

Recorded Crime in Scotland: year ending September 2023

November 2023

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This quarterly Accredited Official Statistics bulletin presents information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland for the year ending September 2023. It also includes a comparison with the equivalent four previous years.

Key Points

The police in Scotland recorded 297,425 crimes in the year ending September 2023. This was 3% higher than the 287,374 crimes recorded in the year ending September 2022, but 3% lower than the 307,938 crimes recorded in the year ending September 2019.

It should be noted that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and associated measures to limit social contact, has had an impact on both the type and volume of crime recorded since March 2020. The largest impact was seen during year ending September 2021, and to a lesser extent the years ending September 2020 and 2022. The final legal restrictions were lifted in April 2022, meaning the most recent year (year ending September 2023) was not impacted by these restrictions.

In the year ending September 2023:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 3% higher compared to the year ending September 2022 (increasing from 69,353 to 71,571 crimes), and 5% higher compared to the year ending September 2019 (increasing from 68,170 to 71,571 crimes).
- Sexual crimes were 1% lower compared to the year ending September 2022 (decreasing from 14,838 to 14,704 crimes), but 8% higher compared to the year ending September 2019 (increasing from 13,566 to 14,704 crimes).
- Crimes of dishonesty were 8% higher compared to the year ending September 2022 (increasing from 100,246 to 108,153 crimes), but 4% lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 112,941 to 108,153 crimes).
- Damage and reckless behaviour was 5% lower compared to the year ending September 2022 (decreasing from 44,428 to 42,097 crimes), and 13% lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 48,305 to 42,097 crimes).
- Crimes against society were 4% higher compared to the year ending September 2022 (increasing from 58,473 to 60,900 crimes), but 6% lower

compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 64,956 to 60,900 crimes).

- Coronavirus restrictions were 100% lower compared to the year ending September 2022 (decreasing from 36 to 0). As noted above, the legislation used to record these crimes was introduced in March 2020.

The number of offences recorded by the police in Scotland in the year ending September 2023 was 173,762. This is 1% higher than the 172,657 offences recorded in the year ending September 2022, but 9% lower than the 190,520 offences recorded in the year ending September 2019.

- Antisocial offences were 10% lower compared to the year ending September 2022 (decreasing from 53,032 to 47,502 offences), and 22% lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 60,668 to 47,502 offences).
- Miscellaneous offences were 2% higher compared to the year ending September 2022 (increasing from 12,797 to 13,103 offences), and 19% higher compared to the year ending September 2019 (increasing from 11,031 to 13,103 offences).
- Road traffic offences were 6% higher compared to the year ending September 2022 (increasing from 106,828 to 113,157 offences), but 5% lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 118,821 to 113,157 offences).

Introduction

This quarterly Accredited Official Statistics bulletin presents information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland for the year ending September 2023. It also includes a comparison with the equivalent four previous years.

For additional and more detailed commentary on the recording of crimes and offences, including time series analysis over the longer term (back to 1971), statistics on cyber-crimes and clear-up rates, users should refer to the 2022-23 (or year ending March 2023) [Accredited Official Statistics bulletin](#).

Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police provide a measure of the volume of criminal activity with which the police are faced. Crimes recorded by the police do not reveal the incidence of all crimes committed as not all crimes are reported to the police. The other main source of crime statistics in Scotland is the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey \(SCJS\)](#), a national survey of adults (aged 16 and over) living in private households, which asks respondents about their experiences and perceptions of crime.

An Accredited Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are [accredited official statistics](#). The Office for Statistics Regulation has independently reviewed and accredited these statistics as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

These statistics were accredited in September 2016
[Assessment of statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland –
Office for Statistics Regulation \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](#)



Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

Amendments to the recording of Crimes and offences over the past five years

Users should note that some changes have been made to the recording of crimes and offences over the five years up to year ending September 2023. Most often this reflects the enactment of new legislation passed by either the Scottish or UK Parliaments, which can create new criminal offences or amend the existing

approach to recording some types of criminal activity. Other changes reflect decisions taken by the Scottish Crime Recording Board. These include:

- The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, which came into effect on 1 April 2019;
- A procedural change made to the recording of international crime, from 1 April 2020;
- The Coronavirus Act 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020, respectively;
- The implementation of the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted goods and services) (Scotland) Act 2021, which came into effect on 24 August 2021;
- The enactment of various sections of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 in June 2022 and March 2023.

The implementation of the Protection of Workers Act did not change the volume of crime being recorded. Prior to this, any assault of a retail worker would have been recorded as either a Common or Serious assault. From 24 August 2021 such cases are now recorded as either Common or Serious assault of a retail worker (with the same changes for threatening and abusive behaviour towards retail workers).

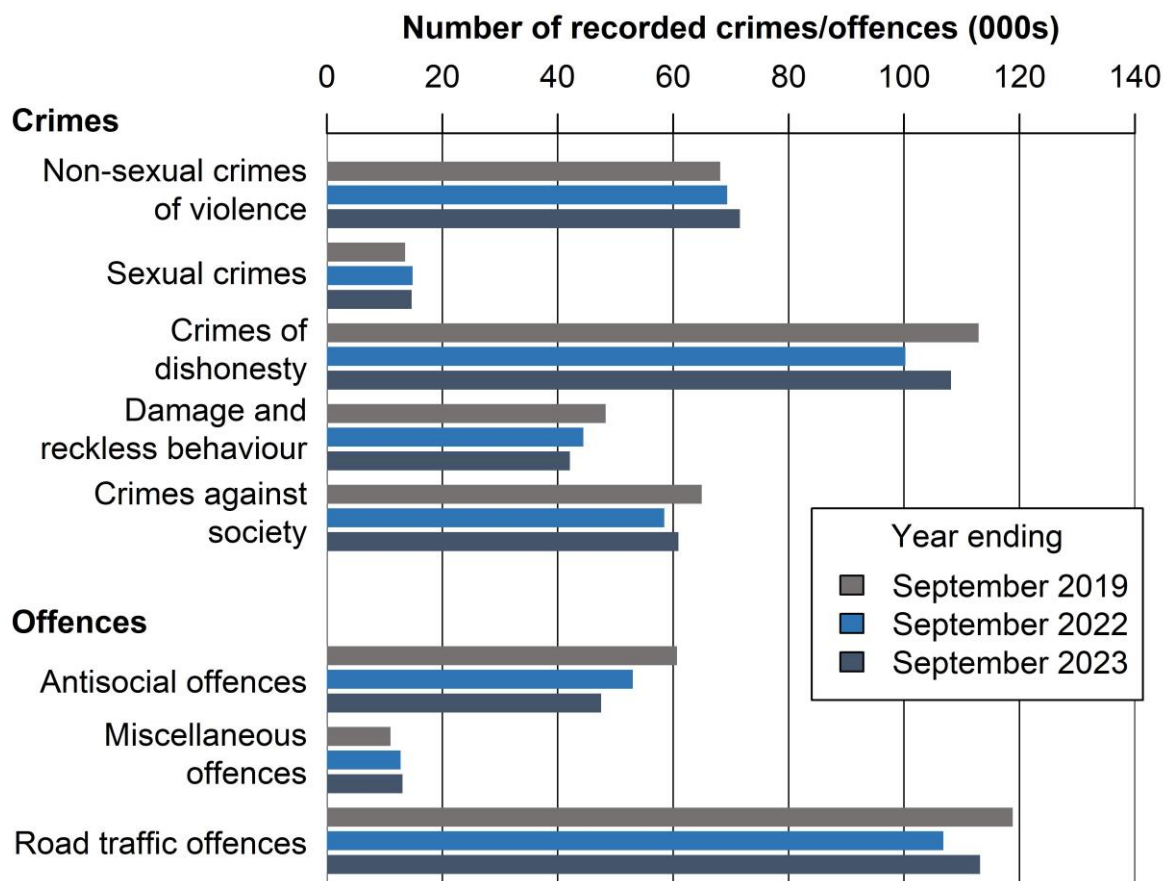
The other amendments did result in changes to the number of crimes being recorded within these statistics, following their implementation – most notably the 19,861 crimes recorded under Coronavirus related legislation in year ending September 2021, which reduced to 36 crimes in year ending September 2022 and further reduced to zero crimes in year ending September 2023.

Where statistics have been impacted by the above changes, this has been highlighted within the bulletin. More detailed information, including for changes prior to the five years presented below, is available in the recorded crime [User Guide](#).

Main findings

Figure 1: Trends in recorded crimes and offences over the last five years have varied by crime group

Crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland, by crime group, year ending September 2019 to 2023



Crimes recorded by the police

In the year ending September 2023, the police recorded 297,425 crimes. This was 3% (or 10,051 crimes) higher than the 287,374 crimes recorded in the previous year, but 3% lower than the 307,938 crimes recorded in the year ending September 2019.

Non-sexual crimes of violence

The number of Non-sexual crimes of violence in the year ending September 2023:

- were 3% (or 2,218 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 69,353 to 71,571 crimes), and
- were 5% (or 3,401 crimes) higher compared to the year ending September 2019 (increasing from 68,170 to 71,571 crimes).

Within this:

- Murder and culpable homicide increased by 15% compared to the previous year (from 47 to 54 crimes), but decreased by 26% from the year ending September 2019 (from 73 to 54 crimes).
- Death by dangerous driving increased by 38% compared to the previous year (from 40 to 55 crimes), and increased by 4% from the year ending September 2019 (from 53 to 55 crimes).
- Serious assault and attempted murder decreased by 4% compared to the previous year (from 3,684 to 3,539 crimes), and decreased by 20% from the year ending September 2019 (from 4,422 to 3,539 crimes).
- Common assault increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 58,350 to 59,413 crimes), and increased by 2% from the year ending September 2019 (from 58,319 to 59,413 crimes).
- Robbery increased by 23% compared to the previous year (from 1,520 to 1,877 crimes), and increased by 7% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,747 to 1,877 crimes).
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 crimes increased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 1,822 to 1,845 crimes). Please note that the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into effect on 1 April 2019. As such the year ending September 2019 figures reflect only six months of activity, with subsequent years covering a full 12 months.
- Other non-sexual violence increased by 23% compared to the previous year (from 3,890 to 4,788 crimes), and increased by 78% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,693 to 4,788 crimes).

Sexual crimes

The number of Sexual crimes in the year ending September 2023:

- were 1% (or 134 crimes) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 14,838 to 14,704 crimes), and
- were 8% (or 1,138 crimes) higher compared to the year ending September 2019 (increasing from 13,566 to 14,704 crimes).

Within this:

- Rape and attempted rape decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 2,515 to 2,501 crimes), but increased by 2% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,446 to 2,501 crimes).
- Sexual assault decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 5,467 to 5,159 crimes), but increased by <1% from the year ending September 2019 (from 5,149 to 5,159 crimes).
- Causing to view sexual activity or images increased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 2,068 to 2,183 crimes), and increased by 13% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,935 to 2,183 crimes).

- Communicating indecently increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 1,540 to 1,569 crimes), and increased by 15% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,363 to 1,569 crimes).
- Threatening to or disclosing intimate images decreased by 4% compared to the previous year (from 849 to 819 crimes), but increased by 26% from the year ending September 2019 (from 649 to 819 crimes).
- Indecent photos of children increased by 3% compared to the previous year (from 758 to 777 crimes), and increased by 44% from the year ending September 2019 (from 541 to 777 crimes).
- Crimes associated with prostitution decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 73 to 72 crimes), and decreased by 55% from the year ending September 2019 (from 161 to 72 crimes).
- Other sexual crimes increased by 4% compared to the previous year (from 1,568 to 1,624 crimes), and increased by 23% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,322 to 1,624 crimes).

Crimes of dishonesty

The number of Crimes of dishonesty in the year ending September 2023:

- were 8% (or 7,907 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 100,246 to 108,153 crimes), and
- were 4% (or 4,788 crimes) lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 112,941 to 108,153 crimes).

Within this:

- Housebreaking increased by 5% compared to the previous year (from 8,674 to 9,126 crimes), but decreased by 32% from the year ending September 2019 (from 13,458 to 9,126 crimes).
- Theft by opening lockfast places decreased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 1,290 to 1,286 crimes), and decreased by 26% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,746 to 1,286 crimes).
- Theft from a motor vehicle increased by 15% compared to the previous year (from 1,994 to 2,287 crimes), but decreased by 26% from the year ending September 2019 (from 3,087 to 2,287 crimes).
- Theft of a motor vehicle increased by 13% compared to the previous year (from 4,800 to 5,438 crimes), and increased by 12% from the year ending September 2019 (from 4,868 to 5,438 crimes).
- Shoplifting increased by 30% compared to the previous year (from 25,978 to 33,789 crimes), and increased by 2% from the year ending September 2019 (from 33,057 to 33,789 crimes).
- Other theft decreased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 36,714 to 35,878 crimes), and decreased by 15% from the year ending September 2019 (from 42,121 to 35,878 crimes).

- Fraud decreased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 17,205 to 16,791 crimes), but increased by 70% from the year ending September 2019 (from 9,862 to 16,791 crimes). Further explanation on the changes in levels of recorded fraud are available in the Recorded Crime in Scotland annual bulletin.
- Other dishonesty decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 3,591 to 3,558 crimes), and decreased by 25% from the year ending September 2019 (from 4,742 to 3,558 crimes).

Damage and reckless behaviour

The number of Damage and reckless behaviour crimes in the year ending September 2023:

- were 5% (or 2,331 crimes) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 44,428 to 42,097 crimes), and
- were 13% (or 6,208 crimes) lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 48,305 to 42,097 crimes).

Within this:

- Fire-raising decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 2,677 to 2,652 crimes), but increased by 5% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,528 to 2,652 crimes).
- Vandalism decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 38,512 to 36,221 crimes), and decreased by 16% from the year ending September 2019 (from 43,253 to 36,221 crimes).
- Reckless conduct decreased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 3,239 to 3,224 crimes), but increased by 28% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,524 to 3,224 crimes).

Crimes against society

The number of Crimes against society in the year ending September 2023:

- were 4% (or 2,427 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 58,473 to 60,900 crimes), and
- were 6% (or 4,056 crimes) lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 64,956 to 60,900 crimes).

Within this:

- Crimes against public justice increased by 4% compared to the previous year (from 22,944 to 23,766 crimes), and increased by 24% from the year ending September 2019 (from 19,126 to 23,766 crimes).
- Weapons possession (not used) increased by 15% compared to the previous year (from 3,951 to 4,528 crimes), and increased by 2% from the year ending September 2019 (from 4,460 to 4,528 crimes).

- Weapons possession (used) increased by 9% compared to the previous year (from 5,545 to 6,051 crimes), and increased by 20% from the year ending September 2019 (from 5,042 to 6,051 crimes).
- Drugs - Supply increased by 9% compared to the previous year (from 3,791 to 4,150 crimes), but decreased by 14% from the year ending September 2019 (from 4,807 to 4,150 crimes).
- Drugs - Possession increased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 22,028 to 22,144 crimes), but decreased by 29% from the year ending September 2019 (from 31,306 to 22,144 crimes).
- Other crimes against society increased by 22% compared to the previous year (from 214 to 261 crimes), and increased by 21% from the year ending September 2019 (from 215 to 261 crimes).

Coronavirus restrictions

The number of Coronavirus restrictions crimes in the year ending September 2023:

- were 100% (or 36 crimes) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 36 to zero crimes).

The [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) and [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) were implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020, respectively. As such the year ending September 2020 figures reflect only a little over six months of activity.

Offences recorded by the police

In the year ending September 2023, the police recorded 173,762 offences. This was 1% (or 1,105 offences) higher than the 172,657 offences recorded in the previous year, but 9% lower than the 190,520 offences recorded in the year ending September 2019.

Antisocial offences

The number of Antisocial offences in the year ending September 2023:

- were 10% (or 5,530 offences) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 53,032 to 47,502 offences), and
- were 22% (or 13,166 offences) lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 60,668 to 47,502 offences).

Within this:

- Threatening and abusive behaviour decreased by 7% compared to the previous year (from 45,631 to 42,573 offences), and decreased by 15% from the year ending September 2019 (from 50,287 to 42,573 offences).
- Racially aggravated conduct increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 1,514 to 1,539 offences), but decreased by 13% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,775 to 1,539 offences).

- Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct decreased by 41% compared to the previous year (from 4,413 to 2,601 offences), and decreased by 57% from the year ending September 2019 (from 6,085 to 2,601 offences).
- Urinating etc. decreased by 46% compared to the previous year (from 1,474 to 789 offences), and decreased by 69% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,521 to 789 offences).

Miscellaneous offences

The number of Miscellaneous offences in the year ending September 2023:

- were 2% (or 306 offences) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 12,797 to 13,103 offences), and
- were 19% (or 2,072 offences) higher compared to the year ending September 2019 (increasing from 11,031 to 13,103 offences).

Within this:

- Community and public order offences increased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 9,157 to 9,210 offences), and increased by 26% from the year ending September 2019 (from 7,327 to 9,210 offences).
- Environmental offences decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 452 to 427 offences), and decreased by 28% from the year ending September 2019 (from 595 to 427 offences).
- Licensing offences decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 818 to 809 offences), and decreased by 38% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,302 to 809 offences).
- Wildlife offences increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 1,456 to 1,483 offences), and increased by 30% from the year ending September 2019 (from 1,138 to 1,483 offences).
- Other miscellaneous offences increased by 28% compared to the previous year (from 914 to 1,174 offences), and increased by 75% from the year ending September 2019 (from 669 to 1,174 offences).

Road traffic offences

The number of Road traffic offences in the year ending September 2023:

- were 6% (or 6,329 offences) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 106,828 to 113,157 offences), and
- were 5% (or 5,664 offences) lower compared to the year ending September 2019 (decreasing from 118,821 to 113,157 offences).

Within this:

- Dangerous and careless driving increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 12,614 to 12,813 offences), and increased by 13% from the year ending September 2019 (from 11,292 to 12,813 offences).

- Driving under the influence increased by 5% compared to the previous year (from 7,611 to 7,959 offences), and increased by 32% from the year ending September 2019 (from 6,009 to 7,959 offences).
- Speeding increased by 10% compared to the previous year (from 18,282 to 20,046 offences), but decreased by 30% from the year ending September 2019 (from 28,795 to 20,046 offences).
- Unlawful use of vehicle decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 36,243 to 35,971 offences), and decreased by 3% from the year ending September 2019 (from 36,898 to 35,971 offences).
- Vehicle defect offences increased by 21% compared to the previous year (from 5,153 to 6,242 offences), but decreased by 11% from the year ending September 2019 (from 7,040 to 6,242 offences).
- Seat belt offences increased by 19% compared to the previous year (from 1,763 to 2,095 offences), but decreased by 28% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,927 to 2,095 offences).
- Mobile phone offences increased by 39% compared to the previous year (from 2,203 to 3,061 offences), and increased by 22% from the year ending September 2019 (from 2,509 to 3,061 offences).
- Other road traffic offences increased by 9% compared to the previous year (from 22,959 to 24,970 offences), and increased by 7% from the year ending September 2019 (from 23,351 to 24,970 offences).

Local Authorities

Between the year ending September 2019 and the year ending September 2023, of the 32 Local Authorities, 12 saw an increase in recorded crime and 20 saw a decrease in recorded crime.

Between the year ending September 2022 and the year ending September 2023, of the 32 Local Authorities, 28 Local Authorities saw an increase in recorded crime and four saw a decrease in recorded crime.

Annexes

Annex 1: Background

These quarterly National Statistics cover a rolling 12-months of activity, up to the end of the latest quarter. They were introduced to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland, on a more frequent basis than the existing annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics](#).

The latest annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) bulletin, covering the 2022-23 reporting year, was published on 20 June 2023. Users should refer to the annual National Statistics for more detailed contextual information regarding the statistics in this report, and the production of the recorded crime statistics more generally - including governance arrangements, a description of their quality, background methodologies and changes to recording practice.

Annex 2: Data Sources

Since 2020-21 the National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland have been produced using data extracted from a single Police Scotland IT system called the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP), which was created in 2019.

A technical review on the impact of changing from the previous IT system to SEBP, found strong alignment between both administrative systems for recorded crime in 2020-21. Further information on this is available in Annex 3 of the [Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2020-21 bulletin](#).

Amendments to crime and offence records will always arise after data has been submitted by Police Scotland to the Scottish Government. Some crime or offence records may, on further investigation by the police, be redesignated to not constitute a crime or offence (a process known as 'no-criming'). In other cases, the original crime or offence may be re-classified, which could shift the record between different crime or offence groups. As such it is important for National Statistics purposes that data is extracted at a similar point in time each year, to allow comparisons of any trends to be on a like-for-like basis.

The figures provided in this bulletin for the year ending September 2023 were extracted in October 2023. Data for the preceding year ending September 2022 was also extracted at the equivalent time (October 2022), whilst the two earlier years ending September 2020 and September 2021 were extracted retrospectively to reflect the position as it would have been at October in each of those two years. This ensured a like-for-like comparison could be carried out, as discussed above. Due to earlier IT constraints, this retrospective extraction wasn't possible for the year ending September 2019. However the impact this will have on any comparisons with this earlier year, will be minor.

Annex 3: Comparisons with England & Wales and Northern Ireland

For further background information (e.g. classification of Crimes and Offences and comparisons with England & Wales and Northern Ireland) please see the [Recorded Crime in Scotland User Guide](#).

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Feedback survey

We'd appreciate it if you would complete our short [feedback survey](#) on this publication.

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