

Vaccine latest

Our latest podcast focuses on the COVID-19 vaccine and people with learning disabilities. We talk to Dr Lucia Anthonypillai, Bromley Learning Disability GP Clinical Lead, about the benefits of the vaccine and what support is available to get it in Bromley. We also hear from two members of Bromley Mencap, Justin Gibson and Hannah Dempsey (pictured), about their experience of getting the vaccine jab and why they think it's a great idea for more people with learning disabilities to get the vaccine.

You can listen to the podcast on our website [here](#)





Hi everyone,

Is spring springing or has it sprung? Either way I hope the improvement in the weather is lifting the spirits somewhat in these difficult times.

Our Spring Bulletin will keep you informed of what's still on and what's running online. We have our usual updates and some great catch ups with various events that have happened virtually.

We have some fab photos from our Children's Wellbeing Service and Day Opportunities. I know they made me smile!

With Bromley Mencap turning the big 70 this year, make sure you check out how you can share your memories with us on page 14.

Take care and stay safe,

Luan
luanlanham@btinternet.com

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Events and Activities

Please check our website here <https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/> or phone our helpline on 020 8466 0790 to find out about our latest events.

<https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-update/bromley-mencap-services-update/>

Bromley Well has various support sessions running virtually, please check the website for details. <https://www.bromleywell.org.uk/events/>



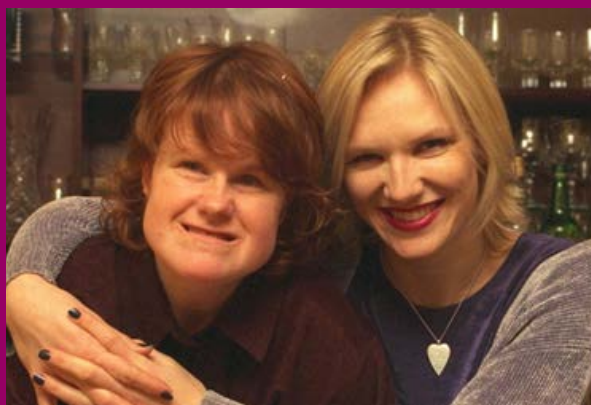
Bromley Well online services include Employment Support workshops, workshops for people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, Autism support sessions as well as our monthly Facebook quiz night.



PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES BEING PRIORITISED FOR VACCINATIONS

After much campaigning and lobbying the UK Government has finally listened and confirmed that people registered on the GP Learning Disability Register are a priority for the COVID-19 vaccine. The Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations had previously said that only people with 'severe' or 'profound' learning disabilities would be prioritised.

The decision was partly driven by a public campaign by the DJ Jo Whiley who had been approached to receive her vaccine before her sister, Frances, who has a learning disability and lives in a residential home. Frances then tested positive for the virus and spent time in hospital but is now recovering.



Although this is great news, it is disappointing the government took so long to take action. People with learning disabilities are six times more likely to die from coronavirus than people without learning disabilities. Furthermore, people with learning disabilities aged between 18 and 34 are 30 times more likely to die from the virus.

Jackie O'Sullivan, Executive Director of Communication, Advocacy & Activism at national Mencap, said: *"This is a hugely welcome announcement, and fantastic news for people with a learning disability. It's now crucially important that everyone with a learning disability checks that they are on the register and asks to go on it if they are not. Being on the register has many benefits and entitles people to annual health checks and prioritisation for future vaccinations, as well as allowing them to get the COVID vaccine and be confident they are protected."*

Mencap has produced a series of easy read guides about the COVID-19 vaccine, including how to join your GP's Learning Disability Register which you can access on their website

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine>

Despite this good news, there are many people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties who are not eligible to be on their GP's Learning Disability Register. Bromley Mencap believes that all people with learning disabilities and difficulties should be prioritised for and encouraged to have the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you or your carer require any support to get the vaccine, please call our Helpline on 020 8466 0790 or email enquiries@bromleymencap.org



Fury at 'Do Not Attempt CPR' notices (DNACPRs) given to Covid patients with learning disabilities

National Mencap has reported on examples in England throughout the pandemic of DNACPRs applied inappropriately to some people with a learning disability on the grounds of disability, alongside decisions about whether to deny critical care, such as a ventilator, on the grounds of support needs. NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care are taking this very seriously. Anyone who is concerned about DNACPRs should check their notes through their GP. Please talk to us if you need advice challenging such notices.



Disabled parking in London

The 33 London boroughs all have their own regulations for disabled parking. This needs to be simplified as many disabled people rely on a car to access hospitals because public transport is often inaccessible.

More details on the Action Network website [here](#)



Guidance on Covid-19 testing for Personal Assistants

The government has published guidance on how Personal Assistants working in adult social care in England can access weekly Covid-19 testing. Personal Assistants will be eligible for testing if they provide care that requires them to come within two metres of an adult over the age of 18 who they support. Personal Assistants will be responsible for ordering test kits every 28 days – or an employer can order test kits for their Personal Assistant. The GOV.UK website has more information on eligibility and the process [here](#)



'Time to think again' - Disability benefits and support after coronavirus

A new report by Scope shows that the welfare system is failing disabled people, their families and communities.

Despite decades of reforms from successive governments, nearly half of all people in poverty in the UK are either disabled or live with someone who is. You can access the full report [here](#)

SCOPE

= Equality for disabled people

We support adults with physical disabilities by providing information, advice and guidance. Although we are currently unable to make face-to-face appointments or home visits, we are still able to work closely with our clients via the telephone.

We are able to offer emotional support and we are working remotely to help clients complete paperwork and forms such as blue badge applications and grants.

Monthly Workshops

In January we were joined by Charley Warren from Barclays Bank to discuss online safety. Charley spoke about growing your digital skills with confidence, whatever your digital ability, and talked about support tools and tutorials available to boost your digital knowledge. Charley also shared tips on how to stay safe on the internet and what scams to look out for.



In February we were joined by Aleksandra from the National Census. Aleksandra took us through a power point presentation explaining the whole process step by step and all the support available for the completion of the census. Aleksandra also explained how this information will be used to support local councils in planning for schools, hospitals and their communities at large. The Office for National Statistics has sent us a summary of all the support available to help people complete the form and this information is now available on the Bromley Well website [here](#)

census
2021

Contact Us:

If you are interested in attending one of our Zoom workshops or you would like to find out more about our service, please contact the office on 020 8466 0790.

You can also contact one of our Support and Information Officers as follows:

Sue Fuller on 07484673090 or email Sue.Fuller@bromleywell.org.uk

Chetan Raval on 07421106922 or email Chetan.Raval@bromleywell.org.uk

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BWPhysicalDisabilities/>

Alternatively you can call us in the office on 020 8466 0790

NEWS -

Physical Disabilities

Lockdown: Boris Johnson unveils plan to end England restrictions by 21 June

Boris Johnson outlined a new four-step plan to ease England's lockdown which could see all legal limits on social contact lifted by 21 June, if strict conditions are met.

You can read more on the BBC website explaining the roadmap out of lockdown [here](#)



Get Yourself Active at Home



Are you looking for new ways to get active at home? Get Yourself Active has been sharing videos for its new Active at Home series that have been developed alongside Sense and Durham University. These are accessible videos to support disabled people to get active at home during the pandemic and include a variety of activities such as seated dance, strength and cardio workouts. The videos have been designed using the experiences and feedback of 450 disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.

You can access the YouTube channel and view the videos so far [here](#)

Census 2021: Eight things you need to know

The census is a count of all people and households in the UK and takes place every 10 years. It is the only exercise that provides a detailed snapshot of the whole population and is unique because everyone in the country answers the same questions about the same day. Please visit the BBC website for more information [here](#)

The disabled influencers making their mark on social media

Tess Daly, who has spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), has worked on social marketing campaigns for the likes of Boohoo and Pretty Little Thing, as well as various make-up brands. She still cringes at the term "social influencer", but says that she wishes there were more people like her when she was growing up.

"So many people with disabilities have told me that I've given them the confidence, not only to embrace their disability, but to also pursue their own love of make-up," she says. You can read more on the BBC website [here](#)



Millie Knight: New concussion 'tough' for partially sighted skier

The 22-year-old, who has peripheral vision and skis with guide Brett Wild, has been released after spending three days in hospital in Austria after falling during her warm-up before a World Cup event this month. Knight suffered two bouts of concussion in 2017, but won three Paralympic medals at Pyeongchang 2018.

You can read the full story on the BBC website [here](#)



We support people who have a learning disability or learning difficulty through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings or contacting organisations.



Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support.

The Learning Difficulty Pathway has recently offered emotional support to people in isolation, support with new benefit applications and benefit checks, and with various housing matters.

Outreach

Please visit our Facebook page [here](#) for up-to-date guidance and information for people with learning difficulties. We have run a number of stories and articles on our page including easy read guidance on COVID-19 vaccines and the latest lockdown.

We also have a Facebook group. This is a private group on Facebook where only members of the group can see what you have written or posted. We are available every working day and are currently in regular contact with many clients on this platform.

If you would like to learn more, please join the group [here](#) or contact Rob for help with setting this up.



Bromley Well LD Workshop Group

Private group · 41 members



Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

Virtual Challenge Week

We were very excited to take part in Mencap's Virtual Challenge Week in January. This allowed us to put on a Zoom workshop every day to encourage exercise and movement for people of all abilities. For those unable to attend, we uploaded the information onto Facebook and many more people participated from there. It really brought out some competitive camaraderie, so thank you to everyone who took part.



Care Quality Commission (CQC)

In February, Patrice and George from the Care Quality Commission joined us on Zoom for a workshop about healthcare. This gave us the opportunity to talk about our experiences of attending our GP surgery, staying in hospital and going to the dentist. There were many examples of positive experiences but we also told the staff from CQC our top tips for GPs and medical staff when helping us.

Our top tips for GPs

1. I would like to see the same GP every time
2. Talk to me (not my carer or family member)
3. Give me the choice of easy read information

Call, text or email Rob Morgan if you would like any more information on 020 8466 0790, mobile 07482 558 660 or email robert.morgan@bromleywell.org.uk

Jo Whiley 'so happy' over learning disability vaccine change

Everyone on the GP Learning Disability Register should be prioritised for a Covid-19 vaccine, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has advised the government. This means 150,000 people at higher risk with severe disabilities will be offered a jab more quickly in England. National Mencap has urged people with learning disabilities to check they are on the register and, if not, ask to go on it. It follows DJ Jo Whiley's plea for people such as her sister, Frances, who has a rare genetic syndrome and lives in residential care, to be vaccinated as quickly as possible. The broadcaster's sister is recovering after being admitted to hospital with coronavirus. Read the full story on the BBC news website [here](#)



"My Son's ADHD masked his dyslexia for three decades."

Carol Barnier writes a blog about how she and her son's teachers missed the signs of her son's dyslexia as a child, only for him to be diagnosed at the age of 30. You can read the full story on the Additude website [here](#)



The defining signs of dyslexia are often ignored

Individuals with dyslexia do not all read or spell words backward. Parents, teachers, and other loved ones may not recognize signs of dyslexia until struggles at school or work start to emerge.

Signs of dyslexia in adults can include:

- Poor self esteem
- May have to reread things several times to understand
- Dreads writing letters or even quick emails
- May gravitate to a career that does not rely on reading
- May hate reading or prefer reading nonfiction because it uses a smaller vocabulary

You can read more about these unlikely signs on the Additude website [here](#)



Supporting People with Autism

Bromley Well

We support people aged 16 and over who have an Autism diagnosis, or believe they have Autism and are seeking a diagnosis, through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings or contacting organisations. Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support.

Online

Find us on social media for up-to-date guidance and information for people with Autism.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/BWAutismSupport>

Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BWAutismSupport>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/bromleywellautismsupport/>

Or sign up to our regular e-newsletter with details, including Zoom links, of all of our upcoming events. Please contact Lauren to receive this newsletter.

ADULT AUTISM SERVICE

INTRODUCING OUR NEW WHATSAPP GROUPS

AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

If you are aged 16+ with Autism, join us to:

- Meet new people
- Join in daily games
- Give and receive advice
- Chat with like-minded people

AUTISM PARENTS & CARERS GROUP

A space to chat about supporting someone with Autism aged 16+. Share your experiences, give support and advice to each other, alongside support from the Bromley Well Autism Service.

To join or for more information contact Lauren
Email: lauren.titheridge@bromleywell.org.uk
Mobile: **07597048674**

You must be registered with Bromley Well to join, contact Lauren to sign up

Zoom Workshops and Drop-ins

We run catch-up sessions on alternate Fridays where we discuss what we have been up to, any information or stories we would like to share, as well as the opportunity to take part in a group activity such as a quiz or bingo.

Our TV and Film Club runs on alternate Wednesdays. We share our favourite films or what we have recently been watching. It is a lighter session and a great way to get some good recommendations and to let the group know why your choices are important to you. Call Lauren if you would like any more information about the Autism service on 020 8466 0790 or email lauren.titheridge@bromleywell.org.uk

IN THE NEWS

World Autism Awareness Week: 29th March – 4th April

We will be organising an event to celebrate Autism Awareness Week. More information to follow.



Kind-hearted man with autism heaves 12 bags of groceries through snow for older people

Murray started the initiative because he was feeling lonely and wanted to help others. He also raises awareness about Autism and helps autistic people access sailing - something which helped him gain confidence and social skills.

Read more on the website [here](#)

Autism and Employment - A Podcast Series

BeyondAutism interns Martin Kelly and Alex Farnese have put together Autism and Employment, a new podcast series available on the BeyondAutism website. This has been created to inform and educate about life as employees with Autism. Listen to their podcasts [here](#)



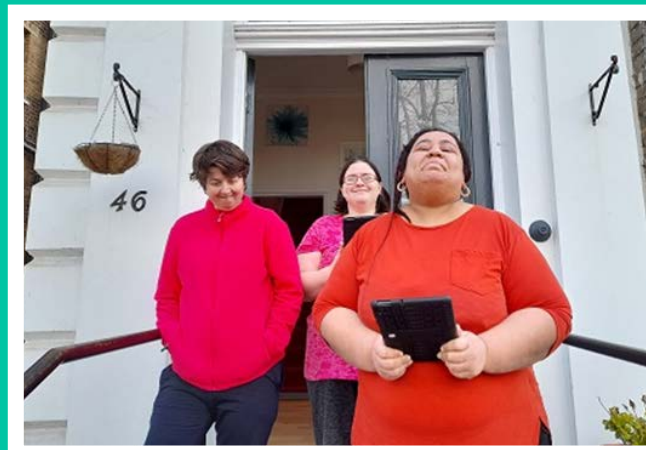
With the ongoing postponement of our Older Carers workshop and lunch, Tina, the Mutual Carers Support Worker, delivered fresh soup and a roll to clients to enjoy. Clients were also given a disc of the Bromley Mencap podcast to listen to, which they were delighted to receive and gave some lovely feedback. It was nice to see all the clients looking well and feeling positive after receiving their first Covid-19 vaccine. Tina will continue to check in regularly with all families and provide specialist support to mutual carers where one of the carers is aged 55+ with a disabled son, daughter or sibling living at home.

For the clients that normally attend the learning disability cookery club, Tina delivered a bag of ingredients to make chicken enchiladas and shortbread biscuits along with easy-read recipe cards. Again this was gratefully received, with positive feedback from clients on how they enjoyed cooking something different.

The mutual carers support worker Tina Penn, can be contacted on 07719426680 or 020 8466 0790.



Step Forward staff continue to be busy with Zoom workshops, candidate calls and workshop packs. We have also been making workshop films and our first one can be found on Bromley Mencap's website [here](#). We have also purchased tablets, thanks to the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund and the London Community Response Wave 3, and have lent them to our Step Forward participants. As you can see from the photograph, Claire and Natalie were delighted to receive theirs. The tablets can be used to access the Zoom workshops we are carrying out and to contact family and friends. Everyone is proving to be inspirational with their positive outlook and we are privileged to be working with such an optimistic group of people.



Virtual Challenge Week

Well done to our members who took part in the Virtual Challenge Week in January hosted by National Mencap and Special Olympics Great Britain. We came fourth out of 113 teams which is an outstanding achievement!

Participants were awarded certificates including Stephen Degiorgio (pictured).

Stephen commented, *'this has been the highlight of my week – I've loved it and can't wait to do some more soon...'*

We are planning more exciting events soon both with the Disability Walking and Cycling Group and Fitness with Ann Wilbourn from Bromley Mytime.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Matt Yule on 0208 466 0790 for more information.





Bromley Mencap turns 70 later this year and we would love to hear from anyone that has had a connection with us over the last seven decades!

Whether you or your family has been supported by Bromley Mencap, has accessed one of our services, or you have volunteered or fundraised for us, we want to hear from you.

Your story could potentially be featured on our website and social media to celebrate our 70th birthday!

Sharing your experience is a big part of our story and we want to share as many of your stories as we can. It also helps to encourage people to donate and support our work.

If you would like to share your story (and any photos you may have), please email jane.barnes@bromleymencap.org

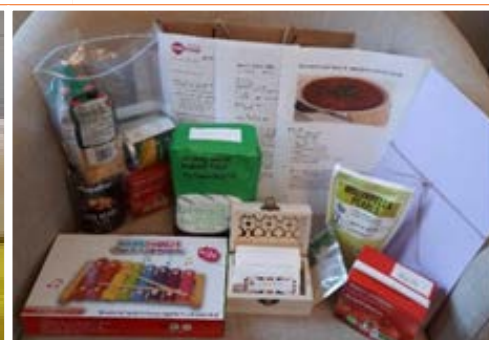
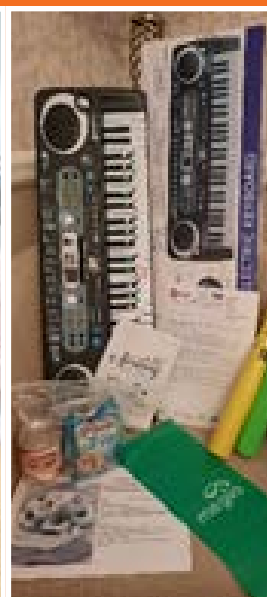
Did you know that Bromley Mencap's first big fundraiser was a Music Hall event held in February 1971? Pupils from Bromley High collected "old money" in their boaters as the event also coincided with Decimal Day.



It has been a busy and positive start to 2021. Our Day Opps Service has now moved to an online programme. The group meets online to do fun activities from their resource bags that are delivered prior to the sessions. Our clients are enjoying being able to catch up over Zoom whilst trying out new crafts and cookery projects.

The Lodge students have been meeting online for lessons to work on their subject-related projects with their tutors. They have resource bags to support their online learning in Catering, Horticulture or Bicycle Maintenance and have had fun completing practical tasks at home.

Our Saturday Club Respite Service is currently operating online. Our members receive monthly resource bags to complete activities with video support from their regular providers. Members have been engaging in cookery, music, art, exercise and wellbeing activities.



The February half term was jam-packed with lots of virtual activity sessions, which kept twenty-eight families entertained, thanks to funding from BBC Children in Need.

Biggin Hill Museum

Biggin Hill Memorial Museum delivered an interesting session all about the planes and pilots stationed at RAF Biggin Hill during the Second World War. We also learnt about parachutes and had the chance to make our own in a fun craft activity.



Reptile Family Zoom Club

James from Essex Reptile Encounters held the first of four virtual workshops all about snakes. Before the club, families were sent an activity pack to keep them entertained. We have lizards, invertebrates, amphibians, tortoises and some surprise reptiles to look forward to over the coming weeks!



Fingerprint Art Workshop

Angela from Maleficent Things led two craft sessions. Using fingerprint art, families created animals, Disney characters, and used their imagination!



Science & Magic Show

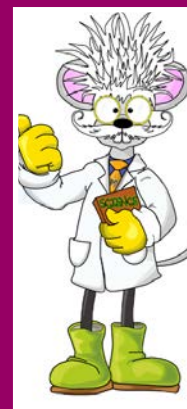
We ended the half term with a Science and Magic Show from Mr Sparky from Hoopstar Entertainment. Science experiments and magic tricks kept twenty-one families entertained and amazed.

Feedback from parents and carers:

'Thank you so much for today's zoom; the boys really enjoyed it and they played for ages with their parachutes!'

'Thank you for today. It was interesting.'

'We absolutely loved the reptile show. Thank you!'



It has been a tough time for everyone with the introduction of restrictions and lockdowns over the past few months but we are grateful to all our supporters for continuing to rise to the challenge and help us through. Talking of challenges, we have several lined up for you to take part in. Take a look at our upcoming events below and sign up today to kick-start your fundraising for 2021!

Events

KM Big Bike Ride (West Kent) - Sunday 18 April



The ride starts and finishes at Cyclo Park, Gravesend and takes in the beautiful Kent countryside. There is a 100km and 50km route to choose from.

This event is organised by KM Charity team and you can choose to support Bromley Mencap from the drop-down box in the registration form [here](#)



Buster's Charity Firewalk - Friday 30 April

Are you ready for a challenge? Would you walk over hot coals for your favourite charity? If the answer is yes then this is the event for you! For more details and to register, take a look [here](#). Don't forget to enter Bromley Mencap as your chosen charity and start your fundraising.

The Vitality Big Half – Event postponed to Sunday 22 August

The Vitality Big Half will return to the streets of London in August. It's a great chance for you to enjoy the camaraderie and fun of a mass participant event while raising funds for us! We have a limited number of charity places available, so if you'd like to take part and raise much-needed funds for Bromley Mencap please get in touch and email jane.barnes@bromleymencap.org to register your place today. The registration fee is £25 with an additional minimum fundraiser of £300.00 (excluding gift aid). You can find more information at thebighalf.co.uk



Virtual Virgin Money London Marathon - Sunday 3 October

Bromley Mencap has a limited number of places available for the virtual event and is encouraging applicants who were unsuccessful in the ballot to contact them for a chance of taking part. The fundraising target is £150 and you need to be 18 or over to enter. You can find more information and FAQs [here](#). Contact jane.barnes@bromleymencap.org to register for a place today.

Already have your own place?

Then why not raise funds for us and help change the lives of disabled people of all ages, their families and carers in the borough of Bromley. Contact jane.barnes@bromleymencap.org for help to set up your fundraising page.

Donors' Spotlight

SSP UK - The Food Travel Experts

We were delighted to receive a donation of £1,000 from SSP UK in December. SSP UK employees are able to apply for charitable grants and we are very grateful for such a generous donation at a time of much need.

"The role of charities in the local community is invaluable and no more so than in the last year. I wanted to recognise Bromley Mencap for the really important work you do locally, supporting those that need help, along with their families. I hope that you can use this money towards improving someone's opportunity in life."

James Turner - HR Business Partner UK & Ireland

Does your employer offer a similar initiative? Do they offer match funding for any fundraising you do? Or can they offer payroll giving to a charity of your choice? Why not ask and nominate Bromley Mencap and help us to continue to change lives for the better.



Thank you to our supporters

Thank you and Happy Birthday wishes to our birthday Facebook fundraisers:

Stuart Kelly - £150

Sarah Fitzsimmons - £115

Claire Maria - £100

Tamsin Holley-Willis - £76

THANK YOU!

And thank you to the following for their generous donations:

Mr & Mrs Dempsey £1,000, Velvet Harmony choir group £100, Mrs L Marks £200.

Big Yellow Self Storage

Thank you to Big Yellow Self Storage Bromley for continuing to provide free storage space.

In such difficult times, the savings of over £2,400 per year make a real difference to us. Bromley Mencap members also receive a 10% discount on storage from Big Yellow when mentioning Bromley Mencap. Telephone 020 8313 0854 for further details.



You can subscribe to our fundraising newsletter [here](#)



Don't forget you can keep updated on what is going on at Bromley Mencap by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Copy deadline for May/June 2021 is 1st May

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