



**COUNTY DURHAM LINK**  
**(Local Involvement Network)**

**Health  
matters**

**Report on the findings by  
children and young people in the  
Durham Dales**



# County Durham LINK

## Health Research by children & young people

### Durham Dales

This report is based upon information received directly from children and young people across the Durham Dales area during June 2009.

The project has been led by Robert Fothergill (Participation Worker for Children, Young People and Families) at 2D, Support for the Voluntary & Community Sector of Durham Dales.

The research involved direct contact with 241 children and young people aged 5-22 years from geographical locations covering the Durham Dales area (formerly Teesdale and Wear Valley districts).

To carry out the research, Robert worked directly with Tommy Lee Shaw and Daniel Robson (young people who took a lead on the project). Thanks are expressed to Parkside Community College and Sunnybrow Primary School for permitting each of them time from school over the 2 weeks of research.

## Who Are We?

### Tommi-Lee Shaw:

My name is Tommi-Lee. I am 10 years old and go to Sunnybrow Primary School. I like to play football and support Manchester United. When I am older I would like to be a professional footballer.

I have enjoyed doing this work because it has been fun and I got to meet new people and find out what they like about hospitals and other things.

### Daniel Robson:

My name is Daniel Robson. I live in Crook. I am 14 years old and go to Parkside sports collage. I play rugby for County Durham I support Newcastle Falcons I also like helping younger kids and disabled kids. When I leave school I would like to work with disabled children and go to different schools.

I have enjoyed working with Robert Fothergill because I like going into different schools and talking to different people and people with different ability's. I also like going to different places.

## These are the groups that we went to speak with:

GROUP NAME	AGES	NUMBER
Bishop Barrington School	11-16	10
BTCV Young Volunteers	16-22	5
Connexions Youth Forum	14-18	2
Coundon Play Project	5-11	22
Dene Valley Breakfast Club	5-11	25
Evenwood Primary School Council	7-11	8
Evergreen School Council	8-11	10
Frosterley Primary School – Year 4-6	8-11	30
Gainford Primary School – Year 5/6	9-11	31
Hamsterley Play Project	5-11	16
Jack Drum Arts Group	5-19	38
King James I Community College Student Council	11-16	22
St John Chapel Primary School – Year 5/6	9-11	9
Startforth Primary School – Year 6	10-11	13
TOTAL	5-22	241

## What does this information tell you?

The information in this report is the quotes that the children and young people wrote down, just as they said it.

We have not attempted to prioritise the order of the notes because sometimes one thing that is important to one child is not important to others. Also there are examples that are working in some areas of the Durham Dales that are not working in other areas.

Hopefully this is an easy and light read over a coffee but the information in the report is very important and needs some action to be taken.





# Health Service Review Sheet

The Local Involvement Networks or 'LINKs' would like to know your opinions on the local health service and what changes, if any, you would like to make.

Today's date: .....

Which Village/ Town do you live in?	How old are you?

Please tick which service you are reviewing:

			
Ambulance	Hospital	Doctors surgery	Pharmacy/chemist

What did you think of the service? Please leave your comments in the appropriate box.

	Empty space for comments
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Please turn over the page...



This work is being carried out by Daniel Robson and Tommi Lee Shaw supported by Robert Fothergill, Children and Young People's Worker for 2D on behalf of The Local Involvement Networks or 'LINKs'.

# Ambulances

## **GOOD THINGS ABOUT AMBULANCES:**

1. They are polite.
2. I knew what was going on and they told me what was happening when I had to get an ambulance for my dad.
3. I felt like I was in good hands.
4. Arrived within 5 minutes (Willington)
5. I went straight to hospital in the ambulance and didn't have to wait when I got there
6. They helped me a lot and had a man doctor and a girl doctor in it which was really good because I wanted to talk to the girl doctor
7. It was really quick and they treated everything in the ambulance.
8. Everything was understandable and I got told what was happening.
9. Paramedic car was able to help whilst we were waiting for the ambulance to come.
10. The treatment was excellent
11. They explained in a language I could understand easily
12. They gave me a mask to help me breath and stay alive
13. My headteacher had moved me to the office and the ambulance men told her off because she could have hurt me really bad. Now the teachers know what to do in case someone else gets hurt badly.
14. It was really fast and exciting
15. They talked and laughed with me to make me feel better
16. My first aid course had helped me because I had already looked round an ambulance and wasn't worried about going in one
17. They helped me think of something positive
18. The driver and people in it are helpful and kind
19. They asked me questions to check that I understood what they were saying to me
20. They really helped when I got barbed wire stuck in my foot. They gave me a wheelchair to get into hospital and the doctors all checked me to see if it was infected

## **BAD EXPERIENCES WITH AMBULANCES:**

1. They didn't have the appropriate equipment for my eye when I got something in it
2. My mam rang NHS direct and they said go straight to hospital but when we went they didn't know anything about it and we had to wait
3. I was confused and worried about what was happening.
4. They tried telling me what was wrong but it didn't make sense and I got angry

5. I didn't understand what they were saying and thought it was more serious
6. It was scary and I didn't trust them to get it right. I thought it would all go wrong like on TV
7. When the crowd gathered there was no one to hold them back
8. There was nothing in the ambulance to put over my eye when I got glass in it so they just used cream and sellotape

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO AMBULANCES:**

1. Be calm when working because the rushing round makes you panic even more.
2. NHS Direct should advise hospital if they tell someone to go so they can prepare for them
3. Talk to us in a language we can understand because otherwise we just get more worried that things are worse than they are
4. Work with St John Ambulance and other first aid courses so people have the chance to look round ambulances and not be afraid about going in one
5. Make them lighter inside because they are dark and scary and look very frightening places to go inside
6. They should have a CCTV outside because they get grief from people when they are just trying to do their jobs
7. Someone should keep an eye on the back of the ambulance to stop things getting nicked and to keep an eye open for help

# Pharmacy/Chemist

## **GOOD THINGS ABOUT PHARMACIES/CHEMISTS:**

1. The clinic on Eston Road (Bishop Auckland) works really well for Chlamydia testing – there is no pressure on you because lots of people go there for different reasons so no one knows
2. It is good that you can get Chlamydia testing with a friend and not have to go on your own
3. I think it is good because we get our prescriptions delivered
4. Generally most of them are friendly
5. When you can get tablets from the doctors surgery it is much better

## **BAD EXPERIENCES WITH PHARMACIES/CHEMISTS:**

1. The doctor sent us to get some medicine but when we got there the man had left and we had to wait until the next day
2. My mum's best friend works there and I wouldn't want to ask any private questions in case she found out
3. They didn't have the right medicine that my doctor said so we had to go all the way to Bishop for it.
4. You get looked down on by staff if you are young and buying condoms from the larger pharmacies (especially Boots)
5. Young people get watched all the time and they make comments if you buy a lot of condoms. They wouldn't say it to adults so why should they say it to us?
6. Condoms are too expensive and should be more easy to buy from places like youth clubs and young volunteers where you know the workers
7. Condom machines are hidden away in toilets but overcharge so we don't use them from there
8. Freepost Chlamydia testing doesn't work. You have to still pay for the postage because it isn't recognised and often the results don't come back.
9. It feels like you are being watched all the time. You are embarrassed because of what you are buying but they make you feel worse by watching all the time because they think you are suspicious
10. There should be somewhere in upper dales to get medicines and free testing so we don't have to go all the way to Bishop because you know the staff or they shut early

11. I had to wait a long time at the desk to get my medicine after the doctor told us what I needed.
12. Wolsingham didn't have a lot of stuff when I went there for when I was ill, it was under-stocked
13. The seats are really uncomfortable
14. They don't always have the medicines on they day they are needed
15. The service can be really slow
16. Sometimes chemists haven't been told by the doctors that you are coming to get a prescription so you have to wait whilst they check it
17. Some chemists don't have the prescriptions in and you have to order them and go back in a few days
18. If Stanhope doesn't have the medicine in you have to get a bus to Wolsingham
19. The doctors closes at 5pm but the chemist closes at 4pm so you can't pick up the prescription if you go to the doctors after school time

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO PHARMACIES OR CHEMISTS:**

1. There should be more chemists inside the doctors that open at the same time
2. They should have somewhere to wait instead of blocking the way for everyone who is shopping there
3. Cost of condoms from vending machines should be cheaper
4. Talk to us like anyone else, not like we are nothing
5. There should be more options for testing for sexually transmitted diseases
6. You could do sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment in a special room at the youth centre if the nurses were based there. This would only work if the access was through the youth workers office or everyone would know why you were going in and it wouldn't get used.
7. The posters say if you want a free pregnancy test you have to ask for it. This is embarrassing because people could be listening. There should be a free example box that can be picked up next to the ones you pay for and when it gets scanned someone could come and ask you to go through for the test without anyone realising.
8. Pharmacies should have a private room where you can talk and get some advice.
9. Have better seating when you have to wait for prescriptions
10. There should be better parking outside chemist shops
11. Doctors and chemists should talk to each other to arrange the same closing times

# Doctor's Surgery

## GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE DOCTORS:

1. Doctor's waiting rooms are really nice for little children
2. They are helpful and tell you how far the nearest chemist is
3. You normally only have to wait about 10 minutes
4. The doctor had a clear voice and he was kind and helpful (Stanhope)
5. My doctor was very kind because he gave up his time to help my bad tummy
6. I think this service is good because they listen to you and try to understand how they can help you
7. You don't have to wait very long at Escomb Road surgery
8. They are polite most of the time
9. The doctors explain to me what's going on. Obviously because I am 15 this is important that I know and understand
10. The doctors treat you with respect
11. I like it when you get stickers for being good
12. Barnard Castle doctors are good at telling you what is wrong in a way you can understand
13. I had green poo from what I had eaten and was embarrassed but the doctors helped me not to be embarrassed
14. Everyone was really nice and told you exactly what was happening.
15. It was really quick and I could go straight in.
16. They were really kind and cheerful.
17. The fish at Butterknowle waiting room is really pretty to watch
18. They were really quick in sending me a note when I needed to go to hospital.
19. The doctor explained what was going on with my knee and cleaned all the sand out and then put a dressing straight on without hurting me
20. Nurse takes good care when the doctor is busy (Coundon)
21. Dr Rohan at Barnard Castle got me straight into Darlo – He wrote the note and off I went; wonderful man!
22. Gainford doctor's is real good because they are kind and got the appointment over really quick.
23. Gainford surgery is always clean
24. Darlington doctors is very big with lots of things to do for all ages whilst you are waiting and the building is very clean.
25. I find that the doctors can give you very insightful comments to learn about yourself more
26. Doctors rooms are well-signposted, high-tech and useful with nice chairs

## **BAD EXPERIENCES WITH DOCTORS:**

1. The waiting room is for toddlers and adults not for teenagers.
2. Doctors talk to the parents and not to the child about their illness.
3. There is nothing much in doctor's waiting rooms for older children
4. I didn't like it because the waiting room is very boring and there's nothing to do
5. They say we can't use electronic games or mobiles because it affects equipment but the people at reception have private calls on their own mobiles so it must be OK to use
6. Seats are uncomfortable
7. I don't like it when they speak to me like a kid; I would rather be spoken to like an adult
8. They sometimes ignore you or talk over you to an adult or because they are more interested in something else
9. When I went to the doctors in Stanhope to get my varucca frozen off they pushed the cold stick till I said it hurt but then they did it twice more.
10. My mum booked an appointment for 5.10pm and she didn't get seen until 6.20pm because 3 people all had the same appointment time and the doctor had been on call and was late back.
11. I went in because paracetamol wasn't working but the doctor just prescribed more paracetamol.
12. I can never find the right room.
13. I had a foot problem but had to go to the furthest away room even though there was a closer option.
14. Some doctors aren't as hygienic as others.
15. When you go and see a doctor at Gainford you have to wait ages for an appointment, even days sometimes. When you actually get there on time you have to wait to be called out.
16. Someone in my family went to Gainford doctors with a bad toe and they said it was just a bruise but she went to A&E and if she had been an hour later she would have got her foot taken off.
17. They should be more organised because they lost the document for my brother about whether he had a injection for measles or not
18. They can smell a bit
19. Adults looked down on me and made me feel uncomfortable
20. Waiting rooms are dull and boring colours
21. It is embarrassing when you have to have a full physical check up
22. You can't book an appointment in advance
23. Inconsistency of doctors for long-term problems. Each simply read my health history from my file. It took ages, and 3 misdiagnoses before I was referred to a specialist.
24. I came out feeling like they hadn't listened to a word I said
25. They were behind time so they just rushed me in and out and never reassured me at all
26. When you go you sometimes have a few things wrong that you have been saving up and you keep the worst til last but don't get chance to tell them because they stop listening after the first 2 things
27. Young people are often treated with disdain

28. I phoned in the morning but found they were already fully booked
29. If you leave the problem to see if it gets worse instead of bothering them with little things, you get wronged for leaving it so long and not going sooner
30. You are made to feel bad about waiting when you are already worried
31. Bishopgate Medical Centre wouldn't listen and thought I was just making up illnesses and how I felt
32. The self check-in isn't easy to use when you have learning difficulties like dyslexia
33. You should be allowed to use your DS or Gameboy but they don't let you because they say it affects machines, but I saw the lady at reception answer her mobile so I know they are lying
34. The doctor in St John Chapel only gave me drops for my ear and it didn't work so I went to Stanhope and they used a syringe to make it better
35. The children's play area in Frosterley needs replacing. It hasn't changed for lots of years

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR DOCTORS:**

1. Have a system where older children can bring their old magazines to be used in the waiting rooms by others
2. Buy more magazines and games for older children
3. Older children should be allowed to use DS and X-Box in the waiting rooms
4. Get more comfy seats in waiting rooms
5. Make sure all appointments are on time when booked rather than having to wait around for ages
6. Explain things more and tell us exactly what is wrong; not using long complicated words
7. Doctors and reception workers should address the person who is ill.
8. Doctors surgeries in the upper dales areas should be bigger to deal with more illnesses instead of having to go all the way to Bishop Auckland
9. If you are late for an appointment you should have to wait instead of making other people wait when they arrive on time.
10. There should be clearer signs for the doctors rooms in Barnard Castle so you don't get lost when looking for them.
11. Find something better than needles, I hate them
12. They should speed up to make room for more patients or get more staff.
13. They should learn more, otherwise someone could get seriously ill.
14. They should make the appointments half an hour later so that when they keep you waiting you are not late getting called through

15. There should be more private rooms that are clearly marked and easy to find.
16. They should explain more about the medicines they tell you to take
17. Buy a tin of paint for the waiting room
18. Have a collection point at school for old magazines for the waiting rooms (like Spongebob, Dr Who, bike and racing magazines, dinosaur comics, etc)
19. The toys need cleaning at St John Chapel because they are the same ones that were there when I was really little and they look dirty now.
20. Old magazines should be got rid of because they spread germs when everyone passes them around.
21. Have an internet café or library in the surgery to get money to keep the surgeries open in the dales
22. Change the air fresheners to more exotic smells
23. Have comfy chairs because the rough ones hurt the backs of your legs when you wear a skirt in Frosterley
24. Change the colour of the walls to be brighter because blue makes you feel cold and sad

# Hospital

## GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE HOSPITALS:

1. Most of the doctors, nurses and other workers are nice and speak kindly
2. It is always clean when I have been there
3. I could understand what they were saying
4. Its OK because the ambulance gets to the hospital in time and the nurses look after you just right; everything is just right, like it should be
5. The doctor was nice and we had things to play with where we waited
6. I didn't wait for long and they cured me fast
7. I had an OK bed, not that comfy but it was OK I guess, I liked it anyway
8. I got to choose the colour of my cast for my sling
9. They showed me the x-rays and explained what was wrong
10. I have been in hospital many times before and always have a very good impression
11. The nurses at Darlington asked me often if I needed anything
12. When I was 7 years old I had grommets and they let me drive an electric car, this was really good and helped me relax
13. The nurses and doctors sometimes come to play with you in the playroom which is fun for them and for us (Bishop Auckland)
14. I saw the nurses washing their hands and felt happy
15. When I had my injection I had a choice to either get it done right at that moment or get it numbed, I chose to get it numbed.
16. I liked it when they gave me a sticker
17. Alston hospital is really good and better than Bishop Auckland
18. The toast at Darlo is wicked, its worth getting ill just to taste it
19. The scar from my stitches disappeared completely
20. My parents could stay at hospital so they were near me (Bishop Auckland)
21. I stayed in hospital for 10 days and the nurses were nice all the time (Bishop Auckland)
22. I knew they cared for me (Bishop Auckland) because they were always coming to see if I was OK or if I needed anything.
23. The doctor was a rugby trainer and knew about sports injuries so I felt safe in his hands when I chipped my elbow
24. My legs were like jelly and I had dizzy spells where I walked into walls but they helped my ears work better and now I look forward to going to hospital for check up because they are really good
25. When I visited granddad at the Richardson hospital in Barnard Castle the nurses talked to me and made me feel good
26. I had to wait about an hour but they kept on telling me where the doctor was and why he was busy with someone else so that was OK

27. I used to have a fear of needles but when I said this they just said they could numb my arm with cream and I never felt anything, now that fear has gone
28. One of my kidneys doesn't work and I have to return every year but they are good and I don't mind going at all
29. The hand gel is a really good idea
30. If you have an operation booked in on the day, you get in very quickly
31. When my brother had a broken leg he got an appointment straight away even when there were lots of other people there
32. They had a button you press if you need anything which I think is a good idea
33. The partners of young parents can stay in overnight at Bishop hospital

## **BAD EXPERIENCES WITH HOSPITALS:**

1. I don't like the needles going in me, its horrible
2. It is scary seeing all the needles and drugs 'cos they think they are all out for you even when they are not
3. Grandad couldn't come to visit me because he was working when it was visiting time
4. When I went to visit Nana I sat on the end of her bed and it was uncomfortable; Nana said it wasn't comfy either
5. The smell is bad as soon as you go in to the hospitals, it smells like dead people (I think)
6. I had to walk all the way round to the operation room with my mum instead of with the staff and we got lost
7. I wasn't sure of the situation and didn't know what was going on
8. Hospital food isn't too good
9. I had to walk quite a way from the car park to the hospital doors and my arm was broken, it was quite a pain
10. I didn't like the position they said I had to be in when I had a sprained ankle and it hurt
11. The toys and books in the playroom and the TV and videos in there were all a bit dusty and dirty (Bishop Auckland)
12. When they took my blood pressure it kept getting tighter and I was worried that it wasn't going to stop and my arm would drop off
13. I split my toe and went to hospital in the late afternoon and ended up having to stay overnight when I wasn't meant to. I had to stay about 12 hours with no food or drink
14. I found it hard to understand the doctor's accent and didn't know what he was saying but was too frightened to ask
15. I had to stay in outpatients all night and didn't know what was happening (Darlo Memorial) and then they said in the morning that I needed a sling (I could have told them that)

16. My uncle was staying in hospital for a long time and was getting better but then he collapsed just before we went into his room and the doctor didn't come to see him for almost an hour. I was really scared for him.
17. I went to Bishop Hospital and waited for 7 hours in A&E then they said it was just a sprain and I had to go home
18. The nurse don't tell you what is happening and take ages to come back (Darlo hospital)
19. At Darlington A&E they just said my arm was not broken but they didn't tell me what was wrong with it
20. They used a Hoover to get 3 peas out of my nose and it felt like they were going to suck my brains out
21. I didn't like it because I broke my collarbone and it hurt but they never gave me an x-ray
22. You have to walk on your hurt foot when you hurt it
23. When a relative has had a baby you're not allowed to see them unless you are an adult (Darlington)
24. Someone I know took about 3 years on the waiting list to have an operation
25. I wasn't allowed to see my brother when he had pneumonia and I had to wait 3 hours before I could see him and the doctor never explained to me why I couldn't go in (Darlington)
26. In the games room I couldn't play on the games because I only had one hand free cos I broke my arm
27. I went at night time and there were about 10-11 teenagers and they were sitting in the waiting room. I don't think that was very good, they were drunk.
28. We had to wear a pinafore when we visited a friend, we should wear no pinafores
29. The doctors made us leave because they said there were too many people visiting at the same time
30. I didn't feel comfortable having an x-ray in a room all by myself
31. I would like to have had a choice of a woman doctor or nurse because I feel more comfortable with a woman.
32. We went to visit granddad because he was really ill but we couldn't find him and no one knew what had happened to him. We were worried but then 30 mins later we found out he was waiting to go home
33. The beds were too high to get into or out of
34. I had a severe migraine and was left to sit in tears in front of everyone for over half an hour before anyone came to me
35. They wouldn't send any transport when I broke my foot and they told me off for walking on it
36. Partners of young parents get sent home at Durham hospital instead of being allowed to stay
37. You shouldn't have to pay for car parking
38. My 2-year-old brother was on a drip to get liquid into him because he couldn't drink, but they got it all wrong and had to take it out and do it again
39. I had red spots all over my back and was scared because I had to stay overnight but mum wasn't allowed to stay with me

40. They didn't have any small bandages so gave me a big one for my foot and made it so I couldn't walk properly
41. They only talk to parents and ignore us. They even asked my parents how much calpol I had taken
42. I had a broken leg but was told to sit down for an hour and wait for an ambulance to take me from Bishop to Darlo

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR HOSPITALS:**

1. Have more doctors & nurses to go round the wards
2. Make the rooms more colourful instead of dull colours that make you feel more ill
3. Have more stickers for being brave at hospital
4. Improve the times people can come to visit because some are at work in the visiting times
5. They should have a space where children can watch TV or do games when they get bored visiting someone
6. Have more fun stuff and things to do in the waiting area so we don't get bored and irritable and annoy everyone else
7. You could have the public car park before the staff one (Durham) because it is really complicated when you go there for the first time
8. Have somewhere near the doors when you can drop off someone who can't walk far because of the pain
9. Let parents stay next to you when you are in x-ray
10. On the children's ward the rooms need a new coat of paint
11. They should clean and dust the playroom and toys more often
12. The doctors should speak slower so we can hear what they say to us
13. The medicines should taste better so we will take them and get better
14. They should serve food and drinks for when you get there after tea has finished because it is a long time to breakfast and I was real hungry
15. Have someone dealing with less serious cases even when they are busy so the waiting time isn't as long and there is less pressure on the doctors
16. They should change the blankets more often because mine were covered with blood after I was bitten by a dog and I had no clean place to lie down
17. Slow down a bit when doing an operation. The rushing and panic makes me feel worse.
18. Let us have somewhere to go outside and get some fresh air
19. Have more easy ways to get inside
20. Better food for the people who have to stay in hospital
21. Don't put so much salt in the food
22. Have easier to read signs at Darlo telling us where to go.
23. Spray some refreshing smelly stuff to make it smell better
24. Anyone can see a relative's baby no matter how old you are

25. They should hang the help button on a wall or somewhere because I accidentally pressed it when it was next to me and someone came to help me when I didn't need them
26. Have a limit of time and numbers so you don't have a problem like noisy drunk teenagers
27. Give patients a choice of man or woman doctor because some of us may have been hurt by a man before
28. Make more rooms for children because they mostly have all the rooms full
29. Other nurses should know where the patients are if they have been moved from a ward or room
30. The directional signs could be more specific
31. Publicise which hospital to go to for which illness so we don't go to the wrong one and have to move again
32. Have a paper ticket system to display in your car window if you have an appointment so you don't have to pay for car parking
33. Don't be ignorant and ignore us; if you are busy then apologise for keeping us waiting instead of looking down on us
34. The hospital at Bishop should be able to do basic first aid (like strapping up fingers) instead of having to go to Darlo
35. I got a pot fitted at Sunderland when I was there and had to go all the way back to get it changed because they wouldn't do it at Bishop

## What happens next?

As you can see from these findings, they are vast and varied and will need prioritising as the LINK group move forward. If we, or others, can help further with this please get in touch at:

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## Thanks

Sincere thanks are expressed to:

- Daniel Robson
- Tommy Lee Shaw
- 2D colleagues
- Coundon Play Project
- Teesdale Play Project
- Dene Valley Breakfast Club
- Bishop Barrington School
- Evenwood Primary School
- Evergreen School
- Frosterley Primary School
- Gainford Primary School
- King James I Community College
- Parkside Community Sports College
- St John Chapel Primary School
- Startforth Primary School
- Sunnybrow Primary School
- Jack Drum Arts
- BTCV Young Volunteers
- Connexions



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