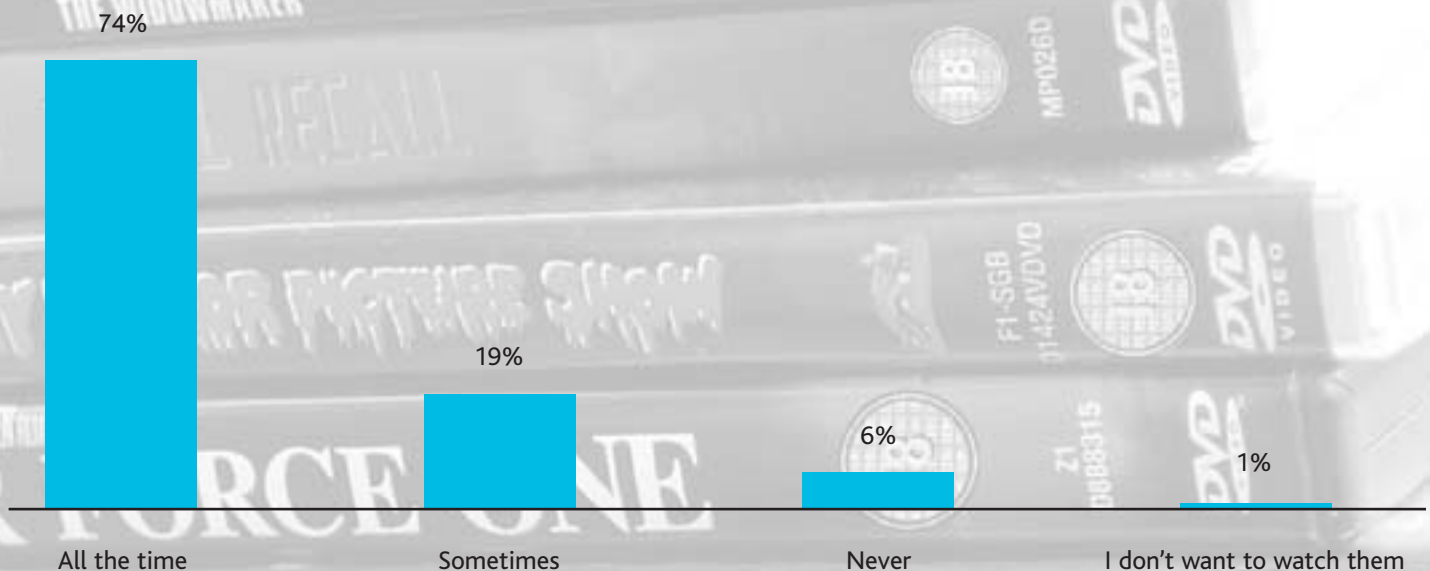
# KEY FINDINGS

## 18 RATED MOVIES

Films of a violent or sexual nature have had a pivotal role in the anti-social behaviour debate since the 1960's, with some commentators arguing they are a significant contributory factor behind the emergence of the yob culture.

QA asked 14-17 year olds the extent to which their parents allowed them to see films they were legally too young to view.

**Q. Do your parents let you watch films that are rated 18?**



Almost three-quarters of respondents were always allowed to watch films rated 18. A further 19% said they were sometimes allowed to. Only 6% were not given permission to view these films.

### Further questions

The findings revealed that 93% of young people have access to films they are legally too young to view. This may be of concern to those campaigning to reduce factors that could have a negative influence on young people, raising further questions:

What impact does exposure to 18 rated films have on the behaviour of young people?

Should efforts be made to educate parents about the impact 18 rated films might have on their children?

Is '18' a worthless certificate and should it be reduced to '16'?

Should warnings regarding the impact of viewing sexual or violent conduct be made more explicit - similar to health warnings on cigarette packets?

# CONCLUSION

The Sounding Out research network provides a quick and easy way to reach 14-17 year olds and explore their views on a wide range of issues.

This report revealed what a sample of Bolton's young people actually think about some of the key issues facing them and their peers.

The findings of the research have shown that young people appear to be able to access whatever they want should they have a particular desire or need.

Previously the preserve of adults, consuming alcohol with friends and viewing films rated 18 now appear to be common activities for 14-17 year olds.

So does society therefore need to reconsider how it communicates with and sends messages to young people?

Are young people alienated and not taken seriously enough by adults?

Is happy slapping evidence of a new and disturbing approach to violence, one that would have been anathema to previous generations?

**Sounding Out: communicating with the UK's next adult generation.**

# NEXT STEPS

QA Research will be consulting young people at other Sounding Out venues around the country throughout the summer of 2005.

If you would like to undertake your own research with young people at Sounding Out events please contact Richard Bryan at [richard.bryan@qaresearch.co.uk](mailto:richard.bryan@qaresearch.co.uk) or call **01904 632029**.

You can use Sounding Out locally or nationally for...

- Quantitative surveys
- Depth face-to-face interviews
- Focus groups
- Vox pops
- Interactive research sessions via the DJ
- Handing out samples and flyers
- Promoting your products/services using banners and other forms of promotional material.

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