

**Board Meeting in Public**  
**Tuesday, 24 March 2026**

<b>Title of Paper</b>	Brixton Donor Centre – Key lessons and performance update	<b>Agenda No.</b>	3.5
<b>Nature of Paper</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Official <input type="checkbox"/> Official Sensitive		
<b>Author(s)</b>	Darren Bowen, Assistant Director – Supply Chain Terry Omiyi, Assistant Director – Planning, Insight and Direct Marketing		
<b>Lead Executive</b>	Gerry Gogarty, Director of Blood Supply Mark Chambers, Director of Donor Experience		
<b>Non-Executive Director</b>	N/A		
<b>Presenter(s) at Meeting</b>	Darren Bowen, Assistant Director – Supply Chain Terry Omiyi, Assistant Director – Planning, Insight and Direct Marketing		
<b>Presented for</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assurance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update		
<b>Is there a plan to communicate this to the organisation?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yet to be determined		
<b>Executive Summary</b>			
This brief summarises the first-year performance of the Brixton Donor Centre, the strategic lessons learned, and the implications for future donor centre planning and capacity deployment.			
<b>Previously Considered by</b>			
Executive Team, Futureproofing Blood Programme SRO, Programme Director, Accountable Executives and Programme Manager.			
<b>Recommendation</b>			
The Board is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise the progress following the opening of the Brixton Donor Centre in Dec 2024</li> <li>Review the lessons learnt and the progress made to imbed this into future donor centre openings.</li> <li>Provide feedback in line with this paper going to the Board in March</li> </ul>			
<b>Risk(s) identified (Link to Board Assurance Framework Risks)</b>			
P04 – Donor Numbers and Diversity.			
<b>Strategic Objective(s) this paper relates to:</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with partners <input type="checkbox"/> Invest in people and culture <input type="checkbox"/> Drive innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Modernise our operations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grow and diversify our donor base			
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix i: Brixton Marketing Plan – Summary of Activity & Key Learnings Appendix ii: Ro Taskforce; Appendix iii: Annex C; Appendix iv: Annex D		

**Brixton Donor Centre – Key lessons and performance update**

March 2026

Status: Official

**1. Summary and Purpose of Paper**

This brief summarises the first-year performance of the Brixton Donor Centre, the strategic lessons learned, and the implications for future donor centre planning and capacity deployment. Whilst the paper references Brixton, the lessons learned in relation to performance are also being taken forward for Brighton Donor Centre.

**2. Background, Strategic Intent and Original Ambition**

The Brixton Donor Centre opened in December 2024 to strengthen whole-blood resilience and grow the donor base across South and Southeast London, with a focus on under-represented communities and improving blood group mix.

Comprehensive analysis in 2021 -2022 (Collection Footprint) on a range of factors was used to determine optimal locations for new donor centres and the case for a new donor centre in the south/southeast London area was compelling. The refreshed analysis in 2023 confirmed that Brixton remained an ideal place for a centre as the overall population density and Black heritage population remain under-served by our existing capacity in the area (see Appendix 3 – Annex C). Hyper-location analysis determined that the most optimal place to locate a new donation centre was near Brixton tube station (Appendix 4 - Annex D) due to the very high levels of footfall, excellent transportation links and ethnically diverse local population providing significant opportunities to grow the donor base with Black heritage donors to benefit Ro type patients. Alongside this Increased visibility in the heart of the Brixton community would allow for greater engagement with local partners with targeted recruitment for staffing to reflect the community we are serving.

The business case established a five-year objective to build an active donor base of 24,000, including 3,600 donors of Black heritage, supported by an initial capacity of approximately 1,100 weekly appointments. Collection targets were set to scale in line with donor base growth, with year one expected to deliver 50% of the full target and a phased increase thereafter. This ramp-up profile aligns with benchmarks from other blood services opening new centres, such as Lifeblood (Australia) and CBS (Canada).

## 3. Year 1 Performance Overview

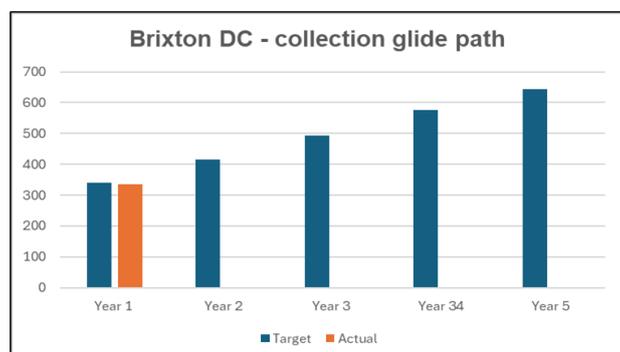


Chart one: Collections vs. target

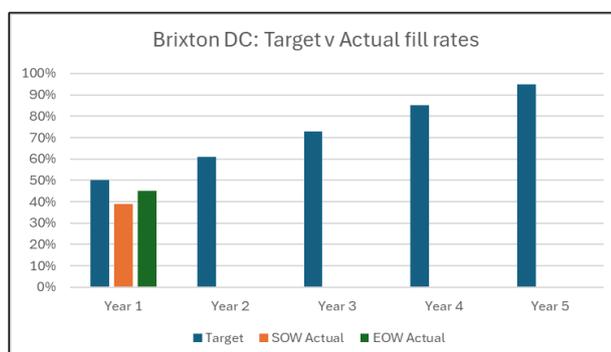


Chart two: Appointment fill vs. target

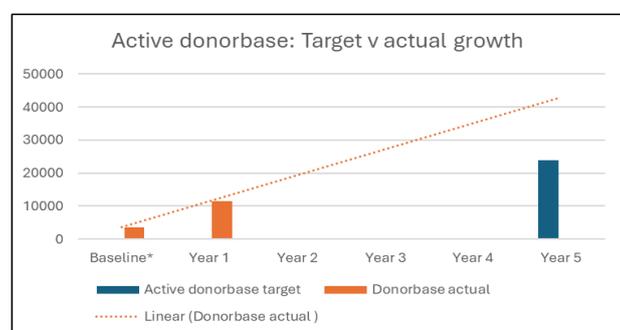


Chart three: Active donor base vs. target

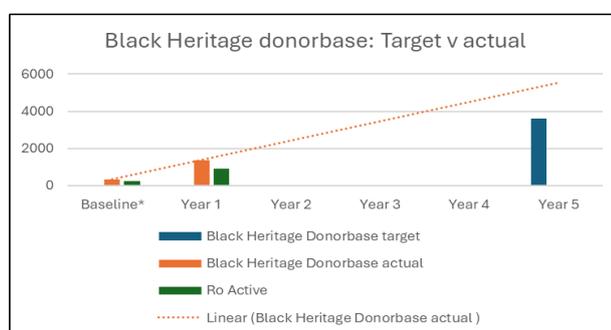


Chart four: Black heritage / Ro donor base vs. target

### 3.1 Collections

- Average weekly collections: 336, achieving 99% of Year 1 target (339/week).
- Ro performance:
  - 1,400 Ro units collected in 2025 (~27/week).
  - Brixton delivers 80 Ro units per 1,000 donations, more than double the NHSBT average (35.3).
  - Second highest Ro collection rate across all Donor Centres

### 3.2 Appointment Behaviour

- Start of week fill: 39%; end of week fill: 44% (excluding bank holidays). DC experiences strong in week appointment bookings.
- Conversion rate: 77%, outperforming the DC target (72%).
- Strong donor preference for late appointments: 69% fill (6–8pm) vs 40% (8–10am).

### 3.3 Donor Base Growth

- Active donor base after 12 months: 11,416 (up 7,800 from opening).
- 6.9k new donors attended; 4.6k made a successful first donation.
- 834 new donors of Black heritage (18% of first-time donors)-.
- Black heritage and Ro donor bases grew 314% and 298% respectively.
- Brixton now has the 3rd largest Ro donor base nationally.

## 4. Future Planning Implications as a result of the Lessons Learnt

### 4.1 Future implications

#### Enhanced local Partnerships and Community Engagement activity

Local partnerships drive c.30% of all donations for Lifeblood in Australia. In future we will aim to increase and strengthen community-led marketing activity. We will also look to optimise field marketing activity nearby to the centre with a particular focus on typing new donors in preparation for opening and ongoing donor recruitment.

### **Improved paid marketing reach**

First year paid marketing reach (for example outdoor banners and the Tube station takeover) engaged 88% of target audiences across Brixton. We will look to enhance this for year two Brixton but will also incorporate this successful approach where applicable to other new donor centres.

### **Respond to collection and donor base performance**

Future Donor Centre plans should reassess ramp-up periods reflecting on performance stats, local data and insights. Where performance in collection and donor base growth is above target we will set parameters and set aside budgets to support increases in targets mid-year, to cover enhanced donor engagement activity.

### **Optimise RO collection to accelerate closing the demand gap**

The Brixton Centre met its first-year business case collection target (50%). However, achieving this result while operating at full staffing levels highlights significant opportunities to further increase collections by accelerating progress in closing the RO supply–demand gap, and potentially broadening collection of other high-priority blood components. To support additional Ro donations, we have established a Ro taskforce, which has the objective of closing the demand gap (appendix ii). We will also look to see how Collection Staff could be deployed differently to support wider collection to meet business plan needs.

### **Wider lessons learned beyond donor centre opening**

Capacity decisions will need to reflect performance and business plan needs. We will balance growth opportunities with productivity and financial performance. Collection staffing approaches will align with how capacity will be deployed.

As part of the Stabilise Plus element of the Future Proofing Blood Programme, newly introduce mobile sessions in the West Midlands and Hertfordshire achieved target performance within the first month, and this has been maintained for almost three months. Though smaller in scale, their rapid impact provides valuable lessons for future capacity planning, including the ability collect at local venues closer to the homes of donors, so reducing travel time.

## 4.2 Key Lessons Learned – Summary and actions

### 4.2.1 – Lessons Learned: Marketing

Theme	Issue	Insight	Action	Lead
Service Offering *	Donor behaviour shows a preference for later appointment times; however, Brixton Donor Centre only operates between 6-8pm 3x per week.	<p>Average appointment fill rates in Brixton between 6-8pm are 69%, compared to 50% from 10am-12pm. Increasing evening capacity post 6pm would improve utilisation, collection performance and accelerate donorbase growth.</p> <p>National Donor Centre fill rates indicate a preference for later appointment times, with an average 78% appointments being booked post 6pm compared to 67% between 8am and 10am.</p>	<p>Explore opportunity to expand number of days Brixton Donor Centre is open post 6pm.</p> <p>Review Donor Centre appointment fill by hour across the Donor Centre network to understand wider opportunities to optimise appointment uptake, collection and donorbase growth.</p> <p>The Donor Network Design Programme is currently piloting a targeted trial to optimise donor preference times across key centres—Brixton, Manchester NH, and Birmingham—implemented through an approved change request.</p>	Terry Omiyi AD PIDM
Partnerships *	DHSC has raised concerns regarding certain commercial brands (Costa and Wingstop) and set parameters around partner suitability and NHS logo usage. All collaborations must protect NHS reputation, maintain brand integrity, and align with public health values.	<p>Insight demonstrates that whilst there are retail outlets around the donor centre – conversion to donation from retail partners is low, due to staffing numbers and stores unwilling to give paid leave to staff to donate blood.</p> <p>Instead, we have focused on Impact Brixton, St Vincent Centre, Goldsmiths University, South Thames College, Experian, Shark Ninja and The Foundry. Partnerships are one of the most powerful engines supporting donor recruitment and mobilisation because they expand reach, credibility, and capacity far beyond what an organisation can achieve alone.</p> <p>Partnerships play a crucial role, forming the core of Ro collection for the ARC and contributing 33% of all donations within Lifeblood.</p>	<p>Impact Brixton – messaging shared with 200 staff, looking to book a WYBT activity.</p> <p>St Vincent Centre – message to 2000 members, mass typing event explored for April 2026</p> <p>Goldsmiths University + South Thames – Student community and employers' community messaged – looking to deliver WYBT activity.</p> <p>Shark Ninja and Experian – exploring supporting NHSBT from CSR policy, currently being reviewed.</p>	Ataf Kazi AD partnerships
Local Community Engagemen	Brixton DC was delayed in opening by 6 months. More localised community-based events and activities could have been delivered during this period to support donor base growth.	Research tells us that donors build a relationship with their donation venue and so encouraging donors to donate in one location ahead of moving to an alternative location does come with a risk of increased donor attrition.	Strengthen Community Led Marketing: Build, sustain and scale the approaches that have built trust and participation amongst the local community, especially donors of Black heritage and Ro donors, supported by a Brixton specific, fully integrated marketing campaign.	Danielle Pettit AD CE

Theme	Issue	Insight	Action	Lead
Marketing *	High-impact local outdoor advertising is effective; however, it is expensive and therefore not possible to maintain an 'always on' approach without increased budgets	Evidence shows community and locally focused marketing is highly effective in Brixton, reflecting strong local identity and cultural engagement  Initial launch campaign reached an estimated 88% of priority audiences. It is expected that this will increase to 98% when considering initial campaign learnings.	Deliver a fully integrated marketing campaigns in the local area, leveraging the opportunities that high impactful, locally targeted paid advertising provides by implementing alongside a drum-beat of always on earned, owned and local community engagement and partnerships activity, putting Brixton Donor Centre at the forefront of the local community's mind.	Helen Duggan  AD MCS
Centre Design	N/A	94% Donor Satisfaction for Brixton DC on venue look and feel. Comparatively DCs nationally sit at 85% satisfaction. Anecdotal feedback indicates the centre well reflects the vibrancy of the local area.	Design principles developed in Brixton to be used as a starting point for future Donor Centre design projects, with consideration of how principles can be translated into other geographical locations – enabling consistency with space to personalise to other local communities.	Claire Claydon AD DXS
Modes of collection	Comparatively <b>recent increases in mobile capacity have achieved quicker</b> utilisation <b>but offers reduced scale</b>	Insight tells us that Donor Centres deliver high scale, long term capacity but require months/years to mature. Comparatively recent increases in mobile capacity have achieved quicker utilisation but offers reduced scale	Future planning must balance volume v speed vs scale, depending on organisational need (within scope of Donor Network Design)	Terry Omiyi AD PIDM

## 4.2.2 – Lessons Learned: Operations

Theme	Issue	Insight	Action	Lead
Target setting and ramp-up ambition *	Targets were based on benchmarks and previous experience	<b>A greater level of urgency and ambition is required to better meet sickle cell demand</b>	<b>Ro taskforce adopting a new and ambitious approach to increase targets quickly and incrementally as volumes increase (see appendix)</b>	Darren Bowen AD Supply Chain
Staffing and productivity	Low staff productivity	Frontloading staffing before opening improves readiness but reduces early productivity	Future model: 1. Introduce flexible contracts enabling staff dual roles (collections + community engagement), 2. Align shift patterns to donor preference to increase utilisation of staff and to accelerate delivery of RO ambition, 3. Phase recruitment to match ramp up (	Dan Cooper  AD BS

\* Priority Action

**Authors: Darren Bowen, Assistant Director – Supply Chain, Terry Omiyi, Assistant Director – Planning, Insight and Direct Marketing**  
**Responsible Director: Gerry Gogarty, Director of Blood Supply**

## Appendix:

### Appendix i: Brixton Marketing Plan – Summary of Activity & Key Learnings

The Brixton marketing plan aimed to **inspire, educate and guide** priority audiences—non-donors of Black Heritage aged 17–50 and non-donors of other ethnicities aged 17–35, Activity focused on the launch of the new Brixton Donor Centre between **Oct 2024 and Mar 2025**.

Since opening in **Dec 2024**, the centre has attracted **6,900+ new donors**, with **4,600 successful first donations**, including **834 donors of Black Heritage**. Brixton is now the **6th largest donor centre** nationally and has the **3rd largest Ro donor base** in just 12 months.

Some audiences were also reached by wider **London level marketing**, planned holistically alongside Brixton activity.

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#### Launch Period (Oct 2024 – Mar 2025)

- Campaign activity reached **~88%** of target audiences.
- Community led launch events created strong local impact, media buzz and improved relationships with partners, influencers and press.
- High impact **Out of Home** (OOH) activity—including a Tube takeover and 70+ ads—reached **~1.5 million people**.
- Limited availability of premium OOH sites highlighted the need for **earlier booking**; planning for 26/27 is already underway.
- Localised audio partnerships (e.g., **Reprezent Radio**) were challenging due to timeline and budget year constraints; earlier engagement with smaller media owners is needed in future.
- A single email variant was used; future campaigns require **more segmented, action-oriented email**
- Events like **'For the Love'** need clearer objectives and audience centred design if repeated. -centred design if repeated.

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#### Spring/Summer 2025 (Apr – Sep 2025)

- Expanding the **Next Best Action** optimisation model across online video, digital audio and social drove a **2% uplift** in bookings in test regions, with Brixton often prioritised.
- **Simply Sayo's ITAV** influencer campaign showed particularly strong engagement among young Black Heritage audiences.
- Email A/B tests showed **direct, active subject lines** significantly improved opens and clicks.
- The children's book initiative led by **Laura Henry Allain MBE** generated strong media interest and was well received locally, though school engagement is resource intensive and not an organisational priority.
- Around **World Sickle Cell Day**, Jourdan Dunn's donation visit drove high profile media coverage across London.
- Reddit video content delivered **high impressions and CTR**, with the 'Be There' video outperforming existing creatives.
- The **Love Is In the Blood** partnership with Channel 4.0 generated **~5 million views** with very positive sentiment; plans for year two are being explored.

## Autumn/Winter 2025 (Oct 2025 – Mar 2026)

- **Bus wraps billboards** provided strong visibility and media value, with wraps running for free into December (worth ~£55k).

## Additional DX & Comms Outcomes

- **190+ media articles**, valued at **£1.6m AVE**, generating **241m opportunities to see**.
- **104 local community events** delivered **1,515 registrations** (633 Black Heritage) and **568 bookings**.
- **26 group bookings** produced **350+ appointments**, including high volumes of Black Heritage and Ro donors.
- Multiple community partnerships (e.g., Disney Ironheart, South Bank Colleges, Goldsmiths, St Vincent Centre, Port Royal Patties) reached **15,000+ potential donors**.

## Appendix ii: Ro Taskforce

Today, NHSBT only meets c.50% of the demand required to treat sickle cell patients, demand from these patient groups will increase by at least 5% every year.

This means that every week around 100 sickle cell patients do not get access to the best possible treatment. It also means that NHSBT must over-collect O-negative and B-negative donations to provide the substitutions to these patients. So far, this financial year, we have issued more than 22k O-negative units and 6k B-negative units as sickle cell treatment substitutions.

A Ro taskforce has been established with the ambition to close the Ro demand gap this calendar year. The Ro Taskforce programme brings together focused workstreams across the organisation to unify effort, remove barriers and deliver measurable improvements in Ro collection:

- Increasing the number of sessions, we host within communities where Ro donors are more prevalent. Brixton Donor centre is a key location.
- Increasing the number of Ro donors on our donor base.
- Developing partnerships within communities that help NHSBT to increase the number of donors and donations.
- Reviewing deferrals for Ro donors, exploring ways to increase the likelihood of Ro and Black Heritage donors to be able to donate when they attend our sessions.
- Working with hospitals to ensure that every time a Ro unit is issued, it is provided to a patient that needs this product.

The Ro taskforce reports into the Blood Operations Leadership Team governance structure and will work closely with other programmes to support achieving this ambition.

## Appendix iii: Annex C

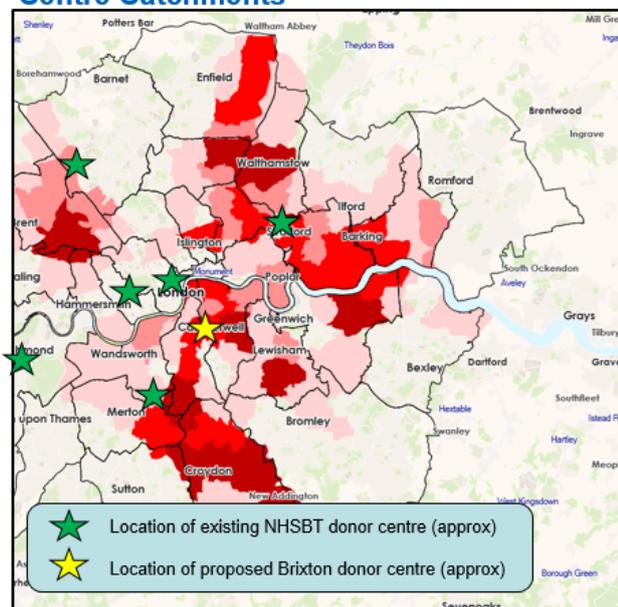
FRM6642/2 – Business Case Summary

Effective Date: 16/12/2022



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### Annex C: Black Heritage Population Density in London vs Existing Donor Centre Catchments



- Annual Ro Kell neg collections need to increase by at least c60k by 2023-24 (vs. 2020-21) to close the Ro supply gap. At current donation frequency, this would require a further c30k donors (in addition to replacing any existing donors who become inactive).
- Less than 2% of non-Black new donors have Ro blood vs 41% of Black donor recruits (2020 actuals). Around 60% (c1.1M) of the Black population in England live in London<sup>1</sup>, although there is variance by borough.
- More collection capacity is needed in parts of London to maximise the opportunities for donor base growth from the Black heritage population. The proposed new Brixton site is in a location with high Black heritage population (as expressed by dense red areas of the map).

<sup>1</sup> 2011 Census Survey.

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Cross-Referenced in Primary Document: MPD1463

## Appendix iv: Annex D

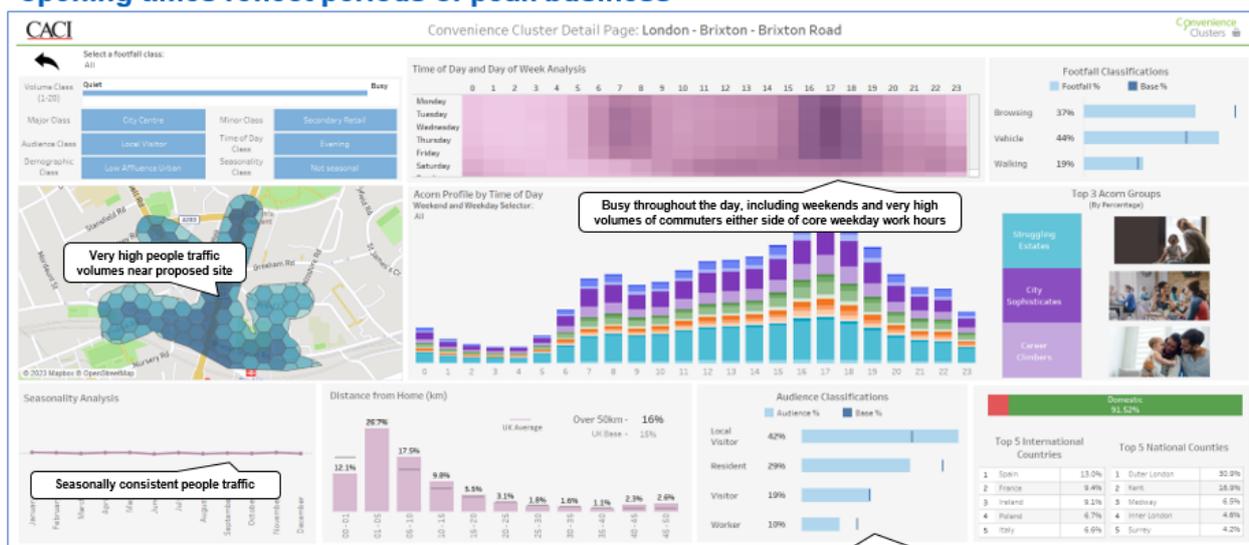
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### Annex D: People traffic at our proposed location remains high. Proposed opening times reflect periods of peak business



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