

Private Fostering

**Sarah Street – Supervising
Social Worker**



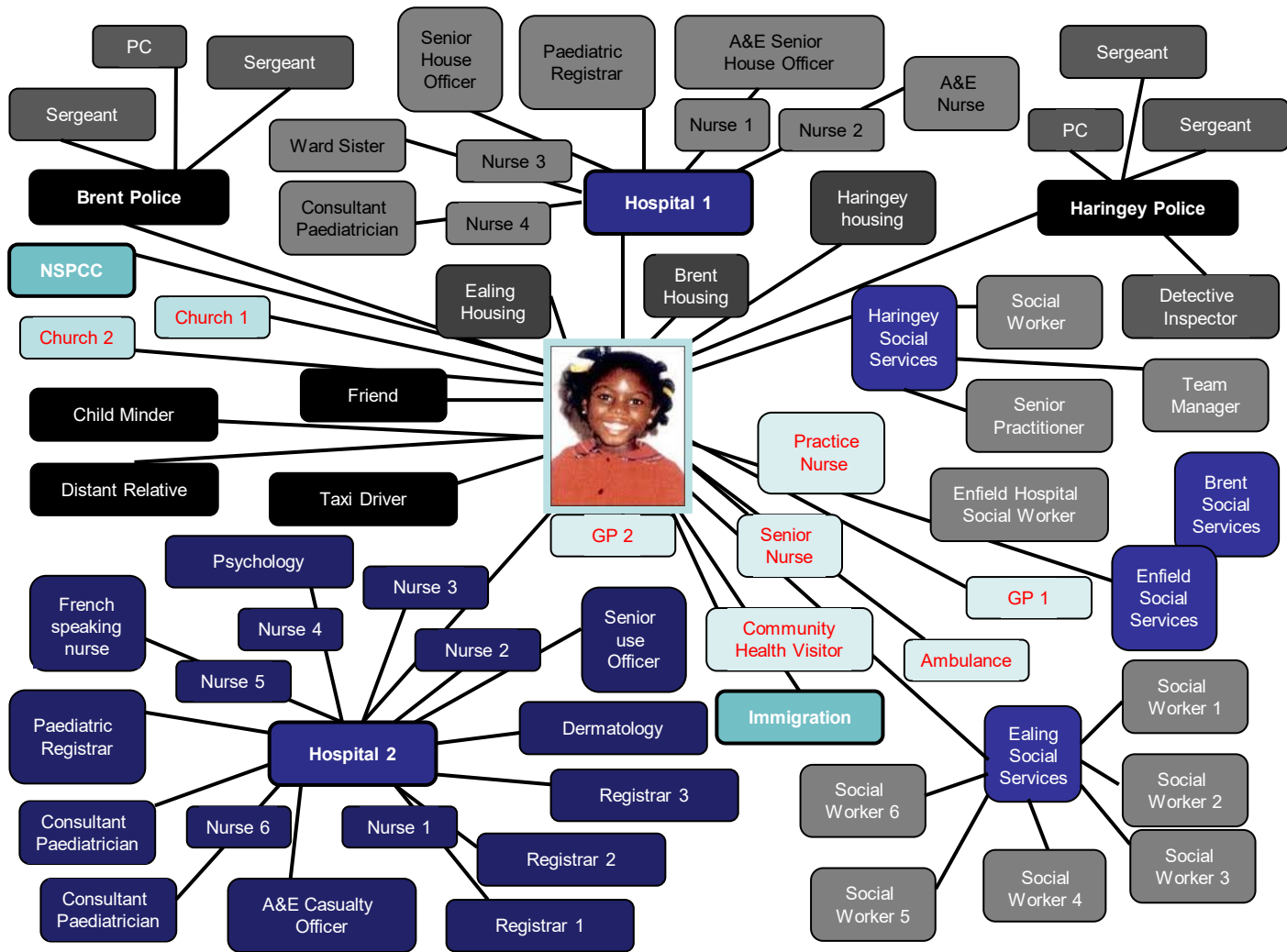
The Children Act 1989 defines private fostering as occurring when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for, and provided with accommodation, for 28 days or more by someone other than a close relative, guardian or someone with parental responsibility. **Parents and carers have a legal duty to notify the local authority when entering into a private fostering arrangement; local authorities are then required to carry out an assessment, and to monitor the arrangement.**

**Victoria Climbié (2
November 1991 – 25
February 2000)**

Was tortured and murdered by her great-aunt and her great-aunt's boyfriend.

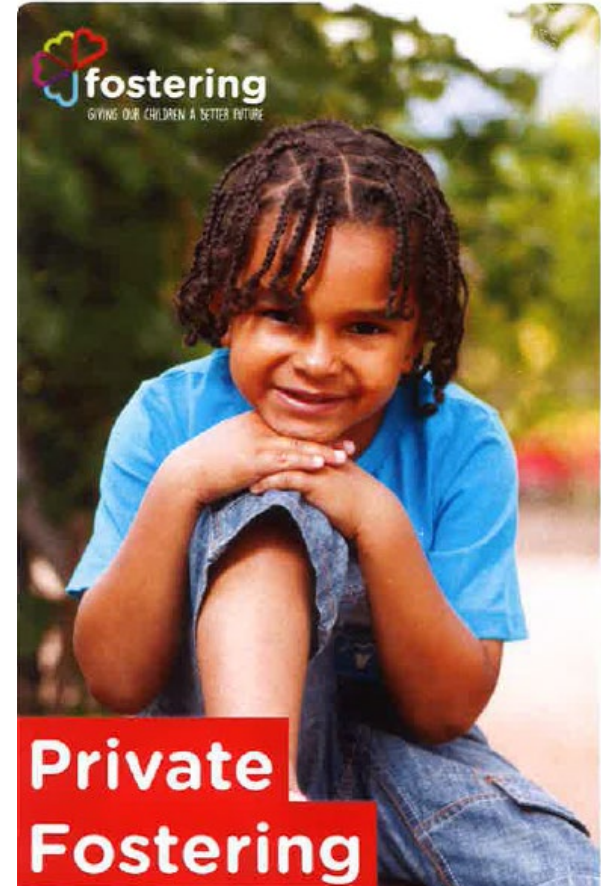
Her death led to a public inquiry and produced major changes in child protection policies in the United Kingdom.





What is Private Fostering?

- Private fostering is when a child aged under 16 years old (or 18 years old if they have a disability) is looked after full time for more than 28 days.
- Private fostering is arranged and agreed by the child's parents (or person with parental responsibility) and the person or family who will be caring for the child.



Who cannot be a private foster carer

- Parent
(or legal step parent, or someone else with parental responsibility)
- Grandparent
- Siblings (including half siblings)
- Aunt or uncle



What a birth parent must do

The law requires that you tell your Local Authority at least six weeks before the arrangement begins that you intend for somebody else to privately foster your child. Unless the arrangement is made in an emergency, in which case the notification must be made within 48 hours of the placement starting.

Information birth parents should provide to the private foster carer & LA are:

Full details of your child including: full name, DOB, ethnicity, religion, special needs, medical needs, school and GP details.

Full name, address and contact details of the proposed carer.

The reason for, and the intended length of the private fostering arrangement.

It is a good idea for parents to have a written agreement with the carer so that everyone is clear about how the child should be cared for. This should include consent to medical treatment, educational issues and financial arrangements.

Some Examples of Private Fostering

- Children sent from abroad to live with other families; or extended family members in the UK.
- Children whose parents have paid someone to care for them whilst the parents are away working or studying.
- Unaccompanied minors who are living with friends or someone who was previously unknown to the family who is willing to PF the child.
- Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Children who are attending schools in the UK and who live with a local family.
- Children brought to the UK for adoption.
- Children and young people who live away from their own family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home.

CHILDREN ACT 1989- schedule 8

POWER OF LOCAL AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE REQUIREMENTS:

WHERE A PERSON IS FOSTERING ANY CHILD PRIVATELY, THE LA MAY IMPOSE REQUIREMENTS ON HIM AS TO:

The number, age and sex of the children

The standard of the accommodation and equipment provided to them.

The arrangements to be made with respect to their health, and safety

Particular arrangements which must be made with respect to the provision of care for them.

THE APPROPRIATE LOCAL AUTHORITY IS THE AREA WHERE THE CHILD IS BEING PRIVATELY FOSTERED.



What are the Responsibilities of Enfield Children's Social care?

Enfield social care has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their borough and to ensure that those in private fostering arrangements are safe and secure. To fulfil this duty we will:

Assess the suitability of the arrangement by acting on any information provided by parents, carers and professionals.

Check the suitability of the carer and their accommodation.

Visit the carer and child every 6 weeks (the first visit will take place within 1 week), and after one year of the child living with their carer, the visits will be every 12 weeks.

Speak to the child alone.

Offer advice and support to the carer, child and parents.

Ensure DBS's are completed on all adults living in the PF home, and two references are completed on the PF carers

Make contact with the birth parents.

Since 2019 - 2022

Private fostering now sits within the Fostering team.

Caseload fluctuates from 4 to 14 at any one time: We currently have 8 PF cases.

Initial visits are completed within 7 day timescales.

Meetings with consortium partners to find out what other LA's are doing.

Policies/ procedures put in place to ensure that DBS checks and references are taken up.

Meetings with safeguarding board to discuss raising community awareness

Meetings with private businesses e.g. compass – in relation to international students.

New Leaflet produced – to be distributed into the community (schools, GP surgeries & voluntary organisations).

Areas for Development & Challenges

All Professionals to be made aware that PF referrals MUST go via MASH.

Work with partner agencies; Education, Police, Health, Community groups, Private businesses. Our aim is to distribute our PF leaflets to these agencies to ensure that PF are being referred & assessed.

Continue to work with Consortium partners to share ideas/ initiatives.

When contact issues arise between disputing families or birth parent does not agree to PF arrangement.

No appropriate adult with PR for the child especially those children that have travelled overseas, and we are unable to contact birth parents.

Families that do not want us involved.

Safeguarding

News

Saturday November

Up to 40 teenagers trafficked from private schools

As many as 40 Vietnamese children at risk of being trafficked are now thought to have vanished from private schools after entering Britain on student visas, *The Times* has learnt.

Suspected trafficking gangs are using legitimate visas sponsored by the schools to bring children as young as 15 into the UK. The pupils then disappear, this newspaper revealed this week.

At least 24 teenagers who went missing after enrolling at boarding schools and private colleges in the past four years have been identified.

Sources in the private education sector believe that the true figure may be double that number.

The Times has found three more boarding schools where Vietnamese teenagers vanished in the first year, bringing the number of institutions known to have been caught up in the scandal to nine.

The students are typically recruited by overseas education agents and pay a term's fees upfront, then go missing. Many are at risk of exploitation in nail bars, cannabis farms and brothels.

One girl who disappeared at 16 has been missing for three years and others

Behind

Independent schools panicked about the disappearance of Vietnamese students long before their cases were made public (Joshi Herrmann writes).

In 2016 Cambridge Tutors College in Croydon, south London, sent a senior

staff member to Hanoi to check the agents used to find students. Chelsea Independent College, from where eight students have vanished since 2015, put pupils on watch and, according to a Whitehall source, told civil servants that

recruitment from Vietnam was being suspended. One college employee said: "Everyone was scrambling to work out where the girls had gone and who might be next. These were teenage girls and they disappeared into thin air."

include a 17-year-old girl who disappeared in January 2017 from Bosworth Independent College in Northampton, where international students pay up to £33,000 a year.

The same month another girl failed to return to Padworth College in Berkshire after Christmas. The school, where fees for boarders are £30,000, did not confirm if she had been found.

Mander Portman Woodward operates private colleges in Birmingham, Cambridge and London and is owned by the US education group Kaplan Inc. They confirmed that a teenage boy enrolled in autumn 2016 but failed to return after half term. They immediately alerted the authorities. The charity Missing People said the cases were "particularly startling as they are going missing from places where they should have been safe".

The missing children arrived in the UK on Tier 4 child visas, which are sponsored by schools and do not require an English language test.

Robin Fletcher, chief executive of the Boarding Schools Association, said it had asked members to review recruitment policies and make additional checks to safeguard pupil welfare.

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Pham Thi Tra My, 26

Nguyen Huy Hung, 15

Nung's Story:

My name is Nung and I am 14 years old. I am from China and I came to the UK with my parents. I am keen on having a good education and I love football. My parents and I agreed that it would be best if I remain in the UK so that I have the opportunity to get the best education and of course access the best football training. My parents have returned to China and I now live with a host family in Enfield. I attend a private school in Hammersmith and I go back to China during school holidays. I speak to my parents every day and I also visit my cousin Luo, who lives in Birmingham with his host family.

Amika's Story:

My name is Tamika and I am 7 years old. I lived with my parents from when I was born, up until my parents separated 2 years ago. My dad could not live in the UK and returned to Zimbabwe. My mum became unwell and found it difficult to take me to school, play with me, or even cook for me. My mum and dad talked about how hard things were for me.

They agreed that it was best that I stayed with my mum's friend, Shona, until my mum got better. I was happy about this because I already knew Shona and her children. The good thing about living with Shona is that I get to speak to my mum, my dad, and Shona takes me to visit my mum. I guess I will go back to my mum's when she gets better again.

Gary's Story:

I am Gary and I am 14 years old. I live with my best friend Thao and his parents. I left home because I did not get on with my mum's new boyfriend and my half-sister. My dad lives far away, he works full time and has no spare room for me. My dad is happy for me to stay with Thao's parents and he gives them money for my upkeep. I am happy living with Thao and his parents, however, my mum is not happy with this arrangement.

The people looking after Nung, Tamika and Gary are private foster carers

What can Nung's, Tamika's, and Gary's private foster carers do

- Do everything that parents do for their children.
- Give regular meals.
- Make sure that they have warm clean clothes and their own bed
- Make sure they go to school.
- Take them to the doctor or hospital if they are unwell, PF to ensure the child is registered with a GP
- Make sure they have a chance to make friends and enjoy extracurricular activities.
- Help them to stay in touch with family and their social worker.
- Respect things that are important to them and their family such as religion, culture and diet.

What private foster carers cannot do

The following acknowledges that the child/children being privately fostered have parents with parental responsibilities

So private foster carers cannot:

Change the child's/children's name

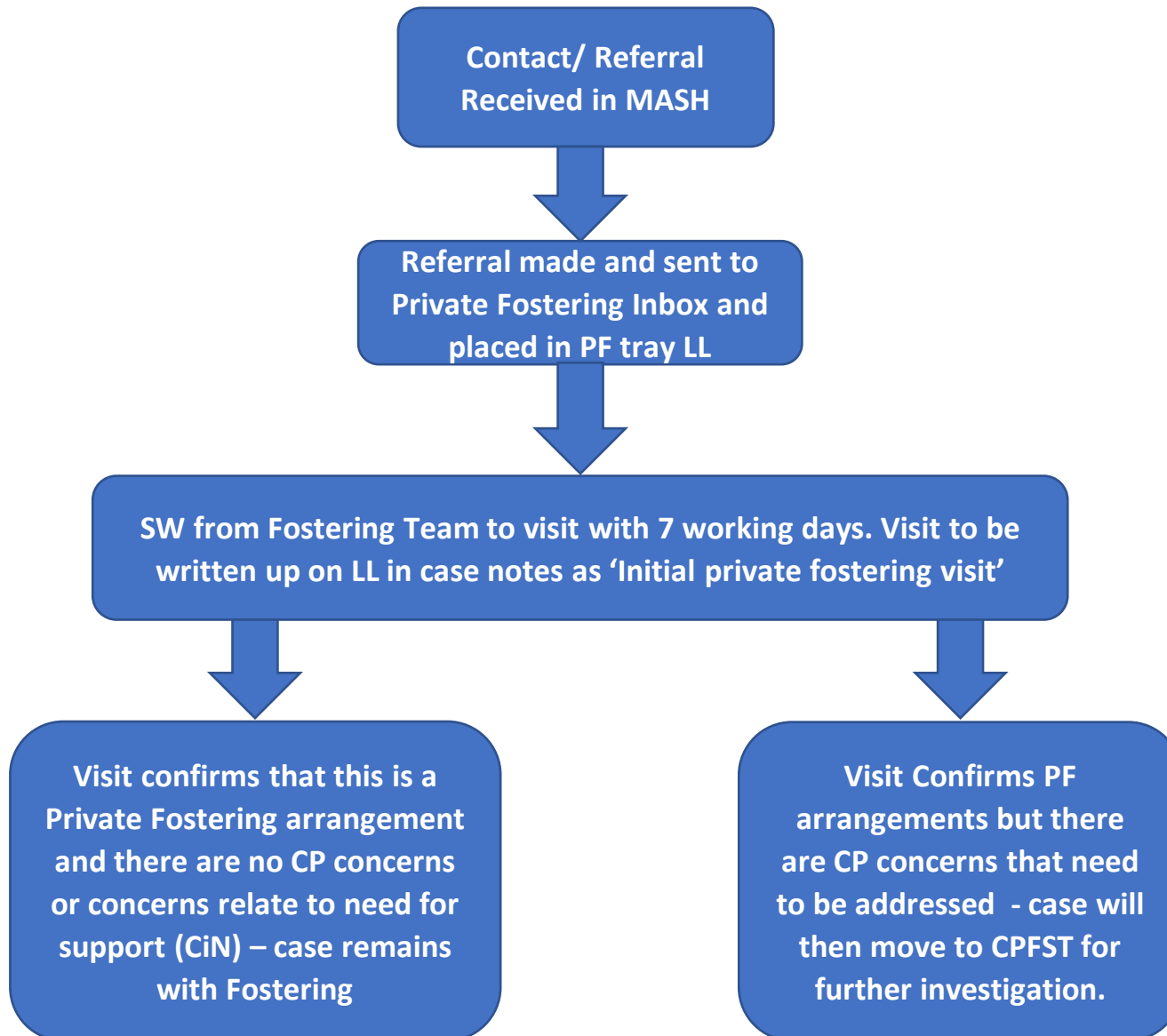
Change the child's/children's school

Move the child/children to another family

Take the child/children to another part of the country or another country without your parents' permission

Make decisions regarding any urgent medical treatment. The child's/children's parent/s must agree to this. If parents cannot be contacted, the doctor will decide on the best thing to do.

Private Fostering Processes



Private Fostering Processes

Case allocated and PF is in place. PF assessment opened from the referral and completed. Check the data base to see if carer or child is known



PF visit confirms placement is appropriate (within 7 days of notification). Child seen and spoken to. Request for details of Personal references taken . DBS checks of all over 16 to be undertaken



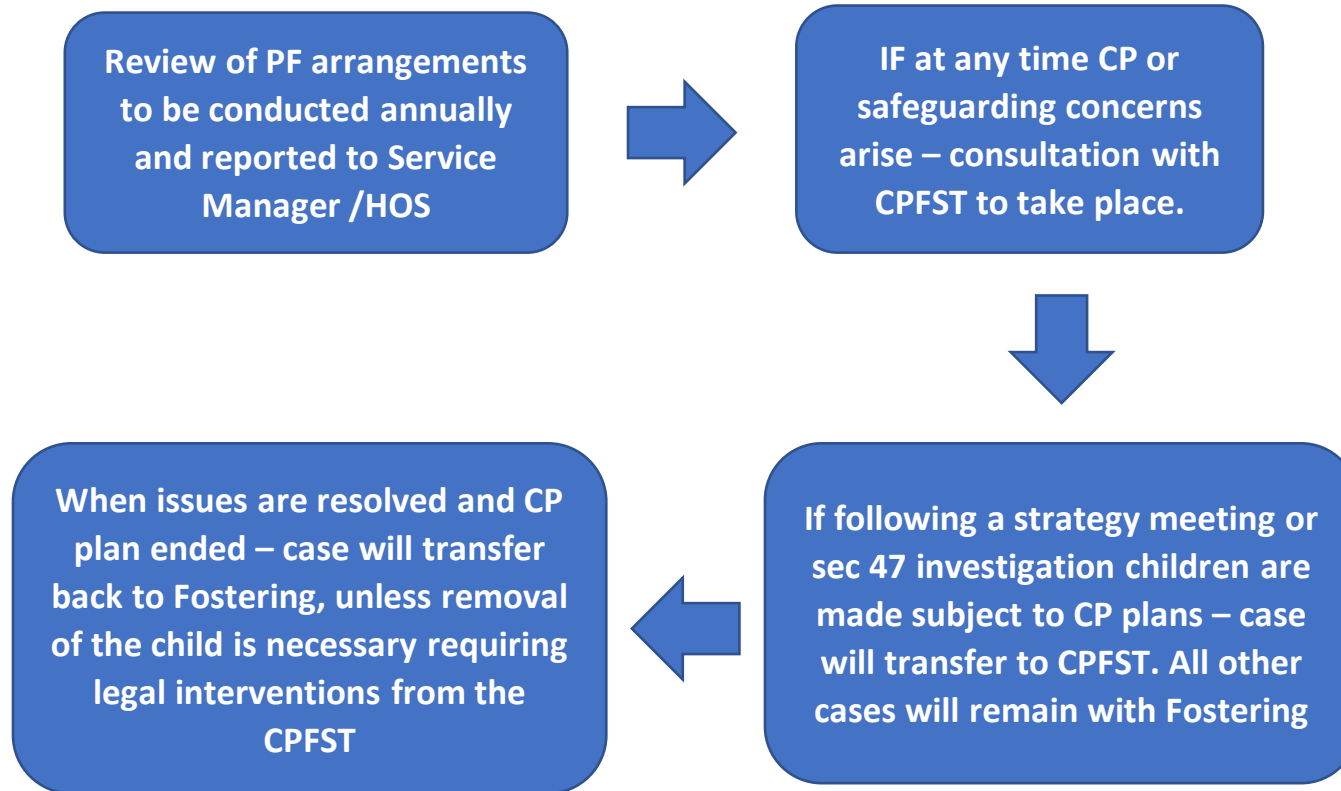
Visits continue at a minimum of 1 every 6 weeks for the 1st year. PF assessment to be completed within 45 working days.

In 2nd year – visits can be at a minimum of 1 in every 12 weeks.



PF – pathway to be opened so that Assessment can begin

Private Fostering Processes



Who to contact?

If you know of a private fostering arrangement, then you **must** contact Enfield's Children's Services MASH team in the first instance


MASH, ENFIELD CHILDREN'S SERVICES - TEL: 0208 379 5555

WWW.ENFIELD.GOV.UK/CHILDRENSPORTAL

Children's Portal


[Home](#) / [Children, Young People and Families](#)

Make a referral




Click here to make a referral to Child Protection or Family Support

Information, advice and guidance






Click here for inventory of services

Fostering/Adoption enquiry



Click here if you want to enquire about being an adopter / foster carer

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Any Questions?