



Next Steps Education AP Quality Framework

Update June 2025

This document combines the ALIGN Alternative Provision Draft Quality Framework and Centre for Social Justice AP Quality Toolkit and acts as a record of policies and procedures in place within Next Steps Education, as well as setting a framework for future development and improvement.

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1.1	All staff, volunteers and proprietors have appropriate recruitment checks including an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check, which are recorded on a single central register, and persons failing to meet those checks are not employed or contracted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers who take part in recruitment of staff/contractors have appropriate Safer Recruitment training which is updated regularly. Managers can provide written evidence of actions taken if/when recruitment of staff/contractors is prevented following checks. Audits are carried out periodically to ensure up to date records. 	<p>Sarah/ Ellen completed Safer Recruitment Training updated April/ May 2025. Liz completed Safer Recruitment Training January 2024.</p> <p>Ellen keeping evidence trail of recruitment.</p> <p>Single Central Record updated</p> <p>Safer Recruitment Policy</p> <p>Robust and transparent recruitment process with safeguarding at the heart.</p>
1.2	Appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children are in place and are accessible to relevant parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies are reviewed and updated annually in line with KCSIE and taking account of local need and best practice. 	<p>Policies reviewed January/ February 2025.</p> <p>Ongoing timetable for policy reviews.</p> <p>Updated policies on website</p> <p>Parents, tutors sign to say they have read policies</p>
1.3	Staff are aware of the content of safeguarding policies and procedures and implement them effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff/contractors, volunteers and proprietors read policies on induction and annually thereafter, and a record is kept to confirm that they have done so. Periodic refresher activities take place to remind 	<p>Processes in place for policy reading on induction (Ellen keeps a record and tutors sign to say they have read via Signable)</p> <p>Monthly email to all tutors with safeguarding question and then follow up with model answer 3 days later.</p>

		<p>staff/contractors of policy content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff, contractors and volunteers all read yearly updates to KCSIE part 	KCSIE record updated Sep 2024 with SSS Training now in place for 2025 updates
1.4	Robust procedures are set out for recording and escalating concerns and the actions taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies include clear directions on reporting and escalating concerns. Staff and/or contractors are trained to use the procedures correctly and this training is reinforced regularly through emails, at team meetings and via additional training sessions. A culture is in place, throughout the provision, of professional curiosity and willingness to challenge. An effective information management system is in place which will record concerns and prompt appropriate follow up. Daily debriefs take place among staff/contractors to share any concerns and provide support if needed. Where contractors are used, they are included in any debriefing mechanisms. 	<p>Policies and links to safeguarding forms in the Virtual Staff Room – all tutors have access.</p> <p>Staff Handbook has clear instructions around safeguarding procedures, reporting and recording</p> <p>Safeguarding prompt on every lesson report with low level concerns recorded (not visible to clients or parents, just DSL team & IT Lead)</p> <p>Safeguarding questions sent monthly</p> <p>Open door to management team to raise concerns. For those working in outreach, meeting link shared on every email, meeting button in Virtual Staff Room, regular contact with outreach tutors to discuss student progress.</p>
1.5	Access to pupils using the provision is restricted to registered pupils, the organisation's own staff and/or contractors and supervised visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessments are in place to ensure pupils are appropriately supervised by staff/contractors at all times, whether on or off site. Risk assessments include generic and site-specific risks (for example, staff to pupil ratios), taking into account the needs of individual pupils, and local geographic/community factors. 	<p>Front door locked at all times</p> <p>All staff wear ID badges, visitors signed in & accompanied by staff</p> <p>Premises risk assessment completed yearly and reviewed half termly</p> <p>Staff to pupil ratios generally 1:1 except groups of 1:6</p>
1.6	There is a safeguarding lead at the provision who has received appropriate, documented training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A DSL is trained to a minimum of Level 3 and this training is refreshed regularly. The DSL(s) is/are aware of local risks and resources and best practice for mitigating these. Sufficient Deputy DSLs are appointed and appropriately trained to ensure there is effective DSL cover at all times. The work of the DSL and team is monitored and reviewed by an external 'critical friend' who is not directly involved in the day-to-day work of the provision. 	<p>Both Liz and Ellen are trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding. Li is DSL and Ellen DDSL</p> <p>Next Steps is connected with local authority MASH, MARU and other agencies for Safeguarding</p> <p>Next Steps Education works with BeautifulMindset in Essex (Rachel Dodson) who is a similar AP provider in the South East. Rachel acts as our critical friend and we support each other in Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment, amongst other things. Further, a local headteacher and chair of their learning community will complete a safeguarding audit in September 2025</p>

1.7	Where appropriate, pupils with needs relating to health, disability or a special educational need should have individualised plans in place to help meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils at the provision have individualised plans in place which address their needs and take into account their views. • Each pupil at the provision has an individual risk assessment in place which takes into account their needs and any local factors. • Plans are live documents which are adjusted as and when needed and reviewed formally with pupils and their parents/carers at least annually. • Risk Assessments are live documents which are reviewed at least annually and after every incident or new piece of information received. • Staff/contractors are trained to manage risk effectively but are not entirely risk-averse, so that pupils are offered a range of opportunities. 	<p>We start with a relational learning call or meeting to build a picture of the student and their family. This supports us in creating a risk assessment for each student.</p> <p>Plans and documents are shared with tutors in a Microsoft Team, individualised for each student. Tutors update Teams to inform other tutors and Next Steps management team of any further risks</p> <p>Review meetings happen every half term for students where information is shared amongst the professional team around the student</p> <p>Educational visits training is available on our SSS Training platform.</p> <p>A generic 'All Trips' assessment is available on our Virtual Staff Room and tutors are trained and supported to complete it.</p> <p>A visit log is kept up to date by Ellen</p>
1.8	Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the provision's activities/curriculum, and through interactions with staff/contractors on a day-to-day basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies are in place to help pupils understand risks in the online and 'real' worlds and to understand the impact they can have through their own decision-making. • Pupils are offered opportunities to use their learning in everyday situations and to reflect on and review their experiences with each other and with staff/contractors. 	<p>Tutors take a relational approach with students, supporting a range of activities that offer personal development opportunities</p> <p>We're beginning to use AQA units around online and real-life safety, managing risks and supporting decision-making</p> <p>Posters are displayed in the centre around the computer area regarding online safety</p> <p>Further steps: training to outreach tutors in online safety</p>
1.9	Pupils feel a sense of belonging and emotional safety at the provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are policies in place, which are based on need and optimise inclusion, to encourage positive and kind behaviour. • Staff/contractors are trained to create and sustain relationships of warmth and unconditional positive regard with pupils, and training is refreshed regularly. • Fun is understood in the provision as an important need and the reward for learning. 	<p>All policies build from our organisation values, the main one being People First! Policies are designed around inclusion and are needs led</p> <p>Staff are taken on for both their skills in education and their empathetic nature</p> <p>Staff are trained in ACEs & Trauma Informed Practice and follow a relational approach to learning</p> <p>Staff have autonomy to design their own lessons and starting points with students, using their relational plan as a guide</p>
2. Health and Safety			
	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence

2.1	An up-to-date Health & Safety policy is signed and dated and has been reviewed in the last 12 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy changes are effectively communicated to all staff/contractors. Health & Safety Risk Assessments are in place for each location and each activity carried out. Care is taken to ensure health and safety risks are well managed and balanced against the need for pupils to take risks that allow them to learn and thrive Correct procedures are carried out for all off-site trips and visits. Health and safety is a standing agenda item at relevant management or partnership meetings. 	<p>Health & Safety Policy</p> <p>H&S Executive Poster displayed at centre</p> <p>Health & Safety Walk Records for centre – policy updated & adjustments made as required</p> <p>Educational Visits Training (Ellen)</p> <p>Generic All Trips Risk Assessment in Virtual Staff Room and training/ support available to staff/ contractors</p> <p>First Aid and Educational Visits training on SSS in Autumn Term</p> <p>Educational Visits log kept</p> <p>Network of professional advice/ support available, such as discussing OAA with EVC at Skern Lodge</p>
2.2	Health & Safety training is provided to all staff and kept up to date, including risk assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The H&S policy is included in the staff/contractor induction process. All H&S training is recorded by specific type (ie. asbestos, fire training). There is an identified trained health and safety person within the provision who has the relevant level of training. All staff/contractors receive effective and documented health and safety training in their induction. 	<p>H&S Policy included in induction pack</p> <p>Training recorded in SSS Training portal (fire safety, fire marshall, first aid, etc). The portal keeps a record of who has undergone training</p> <p>Health & Safety Lead (Sarah) undertaken training through SSS portal</p>
2.3	Site safety inspections are undertaken termly and documented if a site is part of the provision. If provision is delivered at home, homes are subject to an initial risk assessment. If provision is delivered in the community, community settings have an individual risk assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations arising from previous inspections have been actioned and plans for improvement are continuously reviewed. Risk assessments are updated to reflect changes in provision delivery (from home provision to the Next Steps Home Rooms, for example). 	<p>Centre H&S walks conducted half-termly and records kept in Premises folder. Improvements are immediate and continuous</p> <p>Community provisions are being contacted for their letters of assurance that they are risk assessed (to mitigate risk community settings are usually local authority libraries)</p> <p>Homes are not currently risk assessed by our management team but our tutors complete a detailed checklist on their first session that is then shared on the student's Microsoft Team.</p>

			<p>Our Relational Learning Lead has specific questions about suitable learning spaces at home/ pets, etc in her initial call and tutors are aware of this information before a first tuition session in the home</p> <p>Tutors are asked to debrief after a first tuition session as part of our lone working policy</p>
2.4	A Fire Risk Assessment has been completed / reviewed within the last 12 months. Fire alarms have been tested and records have been kept of all fire alarms and fire drills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fire Risk Assessment sets out how the provision meets and exceeds its obligations under Health & Safety Law. • The provision is satisfied that an appropriate Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out at any community location that is used. 	<p>Fire risk assessment completed May 2024 for Next Steps Education premises. Fire alarms tested weekly by company employed by our landlord, as they have properties upstairs from us.</p> <p>Fire risk assessments have not been requested from community locations, however, to mitigate this we only use local authority locations such as libraries, or school locations when partnering with some MATs</p>
2.5	A sufficient number of fire marshalls have been appointed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriate person is available at all times at each site where staff/contractors and pupils attend. • Staff/contractors are able to identify fire marshalls at any activity location used by the provision, including external locations. 	<p>Sarah, Liz and Ellen all trained as fire marshalls and all have hi-vis fire marshall jackets on hand.</p> <p>Fire marshall poster displayed in the centre (kitchen, office, reception)</p>
2.6	A fire evacuation plan is in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fire evacuation plan is reviewed regularly and a record is kept. 	<p>Fire evacuation policy in place. Fire procedures in wall pockets in every room in the centre, along with room H&S checklist. Tutors are asked to familiarise themselves with procedures when using each room.</p>
2.7	An adequate number of first aiders are trained, or all are trained, if lone working. First aid boxes are stored in appropriate places and maintained, with no unapproved content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid training is regular and specific to the activities undertaken by the provision (outdoor first aid, for example). • A log of checks to first aid items is kept and reviewed as part of regular risk assessment planning. • An accessibility plan is in place for hazardous substances or equipment. 	<p>All tutors asked to train in first aid via SSS training portal during the Autumn Term</p> <p>First aid kit, log and cleaning resources for emergencies kept in the kitchen</p> <p>First aid log on wall above the first aid kit with instructions to record used resources</p> <p>Personal first aid kits supplied to all tutors when taking students off premises</p> <p>Yellow first aid bin available</p> <p>Contract with South West Hygiene to change hazardous waste/ personal hygiene bins regularly</p> <p>Hazardous substances, sharp implements and cleaning products are locked in a cupboard with a digital code</p>

2.8	Pupils with medical needs and allergies are clearly identified and an annual review of care plans is undertaken for those with more significant needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff/contractors are aware of all food related allergies and receive appropriate training related to these. 	<p>Parents are asked to give details of medical needs and allergies in relational learning call/ meeting. This is then distributed to all relevant tutors and staff</p> <p>Major Allergen posters displayed in the kitchen and in the home room (where students cook)</p> <p>We do not currently accept or administer medication and would ask parents to attend sessions if this is needed.</p> <p>Outreach students are always accompanied by a responsible adult who would administer medication if needed.</p> <p>Plans are in place for online allergen training in September, which will be recorded and added to the Virtual Staff Room</p>
3. Admissions Guidance & Support			
	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence
3.1	There is a written policy on admissions, which details the types of needs the provision is able to meet/support and cater for as part of the criteria for admission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision has carefully mapped out the types of needs they are able to meet safely and those they are not able to meet and has provided a clear rationale as to why. There is a clear assessment process for deciding whether a provision works with a pupil, relevant and specific to the type of AP. Everyone in the provision is clear about their admissions criteria and remains committed to this. Commissioners/referrers are clear about the provision's admissions criteria because this is well communicated. The admissions policy is on the provision's website and is reviewed/updated annually. 	<p>We do not operate on an admissions basis as we are not a registered school. However, we do have an Admissions Policy outlining where we can meet a student's needs and consider each student on an individual basis</p> <p>We use a referral form to gather initial information on a student to see where and how we can meet need.</p> <p>Our Admissions Policy is on our website</p>
3.2	A referral form with key information is completed by the referrer/commissioner. This, along with the referral paperwork, is reviewed (including EHCP if there is one).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks/discussions take place with key professionals involved (for example, a social worker) to gain a detailed understanding of risks etc. A "Team Around the Child" meeting takes place and includes the pupil, the home school, AP, outside agencies and the family (if appropriate). 	<p>A referral form is sent to any prospective client as a first source of information</p> <p>Follow-up calls with key school/ local authority professionals are made to discuss the required support for students</p> <p>Review meetings, usually initiated by the school or local authority, take place on a 6-weekly/ half termly basis</p>

3.3	Pupil voice is collected as part of the referral process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A home/school visit takes place to meet the pupil (where possible) and the pupil's likes, dislikes, and aspirations are captured. • If the provision is unable to meet with the pupil, the provision discusses parent(s)/carer(s) and reviews the EHCP/recent Annual Review for the pupil's views. 	<p>Relational Learning Plan gathers the pupil and parent voice</p> <p>Parent welcome email includes a walk-through of the centre (Next Steps Home Rooms) where appropriate</p> <p>Pre-placement visits are encouraged and some students visit prior to commencement of a placement (parental choice)</p> <p>A Parent/ Student Handbook is sent out to all parents via email. Plans are in place to have this on a Parent Page on the website by Autumn Term 2025</p> <p>We share updated EHCPs we receive with tutors and attend EHCP review meetings when we are asked to attend.</p> <p>We contribute to EHCP Hubs or similar when we are asked</p>
3.4	Individualised Risk Assessment/Personal Safety Plan/Individual Safety Plan /Behaviour Plan, including health & safety information, (i.e.allergies and medical/health conditions) is created with initial information from early-stage assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document (s) is developed which acts as an individual pupil plan, including the information you would find on the documents detailed in foundational requirements. This includes initial information gained via the initial assessment process. • These documents are checked by parent(s)/carer(s) and other professionals/school staff. • This is a live document which needs to be added to/adapted throughout the pupil's journey. 	<p>Our Relational Learning Plan is our individual pupil plan</p> <p>Documents are created in conjunction with parents and carers</p> <p>The Relational Learning Plan can be shared with schools and local authority key professionals on request</p> <p>The Relational Learning Plan remains a live document that is updated where necessary during a student's time at Next Steps Education</p>
3.5	A "contract" or parental agreement as well as parental consent/ visits permission/ photographs & social media permission are all in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permissions are accurate and up to date and the staff team knows where these are. • These are checked and included as part of the risk assessment process. • There is clarity for parent(s)/carer(s) and the provision about the expectations set for pupils and those who support them. • Parent(s)/ carer(s) "buy in" to a positive start before the placement begins. 	<p>Parents sign the Parent/ Student handbook prior to placement and details are added to our secure online portal</p> <p>The handbook includes permissions, medical notes, allergies, expectations of parents and students and provision ethos statements</p> <p>Our initial Relational Learning call sets parents up with a positive start and a no-judgement approach. Parents are told they are part of our team to support their child</p>
3.6	Baseline assessments (academic, SEMH).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last assessments/levels are communicated by prior/current provision. • Baseline assessments are performed during the 	<p>We use a Readiness to Reintegrate matrix developed by Devon County Council</p>

		<p>first term of provision, where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments are carried out creatively and are personalised in order to meet the needs of the pupil. 	<p>The Relational Learning Plan provides us with an informal baseline assessment for SEMH, behaviour and attitude to learning</p> <p>Academic assessments are formative rather than summative, apart from where students will be GCSE entrants</p> <p>AQA Unit Award Scheme offers opportunities to assess and show progress over time and are aligned to individual student needs</p>
4 Quality of Education (Curriculum)			
	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence
4.1	There is a written policy on the “curriculum”, which details the unique nature of the learning provided and how learning is recorded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “curriculum” policy sets out the overall approach to the “curriculum” (i.e what frameworks/curricula/approaches are used) including a rationale for why this is most appropriate. Where academic learning is not part of the provision’s offer, the “curriculum” policy sets out how learning of other kinds will be delivered (through what activities) and through what approach to learning. The policy contains clear and detailed plans for how the “curriculum” will be implemented. The policy sets out how progress through the “curriculum” is planned, sequenced and recorded. 	<p>We have a written Curriculum Policy that includes intent, implementation and impact</p> <p>We have a curriculum intent for KS1 and KS2, Reading and separate curriculum intents for KS3 and KS4</p> <p>We have curriculum intents for GCSE subjects that students enter through our centre (English Lang, English Lit, Maths, History)</p> <p>We use AQA Unit Award Scheme on an individualised basis for a life-skills based curriculum that is sequenced and recorded</p> <p>When we work with students who are dual rolled with a school we align with the school’s curriculum to facilitate easy reintegration back into school</p>
4.2	The “curriculum” is reflective of and appropriate to the type of Alternative Provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative provisions come in all shapes and sizes; the “curriculum” must be appropriate to the type of provision on offer. The “curriculum” is creative in its delivery, with a pupil-centred focus. The “curriculum” is flexible enough to be individualised where necessary. The “curriculum” has an overarching framework/plan, that allows the provision to demonstrate progression in skills and knowledge, through levelling (or similar). Individual targets should be identifiable from a “curriculum” framework/approach. The “curriculum”, where possible, incorporates 	<p>The Curriculum Policy outlines our individualised approach to learning</p> <p>Pupils' interests, drawn both from the Relational Learning Plan and what we discover about them, drive our lesson planning</p> <p>Gaps in knowledge and understanding are addressed with a personalised approach</p> <p>Targets from other settings are incorporated where applicable in order to move learning forward and achieve aims</p> <p>Targets are modified through a collegic approach during review meetings</p>

		targets from any other provisions the pupil is accessing as part of an AP package, or from the mainstream school (if appropriate).	
4.3	The “curriculum” takes into account the individual pupils’ ages, aptitudes and needs, including those with an EHC plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “curriculum” has the flexibility to adapt to individual pupils’ needs and stages of development, remaining pupil-centred. • If KS3 - KS5/ up to 25 years, is being taught, the “curriculum” provides the option of qualifications relevant to the type of “curriculum” delivery (for example, Functional Skills or a Unit Award Programme). • If a pupil with an EHC plan is being educated, the “curriculum” incorporates all areas of the EHC plan: Communication & Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory and Physical i.e. sensory and self-regulation strategies. 	<p>In addition to 4.2</p> <p>AQA Unit Awards provide the flexibility to adapt to students’ individual needs</p> <p>Tutors are aware of EHCP targets and design sessions to encompass them</p>
4.4	The “curriculum” includes elements related to relationships, health, sexual health and economic wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements from PHSE and RSE frameworks are embedded in the AP’s curriculum. • The curriculum covers areas such as (but not limited to) health and wellbeing, relationships, living in the wider world, diversity, consent and the laws around sex and sexual acts. • The “curriculum” embeds these in a way which is accessible to all. • Leaders can demonstrate how PHSE/RSE topics are embedded, through cross-curricular mapping or other. 	<p>We have an RSE Statement of Intent which covers areas such as (but not limited to) health and wellbeing, relationships, living in the wider world, diversity, consent and the laws around sex and sexual acts.</p> <p>AQA Unit Awards provide a framework for PSHE and RSE</p>
4.5	The “curriculum” will embed, where appropriate, career advice and next step discussions, such as independent living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “curriculum” includes career advice and next step discussions. • Life, and work skills, are embedded into the “curriculum” and, if post-16 is being taught, there is an increased focus on this. 	<p>Our Year 11 work, where appropriate and mentors are in place, guides students on next steps and supports transitions into FE placements or other career options</p> <p>AQA Unit Awards address life and work skills where students are working with a mentor</p>
4.6	Appropriately qualified and experienced staff are in place to deliver the educational programmes that are provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision has a Teaching and Learning policy that details how teaching meets the needs of the pupils that it works with. • The provision ensures that, where academic 	<p>A Teaching & Learning Policy is in place</p> <p>All staff and contractors are suitably qualified for the subjects and key stages that they deliver, including where these are vocational skills</p>

		<p>subjects are delivered, a suitably qualified and experienced teacher oversees academic subject provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision ensures that all academic subjects are taught by a suitably experienced team member who is able to apply principles of good teaching. • The provision ensures that vocational subjects are delivered by subject specialists who have access to suitable resources and relevant equipment. 	
4.7	The provision demonstrates effective working relationships with external partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to provide effective educational provision, the provision has a suitably robust approach to gaining historical baseline information, which would include EHC plan outcomes, and might also include numeracy and literacy levels. • The provision has a suitable form of agreement between themselves and external referring partners that clarifies expectations and outcomes. • The provision has a clear policy and approach to sharing information (such attendance, attainment and progression) with referring agencies. • The provision demonstrates an ethos of professional collaboration with parent(s)/carer(s) to achieve positive outcomes. 	<p>Next Steps Education works closely with key professions across education, youth justice, CAMHS, social work, local authorities, SEND Advisors, police, paediatricians, ed psychs, etc</p> <p>A robust referral process is in place and contracts/ agreements are signed by all parties prior to a placement starting</p> <p>A GDPR Policy is in place, including a process for SAR</p> <p>We agree on an individual basis how we will share attendance data</p> <p>Next Steps Education emails lesson reports securely to all relevant parties in agreement with the paying client</p> <p>Next Steps Education collaborates with parents, emphasising and fostering a sense of belonging for the whole family</p> <p>All non-attendance is followed up swiftly with parents in a supportive manner</p>
4.8	The provision has a strong ethos focussed on behavioural support and positive trusting relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision has a suitable behaviour policy that articulates its approach to behaviour management. • In a provision that uses Physical Interventions (PIs), a clear policy is in place that articulates a PI-reduction approach seeking to maintain trust and relationships. • The provision draws clear links between consistent behaviour management and quality teaching and learning. 	<p>Next Steps Education follows a relational approach, treating all behaviour as communication</p> <p>In the Parent/ Student handbook we have clear expectations for behaviours written in a positive, relatable way</p> <p>We have made a conscious decision NOT to train our staff in positive handling. Students are risk assessed individually and relational approaches & parent support is encouraged rather than Physical Intervention</p>

4.10	Pupils' progress is assessed formatively on a continual basis from their own individual starting points, both SEMH and academic progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A baseline is established when pupils enter provision and is reviewed as the pupil progresses. • Information from initial assessment is used to plan activities so that pupils can progress. • Gaps in learning are identified quickly through initial assessment, and underpinning knowledge is prioritised. • Changes to provision are mapped so that the impact (for example, of an increase or decrease in teaching hours) can be taken into account for planning purposes. 	<p>Each session includes a lesson report, which shows a broad academic level of attainment</p> <p>Readiness to Reintegrate and Attitude to Learning are recorded after each session</p> <p>The Readiness to Reintegrate Matrix designed by DCC is used periodically through the placement</p> <p>Gaps in learning are assessed, addressed and adaptive teaching strategies are used to underpin knowledge</p> <p>Regular review meetings address changes in provision according to individual need</p>
4.11	Appropriate data about pupil assessment outcomes is collected and reviewed. A written record of the assessment of pupils' progress (whether academic or other) is kept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear system for recording progress in all areas is in place, and gaps in data are identified and addressed. • The provision ensures that the data is sufficiently detailed and is collected regularly enough that it can be used to direct how activities are delivered. • Written records of how progress data from assessment is taken into consideration in planning future activities are kept. • Written records are shared with pupils' registered school(s) and the local authority, and a proactive approach to information sharing is established. 	<p>Session reports broadly address the items in this standard, however, we do not summatively assess students as a matter of course. The exception to this may occur with GCSE level students dual-rolled with schools who wish them to sit exams.</p> <p>Where schools have asked us to undertake summative assessments for a student we facilitate this</p>
4.12	A regular written report of each pupil's progress and attainment is provided to the parents of that pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports show the full range of progress made from the pupil's individual starting point(s) and/or over the time period concerned. • Reports detail attendance, behaviour, social-emotional progress, academic progress (where appropriate), and progress towards set aims as a minimum. 	<p>Session reports are provided after each session</p> <p>Attendance reports can be generated as and when clients require them. This is generally included in review meeting data</p> <p>Our attendance at review meetings feeds back into pupil progress</p>
4.14	Members of the provision's teaching staff have a good understanding and knowledge of the subject areas within which they are carrying out assessment duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject specialists are consulted and deployed (where appropriate) to ensure content is up to date and relevant. • Cross-curricular mapping is taken into account in the assessment of pupils so that achievement can be identified across a broad range of activities 	<p>All our tutors are qualified and experienced teachers and are deployed on a subject/ key stage basis</p> <p>The SSS Training portal used for tutor training and an annual training calendar is used</p> <p>Students have individual pathway, so cross-curricula mapping is not used</p>

		<p>where learning is embedded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular ongoing training is provided to staff/contractors involved in assessment activities. External assessment is carried out by awarding bodies (where appropriate) and quality assurance visits are up to date. 	We are currently building in training for assessments including AQA UAS
4.15	Assessment methods are suited to the needs of pupils and the demands of the subject or subjects being taught.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A detailed rationale for assessment methods used is part of a written Curriculum Policy and/or Teaching and Learning Policy. Planning for assessment meetings take place regularly and take into consideration reasonable adjustments and differentiation in approach at the individual pupil level. 	<p>Our formative assessment approach is detailed in our Teaching & Learning policy</p> <p>Formative and informal planning for assessment is conducted by tutors. All differentiate and adjust sessions to suit students.</p>
5. Outcomes for pupils (including transition)			
5	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence
5.1	Opportunities for achievement are provided to all pupils, with a focus on supporting both academic and wellbeing outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisions make clear in their published information what the opportunities for achievement are (whether academic, social-emotional or other) including the levels that pupils can expect to achieve. Where qualifications are offered, progress towards these is carefully tracked to show even the smallest steps towards success. Where social and emotional progress is tracked and/or prioritised, clear systems are in place to evidence positive outcomes over time. Achievements are documented and celebrated so that pupils can evidence them. Where online provision is offered, a clear plan for how social and emotional well-being (for example, appropriate interaction with peers and physical exercise) will be taken into consideration as part of planning outcomes for pupils. 	<p>AQA Unit Assessment Scheme provides small steps at suitable levels for each student</p> <p>We do not currently publish information on opportunities for achievements.</p> <p>Readiness to Reintegrate grid by DCC is used to track social and emotional progress where needed</p> <p>Lesson reports are used for documentation and the unit Award Scheme celebrates achievements and helps students build a portfolio</p> <p>Online groups do not currently run. Where we tutor online this is a 1:1 basis</p>
5.2	Systems are in place to support smooth transitions into the provision and then on to other suitable full-time placements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision makes use of student plans / EHCP/ IEP (if applicable) and transition plans. Communication with previous school/current school is done in advance of the placement and key strengths/areas of concern are identified. 	Next Steps works closely with schools and supports transitions into and out of our service or operate alongside schools.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined up working (between school and the provision) on transition allows information to be shared in both directions in a timely manner. • Visits take place, where possible, between provisions. 	<p>EHCP & other documentation is shared with tutors to help them build a picture of the student</p> <p>Communication with schools is key to our service, with attendance reports, absences, safeguarding and lesson reports all shared with the home school</p> <p>Visits happen between schools and ourselves. Where schools and Next Steps work more remotely, Next Steps makes at least annual visits where possible and shares our frameworks, policies, letters of assurance and any other business or education documentation that enables a smooth working relationship</p>
5.3	Leaders have robust plans in place to identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils when evaluating pupils' attainment and progress on entry and leaving the provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in progress are identified early, and plans are established to address these. • Tracking systems are used to monitor attendance, assessment, safeguarding, behaviour, and attainment. • Leaders regularly review data in key areas such as attendance, assessment, safeguarding, behaviour, and attainment. 	<p>Our Relational Learning Plans create assessments on entry and the Readiness to Reintegrate Matrix is used on exit. Session reports can be shared with a returning or new setting and mentors are available to help a student settle back into the routine of school where this is requested</p> <p>Next Steps monitors student experience and development, not by using data, but by using our comprehensive knowledge of the child, their likes, dislikes, progress and behaviours. We do however have a clear process for monitoring attendance. Attendance is tracked for safeguarding purposes and to share with schools on an ongoing basis and as a half termly data trail.</p>
5.4	Robust plans are in place for Post-16 and Post-18 career pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for adulthood is planned with long term goals; plans are collaborative and parent(s)/carer(s) are encouraged to contribute fully. • Destination tracking is used so that progress post-provision can be monitored. 	<p>We are able to support students with career pathways but this is only appropriate when our Y11s are being mentored</p> <p>Parent follow ups happen after Y11 leave & GCSE results come out. We keep in touch with students informally contacting parents to hold students in mind</p>
5.5	Systems and staff support pupils on entry to provision and exit on a daily basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/contractors ensure pupils are greeted and supported so that needs are identified and students are supported with self-regulation. • The provision ensures that staff/contractors understand the pupil's previous negative educational experiences, but care is taken to always provide a fresh start. 	<p>All pupils are welcomed into Next Steps on an individual basis and according to their need and level of social interaction. Sometimes this will be on a 1:1 basis with their tutor and at other times a student will quickly get to know our whole team.</p> <p>Relational Learning Plans support tutors with the whole picture from a family point of view and allows tutors insight into a student's and family's motivations, experiences and wishes</p>
5.6	Movement around the provision is supported by a calm, safe environment which meets the needs of pupils when	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions in and out community settings are backed up with a detailed individual risk assessment plan. • All staff/contractors are consistent and work towards creating a calm and safe environment. 	<p>We take great care when supporting anxious students. This might be by starting sessions in a home environment, timetabling students to quieter times of the day, allowing parents to stay in our reception whilst sessions take place.</p> <p>Calm behaviour is modelled by all staff and tutors at all times.</p>

	transitioning around the site or other setting(s).	<p>This includes those who deliver online learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff/contractors model calm, respectful interactions taking care to avoid double standards in behaviour. 	
5.7	Clear communication pathways with further education provision and outside agencies are established to ensure detailed transitions are evident, especially in relation to safeguarding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular scheduled reviews at a MAM (Multi Agency Meeting) are planned for. Where appropriate, a TAC (Team Around the Child) meeting takes place. Professionals are held accountable with clear roles and responsibilities when disseminating information, especially in relation to safeguarding. 	<p>Handovers are encouraged to next provision or where a student attends another provision as part of their education experience</p> <p>A Next Steps representative attends all relevant meetings about a student in our service, including EHCP reviews, TACs, TAFs, CIN, medical discharges, along with half termly review meetings</p> <p>Next Steps has a clear Safeguarding structure & process that is shared between our tutors. This includes monthly Safeguarding questions & answers, processes and forms clearly displayed in our Virtual Staff Room, DSL and DDSL training and processes for sharing with relevant key professionals where necessary</p>
5.8	Long term goals and plans are in place to support pupils' transition back into formal education/next steps (where appropriate).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems are reviewed in line with MAM and updated to support a clear understanding of the pupil's needs. A clear, fully evidenced rationale for a return to mainstream school or continued provision in AP is developed at each review point. The provision's process for ensuring that pupils do not become unnecessarily institutionalised in AP is included in the admissions policy. 	<p>Aims and goals established with school team/ LA team</p> <p>We identify as a temporary provision. Our service is delivered on an hourly rate and can be cancelled with 72 hours' notice. We are committed to working with the best interests of the student at the heart of what we do.</p> <p>We support integration by tracking a student's readiness to reintegrate and by working with our clients towards their aims and wishes for their student.</p>
5.9	The behaviour and safeguarding policies set out how transitions work within the provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies include details of specific transition support and are consistent with information provided to pupils, parents/carers, other professionals, and agencies. 	N/A

6. Focus on Children and Young People

	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence
6.1	Pupil voice is gathered on entry and exit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil voice is gathered and reviewed regularly in termly review meetings and ad hoc. The Teaching & Learning policy sets out how activities that promote the inclusion of pupil voice will be embedded in the culture of the provision. 	<p>Students are asked for their input on relational learning plans.</p> <p>Students have access on the website to make anonymous suggestions via a Microsoft Form</p> <p>Student views are gathered by our Relational Learning Lead on exit via a call with parents & students</p>

6.2	The curriculum meets the requirements of core subjects with some foundational subjects – some SEMH skills are intertwined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “curriculum” meets the needs of the cohort to develop, for example, life skills, experience and vocational qualifications as well as SEMH skills. • Where academic learning is delivered, core requirements for literacy and numeracy and prioritised. 	<p>A student’s curriculum meets core requirements where this is requested by a client. Next Steps supports our clients and delivers a core curriculum where it is needed and appropriate. This is particularly relevant for our Y10 and Y11 GCSE students.</p> <p>SEMH skills are taught widely and a range of life skills are covered, adapted personally to a student’s interests and focussed on AQA Unit Awards</p>
6.3	The approach of the provision is based on an appropriate model for their pupils and this is applied consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision’s approach is well researched and takes into account the needs of each child. This may result in a range of approaches being adopted where a clear rationale for this is understood and applied. • Approaches to behaviour management are consistently applied and best practice is drawn from inclusive models (for example, relational or trauma-informed approaches). 	<p>Next Steps Education works 1:1 with most students, individualising provision for each child but following a well-researched relational approach</p> <p>Staff and tutors are trained in ACEs and apply trauma-informed thinking according to students’ needs</p>
6.4	Plans are developed on entry from the home school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are informative and reviewed regularly and shared with parent(s) / carer(s) as well as pupils. 	<p>Next Steps Education works with families to co-produce a Relational Learning Plan for their child</p> <p>Reviews take place every 6 weeks/ half term, and are generally set by schools or local authorities with attendance from Next Steps</p>
6.5	The provision has an understanding of the pupil’s background and how this could create barriers to learning. Baseline assessments are taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision takes into account the holistic background of each pupil and has robust assessment and tracking to support and evidence attainment and progression. 	<p>Formative baseline assessments are completed by tutors alongside the Relational Learning Plan</p> <p>Readiness to Reintegrate...</p>
6.6	The mental health and wellbeing of each pupil is considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mental health and wellbeing of each pupil is measured, supported and developed using a baseline assessment tool (for example, the Boxall Profile Online, or Thrive Online Assessment). • Pupils are provided with opportunities to access external resources to support good mental health and wellbeing. 	<p>Mental health is a priority...</p> <p>Access to Boxall on a seat-by-seat basis</p> <p>Resources for mental health, including displays and signposting are placed around the centre and on the website’s Student Page</p>
6.7	The pupil has access to in-house pastoral care and safeguarding as a priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil is signposted to outside agencies with early intervention as a key aspect. • The provision works with the pupil’s family and supports the development of trusting relationships between families and external services. 	<p>Tutors all take responsibility for some of their students’ pastoral care/ relational approach</p> <p>The Student Page on the website signposts to useful websites and organisations</p> <p>Management team & tutors work with parents & families to support students.</p>



			<p>Our service provides a free counselling service to parents struggling with their family situation</p> <p>We run parent hubs, supporting parents who feel lost, ashamed and isolated by their family situation</p>
6.8	Provision is based on clear rules and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision is based on values and beliefs systems which are reinforced by clear, achievable rules and boundaries. ● Staff/contractors model values, beliefs, rules and boundaries. 	Our values create the bedrock for our service. These are displayed in our centre, on our website, our Virtual Staff Room, our handbooks and within our social media
6.9	Plans are taken from the home school and adapted in line with the provision's systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual targeted plans feed into the EHCP/IEP and detail incremental steps of support for the pupil. ● Plans are adapted in line with age and stage as well as Annual Review processes. 	<p>Key professionals in school are consulted prior to placement and during placement and clear plans are requested on our referral documents</p> <p>Half termly review meetings between the home school (or local authority) update plans and targets based on tutor feedback and client aims</p>
6.10	The provision has a careers advisor who signposts pupils to career pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pathways are clear for preparation for adulthood and include the pupil voice as well as parent(s)/carer(s) involvement. 	Y11 Mentors support students with future education & employment
6.11	Staff understand all behaviour is communication and work hard to support young people to develop self-regulation skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff/contractors adopt an approach that builds on strengths and deploy unconditional positive regard as a baseline for interactions with pupils. ● Staff/contractors understand the elements that can play a part in a pupil needing support around their behaviour (i.e. attachment difficulties and trauma). ● Non-confrontational behaviour management techniques are used to de-escalate confrontations. ● Staff/contractors take a curious (rather than punitive) approach to understanding and managing behaviour. ● Staff/contractors continually model the positive behaviours they want to see, including via online learning environments. 	<p>Our service is built around a relational approach. Positive regard and holding in mind are baseline approaches for tutors.</p> <p>Tutors are trained in ACEs, supporting neurodivergent students, basic mental health approaches</p> <p>Behaviour expectations for tutors are clearly communicated in our training and virtual staff room</p>
7. Staffing			
	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence



7.1	The provision holds an up-to-date SCR demonstrating the safer recruitment of all staff and volunteers in line with DfE guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staff/contractor wellbeing strategy is in place. • The provision's infrastructure encourages support, communication, belonging and buy-in from staff/contractors. • Where provision is remote, the wellbeing of staff is taken into consideration and issues arising from lone working are mitigated via proactive leadership. 	<p>Both Ellen and Sarah are trained in Safer Recruitment and follow best practice for recruiting tutors</p> <p>Next Steps Education are Mindful Employers</p> <p>We have a flat hierarchy within the organisation, both supporting tutors and allowing their autonomy as trained professionals</p> <p>Tutors are asked to read our lone working policy before undertaking any remote work.</p> <p>Tutors are told to 'walk away' if they feel unsafe in a home environment</p> <p>Tutors are asked to call in after their first session with a student as a lone person safety check</p> <p>We operate an open-door policy where tutor well-being is encouraged. This includes a Book a Meeting link on the bottom of every director email, as well as clear links within the virtual staff room to book time with us, termly email prompts to encourage tutors to talk with us about any issues they are facing, yearly tutor surveys that look at what we've done well and how we can improve</p>
7.2	All staff have opportunities to debrief with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/contractors have access to regular external supervision. 	<p>Each student has a Microsoft Team for information sharing between outreach tutors, centre tutors, and management</p> <p>We operate an open-door policy where tutor well-being is encouraged. This includes a Book a Meeting link on the bottom of every director email, as well as clear links within the virtual staff room to book time with us, termly email prompts to encourage tutors to talk with us about any issues they are facing, yearly tutor surveys that look at what we've done well and how we can improve</p>
7.3	Staff have appropriate skills, experience, and expertise for their role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/contractors have specific training and knowledge around the needs of the pupils they work with. This includes specialist SEN training or QTS where appropriate. 	<p>All tutors are qualified teachers; all mentors have extensive experience working with children and young adults</p> <p>Many of our tutors are also SENDCos, have experience in PRUs, have mental health training, etc. We are selective about the tutors and mentors that we work with and only use people with a wide and varied experience and who display a high level of empathy for our students</p>
7.4	All staff and volunteers are trained appropriately for their role, this includes safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/contractors are given opportunities for development and learning in addition to statutory training. 	<p>All tutors and mentors are trained via our SSS Training portal</p>

	and health and safety along with first aid and fire safety where appropriate.		<p>Training is broken into essential (Safeguarding, CSE, FGM, Prevent, GDPR, First Aid, Fire Safety, ACEs) & extra training (a further 20-30 courses)</p> <p>The DSL sends out a safeguarding question and answer email monthly</p> <p>Management team runs virtual Staff Room meetings and further training. The staff room has an area dedicated to other useful training and resources we have found, a bank of SEND resources and previous training session recordings</p>
7.5	Staff have specific knowledge of the needs of their pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a regular CPD programme for staff/contractors in place which is targeted around the development priorities of the provision. CPD that focuses on specific diagnoses is available to staff/contractors (ie. ADHD, Autism, PDA). 	<p>The Relational Learning Plan is shared with all tutors</p> <p>Next Steps has a training schedule for the year which is sent out to tutors in September and communicated in both the induction pack and on the Virtual Staff Room</p>
7.6	Staff ratios support a safe learning environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratios and staffing numbers support flexibility and safety and allow for an immediate response to the needs of a pupil who is struggling. 	Tutors & Students work 1:1 with max ratio 1:6 with at least 1 other adult from management team on site.
7.7	The provision has enough staff to sustain itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff availability rarely affects the provision's ability to offer sessions to pupils. Each pupil has detailed (in their individual plan, or similar) whether they're able to cope with cover, or a new team. 	Students & tutors work on a 1:1 basis, sessions are rearranged where a student or tutor cannot attend. No cover is used.
8. Leadership			
	Foundational Requirements	Best Practice	Sources of Evidence
8.1	The provision has a clear leadership structure in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders have appropriate expertise and support in place, so leadership is continual and sustainable. The organisational structure is clearly documented and shared so that lines of accountability are clear. 	<p>Liz (Director) is CPD trained in Safeguarding (Level 3), Safer Recruitment, Fire Safety, as well as all other courses we expect our tutors to train in</p> <p>Sarah (Director) is CPD trained in Health & Safety, GDPR & Data Protection, Paediatric First Aid, Fire Safety, Safer Recruitment, as well as all other courses we expect our tutors to train in</p> <p>Ellen (Administrator) is CPD trained in Safeguarding (Level 3), Educational Visits Coordination, Paediatric First Aid, Fire Safety, Safer Recruitment, as well as all other courses we expect our tutors to train in</p> <p>Both directors also take opportunities to enhance business and management skills with further courses, reading and training</p>

			The organisational structure is shared in our induction book and in our Virtual Staff Room
8.2	Leaders have appropriate accountability in place for senior teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leaders have routes for external accountability and promote an openness to challenge and improvement from all stakeholders. ● Systems of appraisal and performance management are in place. ● Leaders are invested in contributing to and learning from local networks. 	<p>Next Steps works closely with many networks of provisions, including Devon AP group, Somerset AP group, The Tutors' Association, ALIGN and other Alternative Provisions and tuition companies nationally. We collaborate on local committees and groups such as One Atlantic, One Ilfracombe, the Kailo project and with organisations such as Devon Mental Health Alliance and relevant agencies and support services</p> <p>External Safeguarding Audits are performed annually by Headteacher/ chair of local leadership group</p> <p>There are working relationships between other alternative provision tuition businesses that act as sounding boards, dissemination of reports and information.</p>
8.3	Leaders can demonstrate financial sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leaders invest in growth and can demonstrate a successful business model. ● Leaders outsource or have in-house support for functions like HR and finance. 	Next Steps Education can demonstrate two years of accounts. Our sister company, Next Steps Tutors CIC (formerly an LLP) has been operational since 2022
8.4	Leaders understand the needs of the pupils in attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leaders have a clear purpose, driven by an understanding of the needs of their pupils and by ambitions for their success. ● Leaders take their own professional development seriously and seek opportunities to learn within local and national networks to ensure their own practice is up to date. 	The management team have at least annual strategy meetings to confirm the values and direction of the organisation. These are broken into Key objectives and strategic pillars and outline the developments we aim for in 90-day sequences
8.5	Leaders are ambitious for the pupils who attend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is evidence of successful outcomes and staff/contractors work towards significant change and ambitious outcomes for pupils. ● Leaders review the provision's offer regularly to ensure pupils can aspire to the greatest possible outcomes. 	<p>Both leaders and tutors are ambitious. We all work towards successful outcomes for students.</p> <p>Follow up calls are made with parents and former students are held in mind</p> <p>In 2024, none of our Y11 students became NEETs. Students went on to take FE vocational courses, A Levels, apprenticeships and jobs</p>
8.6	Leaders are aware of risks and manage these well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning is strategic and proactive, focusing on delivering for the needs of the pupils now and in their future. ● Leaders are constantly reviewing business continuity in light of national changes and budget restrictions. 	<p>The management team have at least annual strategy meetings to confirm the values and direction of the organisation. These are broken into Key objectives and strategic pillars and outline the developments we aim for in 90-day sequences</p> <p>There is a Business Continuity plan in place</p>



8.7	Leaders promote a culture of safety, inclusion and success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaders promote a clear ethos which is understood at all levels of the organisation.• Leaders are open to challenge and reflective in their approach to feedback from staff/contractors, pupils and stakeholders.	<p>Next Steps has a clear set of values that inform the strategic decisions and day to day work that we do</p> <p>We use our networks to challenge ourselves and benchmark against the work of other similar companies</p> <p>Tutors are asked to complete an annual survey that asks what worked well for them and what they suggest as improvements</p>
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