

# Cardiothoracic surgeon

Cardiothoracic surgeons specialise in operating on the heart, lungs and other thoracic (chest) organs.

They also diagnose and treat diseases of these organs.

picture of a surgeon

## Life as a cardiothoracic surgeon

You'll see the immediate and life-changing results of your work, but your role will be hugely demanding. Diseases that occur in a person's chest are common killers and you'll be managing life and death scenarios every day.

Cardiothoracic surgery is a relatively young speciality that has experienced rapid growth through the introduction of new technologies.

Before surgery you'll meet with patients and their families to discuss and explain procedures and offer reassurance. Being crystal clear, empathetic and warm is vital to the success of your role.

The main areas of cardiothoracic surgery are:

- cardiac surgery
- thoracic surgery
- congenital cardiac surgery
- heart and lung transplant surgery

Monitoring patients in intensive care [1] after surgery is a vital part of your work. Although cardiothoracic surgery is very safe, complications can occur and you'll need to be prepared to deal with a host of conditions including arrhythmias (heart-beat irregularity), post-operative bleeding, stroke [2], pleural effusion (fluid around the lungs), wound infection or thrombosis [3].

As well as performing surgery, you'll be involved in the treatment and management of many different conditions within your speciality. You'll need to attend outpatient clinics, multidisciplinary team meetings and ward rounds.

## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) <sup>[4]</sup> after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and consultants on the ['Pay for doctors'](#) <sup>[6]</sup> page.

## How about the benefits?

- make a difference
- flexible and part-time working
- high income early in your career
- work anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

## Must-have skills

- excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families
- emotional resilience, a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure
- teamwork and the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams
- problem-solving and diagnostic skills
- outstanding organisational ability and effective decision-making skills
- first-class time and resource management for the benefit of patients
- a high degree of manual dexterity
- superb hand-eye co-ordination, excellent vision, and visuospatial awareness
- physical stamina to cope with the demands of surgery

## Entry requirements

Your first step is medical school. Typically, you'll need excellent GCSEs and three A or A\* passes at A level including chemistry for a five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. Many medical schools also ask for biology and others may require maths or physics.

If you already have a degree, you could study for a four-year postgraduate degree in medicine.

You'll need to pass an interview and admissions test. You'll be asked to show how you demonstrate the NHS values such as compassion and respect.

Some medical schools look to recruit a mix of students from different backgrounds and geographical areas, so your educational and economic background and family circumstances could be considered as part of your application.

**"I had some great mentors who gave me the opportunity to operate on patients with supervision, and to look after very sick patients on the [intensive care](#) <sup>[1]</sup> unit after cardiac surgery."**

**Read Omar's story** <sup>[7]</sup>.

## **What are my chances of starting a career as a cardiothoracic surgeon?**

There are currently approximately 400 cardiothoracic surgeons working in the NHS in England. In 2020, there were between 5.86 and 9.92 applications for every specialty training place.

## **How to become a cardiothoracic surgeon**

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation programme <sup>[8]</sup> where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training <sup>[9]</sup> to become a cardiothoracic surgeon, which will take a minimum of six or seven years.

You may be able to train part time, for example for health reasons or if you have family or caring responsibilities.

## **Where a career as a cardiothoracic surgeon can take you**

Working as a cardiothoracic surgeon, you'll have the opportunity to specialise in cardiac, thoracic or congenital surgery.

As a cardiac surgeon, you'll perform various kinds of surgery including:

- coronary artery bypass surgery – restoring blood flow to the heart by bypassing the narrowed coronary arteries
- heart valve surgery – repairing and replacing narrowed or leaking heart valves
- aortic surgery – replacing an enlarged or damaged blood vessel leaving the heart

If you choose to specialise as a thoracic surgeon, you'll perform a wide range of surgery including:

- surgery for lung cancer, tumours and cysts
- surgery on collapsed or infected lungs
- keyhole thoracic surgery (video assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS))
- chest-wall deformities (pectus surgery)

If you choose congenital cardiac surgery, you'll treat babies and children with heart diseases that have been present from birth. These conditions include:

- septal defects (a hole between two of the heart's chambers)
- aortic and pulmonary valve stenosis (where the valve is narrower than normal)
- transposition of the arteries

You could specialise or conduct research, teach medical students or postgraduate students in training and get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector.

- **Live vacancies**

## Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Search

- **Specialist Radiographer (Cardiothoracic)**

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Radiographer \(Cardiothoracic\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

- **Lead Cardiothoracic Physiotherapist**

London, SW5 0TU

Salary:

£60000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cromwell Hospital

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Lead Cardiothoracic Physiotherapist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

- **Consultant Cardiothoracic Radiologist**

Tooting, SW17 0QT

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiothoracic Radiologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

- **Cardiothoracic Theatre Scrub Practitioner**

Plymouth, PL6 5DH

Salary:

£29970.00 to £36483.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Cardiothoracic Theatre Scrub Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

- **Senior Theatre Practitioner (Cardiothoracic Theatre)**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Theatre Practitioner \(Cardiothoracic Theatre\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

- **Cardiothoracic Cardiology Staff Nurse - Ward**

City of London, EC1A 7BS

Salary:

£38000.00 to £38000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nuffield Health

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Cardiothoracic Cardiology Staff Nurse - Ward job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

- **Theatre Practitioner - RGN/ODP (Cardiothoracic Theatres)**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£29970.00 to £36483.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Theatre Practitioner - RGN/ODP \(Cardiothoracic Theatres\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

- **Senior Clinical Fellow in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia**

Coventry, CV2 2DX

Salary:

£61825.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Clinical Fellow in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

- **Consultant Oral Surgeon**

Hereford, HR1 2ER

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Wye Valley NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

- **Consultant Dermatology Surgeon**

Grimsby, DN31 2BH

Salary:

£105000.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Dermatology Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

- **Consultant Hand Surgeon**

Doncaster, DN40TG  
Barnsley, S71 1TH  
Sheffield, S105UB  
Sheffield, S80YH  
Sheffield, S61GA  
Rotherham, S639EH  
Barnsley, S728SU  
Sheffield, S56AZ

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Locum

Employer:

HealthHarmonie

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Hand Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[20]

- **Consultant Colorectal Surgeon**

Winchester, SO22 5DG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [21]

- **Consultant Dermatology Surgeon**

Scunthorpe, DN15 6HX

Salary:

£105000.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Dermatology Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [22]

- **Consultant Spinal Surgeon**

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Spinal Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[23]</sup>

- **Consultant Hand Surgeon**

Bristol, BS7 8SA

Bristol, BS11 0QE

Bristol, BS9 3AA

Bristol, BS10 6AF

Bristol, BS34 6BQ

Bristol, BS15 4EJ

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Locum

Employer:

HealthHarmonie

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Hand Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#)

<sup>[24]</sup>

- **Consultant Dermatology Surgeon**

Canterbury, CT1 3NG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Dermatology Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[25]</sup>

- **Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) in Cardiothoracic**

Sheffield, S5 7AU

Salary:

£37338.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Apprenticeship

Employer:

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner \(ACP\) in Cardiothoracic job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[26]</sup>



- **Consultant Histopathologist with interest in Cardiothoracic Pathology**

Basildon, SS16 5NL

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Histopathologist with interest in Cardiothoracic Pathology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[27]</sup>

- **Senior Clinical Fellow in Cardiothoracic Critical Care**

Cambridge Bio Medical Campus, CB2 0AY

Salary:

£70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Clinical Fellow in Cardiothoracic Critical Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[28]</sup>

- **Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia & Cardiac Intensive Care Fellowship - ST3+**

Blackpool, FY3 8NR

Salary:

£61825.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia & Cardiac Intensive Care Fellowship - ST3+ job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[29]</sup>

- **Consultant Upper GI Surgeon**

Winchester, SO22 5DG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Upper GI Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[30]</sup>

- **Specialist committee member - Surgeon**

Virtual, M1 4BT

Salary:

£1.00 to £300.00

Type:

Voluntary

Employer:

NICE – The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist committee member - Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[31]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Urological Surgeon**

Northampton, NN1 5BD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Urological Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[32]</sup>

- **Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon**

Northampton, NN1 5DB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[33]</sup>

- **Consultant Head & Neck Surgeon**

Guildford, GU2 7XX

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Head & Neck Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[34]</sup>

- **Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon**

Northampton, NN1 5BD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[35]</sup>

- **ENT Consultant Surgeon (General)**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for ENT Consultant Surgeon \(General\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[36]</sup>

- **Consultant Gastroenterologist/ Colorectal Surgeon**

Manchester, M22 4DB

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Beacon Medical Services Group Ltd

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Gastroenterologist/ Colorectal Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[37]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant General Surgeon**

Harrow, HA1 3UJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant General Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[38]</sup>

- **Consultant Hand & Plastic Surgeon**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Hand & Plastic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[39]</sup>

- **Trust Fellow in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia & Intensive Care (ST3+)**

Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7DN

Salary:

£61825.00 to £70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trust Fellow in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia & Intensive Care \(ST3+\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[40]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Spinal Deformity Surgeon**

Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2AP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Spinal Deformity Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[41]</sup>

- **Fellowship-trained Foot & Ankle Surgeon**

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fellowship-trained Foot & Ankle Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[42]</sup>

- **Consultant Hip and Knee Surgeon**

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Hip and Knee Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[43]</sup>

- **Consultant General Surgeon ( Upper GI )**

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon \( Upper GI \) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[44]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon**

Liverpool, L7 8YE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[45]</sup>

- **Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 15 hours**

Birmingham, B30 1DB

Salary:

£101000.00 to £151000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 15 hours job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[46]</sup>

- **Consultant General Surgeon ( Lower GI )**

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon \( Lower GI \) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[47]</sup>

- **Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 7.5 hours**

Reading, RG1 4QA

Salary:

£101000.00 to £151000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 7.5 hours job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[48]</sup>

- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Foot and Ankle**

Shepton Mallet, BA4 4LP

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Foot and Ankle job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[49]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgeon**

London, E9 6SR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[50]</sup>

- **Consultant ENT Head & Neck Cancer Surgeon**

Rhyl, LL18 5UJ

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant ENT Head & Neck Cancer Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[51]</sup>

- **Consultant T&O - Brachial Plexus Surgeon**

Bristol, BS105NB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Bristol NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant T&O - Brachial Plexus Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[52]</sup>

- **Consultant Oncoplastic and Reconstructive Breast Surgeon**

Wakefield, WF14DG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oncoplastic and Reconstructive Breast Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[53]</sup>

- **Consultant Plastic Surgeon (Interest in Breast & Skin)**

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic Surgeon \(Interest in Breast & Skin\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[54]</sup>

- **Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon - Lower Limb Arthroplasty**

Oswestry, SY10 7AG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon - Lower Limb Arthroplasty job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[55]</sup>

- **Consultant Surgeon with a Special Interest in Dermatology**

Kettering, NN16 8UZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Surgeon with a Special Interest in Dermatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[56]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Surgeon in Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgery**



London, E9 6SR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Surgeon in Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgery job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[57]</sup>

- **Consultant ENT Surgeon (Specialist Interest in Head and Neck)**

Salford, M6 8HD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant ENT Surgeon \(Specialist Interest in Head and Neck\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[58]</sup>

- **Consultant Plastic Surgeon with a special interest in Gender Surgery**

London, SW10 9NH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic Surgeon with a special interest in Gender Surgery job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[59]</sup>

- **Consultant General Surgeon with a Sub Specialty in Colorectal Surgery**

Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 9DT

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon with a Sub Specialty in](#)

[Colorectal Surgery job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [60]

- **Consultant General Surgeon with a sub-specialist interest in Upper GI**

Haverfordwest & Carmarthen, SA61 2PZ

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hywel Dda University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon with a sub-specialist interest in Upper GI job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [61]

- **Further information**

These organisations have further information about being a cardiothoracic surgeon, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

[Royal College of Surgeons](#) [62]

[Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh](#) [63]

[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) [64]

[Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery in Great Britain and Ireland](#) [65]

And hear from people working as cardiothoracic surgeons.

[A career in cardiothoracic surgery \(BMJ\)](#) [66]

[A day in the life of a thoracic surgeon \(CTSNET\)](#) [67]

[A day in a heart surgeon's life \(CTSNET\)](#) [68]

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Cardiologist](#) [69]
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## Links

[1] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care) [2]  
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