



# Pay Rates in Distribution Network Operators (DNOs)

A Prospect briefing • June 2026

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# Background

Pay rates amongst the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) within the UK has long been a topic of discussion amongst Prospect members, however pinning down pay rates for specific job roles across DNOs has proved difficult due to a combination of non-functional job evaluation systems, different voltage networks, differences in terminology and a whole raft of historical differences since the break-up of the nationalised industry.

As a way of trying to understand the current picture Prospect has decided to undertake a significant piece on pay settlements, job rates and job role mappings to obtain a much more holistic view on pay in the sector. This briefing will focus on the following six DNOs, who between them hold all fourteen DNO license areas across mainland Great Britain:

- **SP Electricity North West (SPENW)**
  - Electricity North West Limited
- **National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)**
  - East Midlands
  - West Midlands
  - South Wales
  - South West
- **Northern Power Grid (NPG)**
  - Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Ltd
  - Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) plc
- **Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)**
  - SP Distribution Ltd
  - SP Manweb plc
- **Scottish & Southern Energy Networks (SSEN)**
  - Scottish Hydro Electric
  - Southern Electric Power Distribution
- **UK Power Networks (UKPN)**
  - Eastern
  - London
  - South Eastern Power Networks plc

## **Methodology**

This piece of work has focussed on two main strands:

1. Pay Settlements
2. Job Rates

### **Pay Settlements**

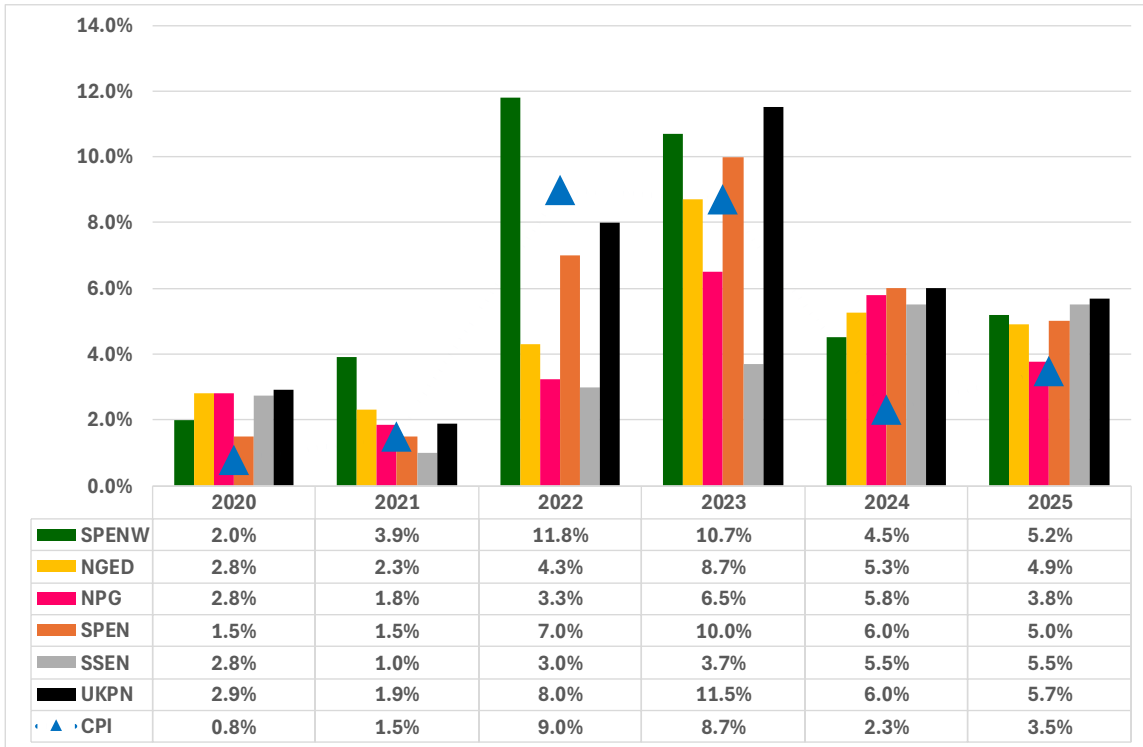
To gain a historical understanding of pay trends, pay settlements across the six DNOs have been tracked back to 2020, and compared with the rate of CPI inflation in April of each year.

### **Job Rates**

To provide a basis for comparison across DNOs a wide variety of job roles have been divided into four groupings, based on the nature of the work, job titles, and salary. This has been done with significant help and input from Full Time Officers and Branch Representatives.

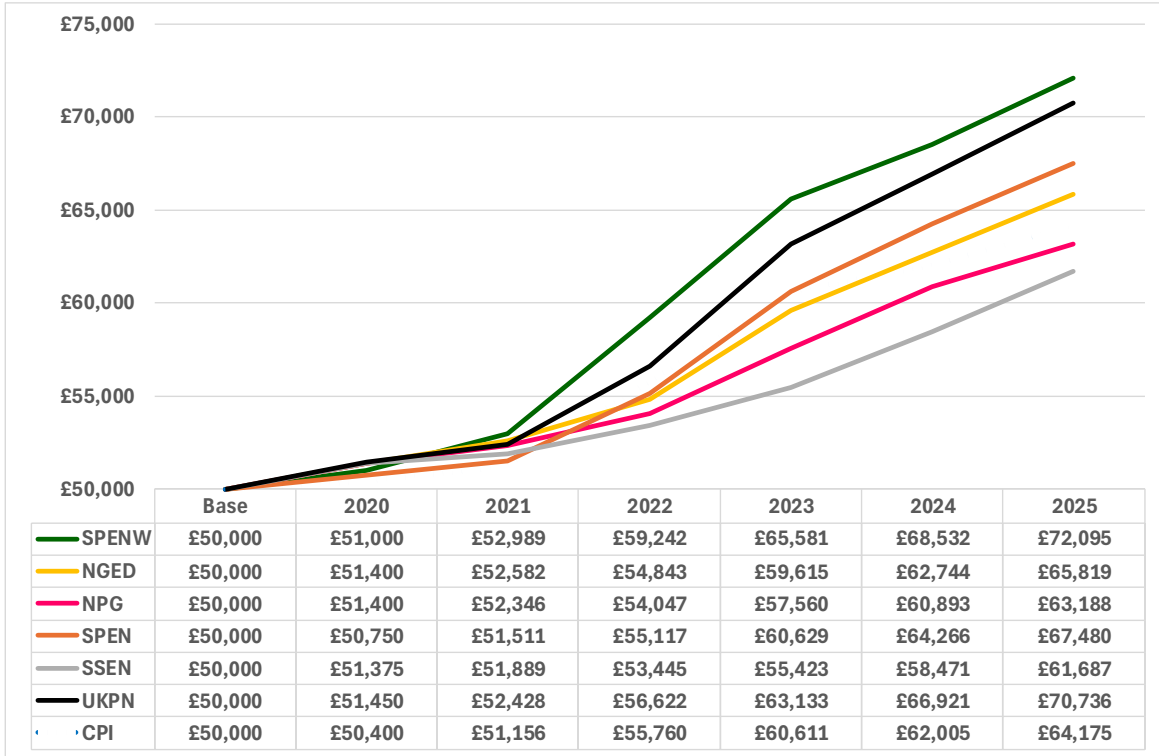
# Pay Settlements

The following chart illustrates the pay settlement received by each DNO since 2020, alongside the rate of CPI inflation in April of each year.



# The Compound Effect of Pay Settlements

The chart below works on the assumption that an employee was paid £50,000 on January 1st 2020. It then goes onto detail what would have happened to their pay on a compounded basis if they had worked for each of the DNOs. The chart also includes a line illustrating how much that £50,000 would now be in real terms due to compounded CPI inflation.



## Job Role Groupings

Each specific job role has been placed into one of four broad groupings, in order to map rates of pay across different DNOs. The table below sets out the broad parameters of each job role group.

<b>Job Role Group</b>	<b>Job Roles Included</b>	<b>Job Role Grade</b>	<b>Job Role Pay Range</b>
Group 1	Craft roles, lower-level technical roles, entry level trainees	Top end of the craft/staff grades, lowest level of the engineering & professional grades	£30,000 - £60,000
Group 2	Lower-level engineering roles, lower level SAPs specialist roles, junior management roles	Lower to middle grades on the engineering & professional grades	£40,000 - £70,000
Group 3	Senior & specialist engineers, higher level SAP's, middle and upper management	Middle to upper grades on the engineering & professional grades	£60,000 - £90,000
Group 4	Senior specialist, senior engineers, senior managers	Highest scales on the engineering & professional grades	£70,000 - £110,000

## Group 1

Job roles in this group are typically craft and technical roles, but also often include those entering engineering roles as new trainees. These roles tend to sit at the lower end of pay structures, the pay range is between £30,000 and £60,000.

### Typical Job Roles

- Control Engineer - LV
- Dispatch Engineer
- Fault-Coordinator
- Fitters
- Jointers
- Linesman
- Technical Craft Person
- Technician
- Wayleave Officer

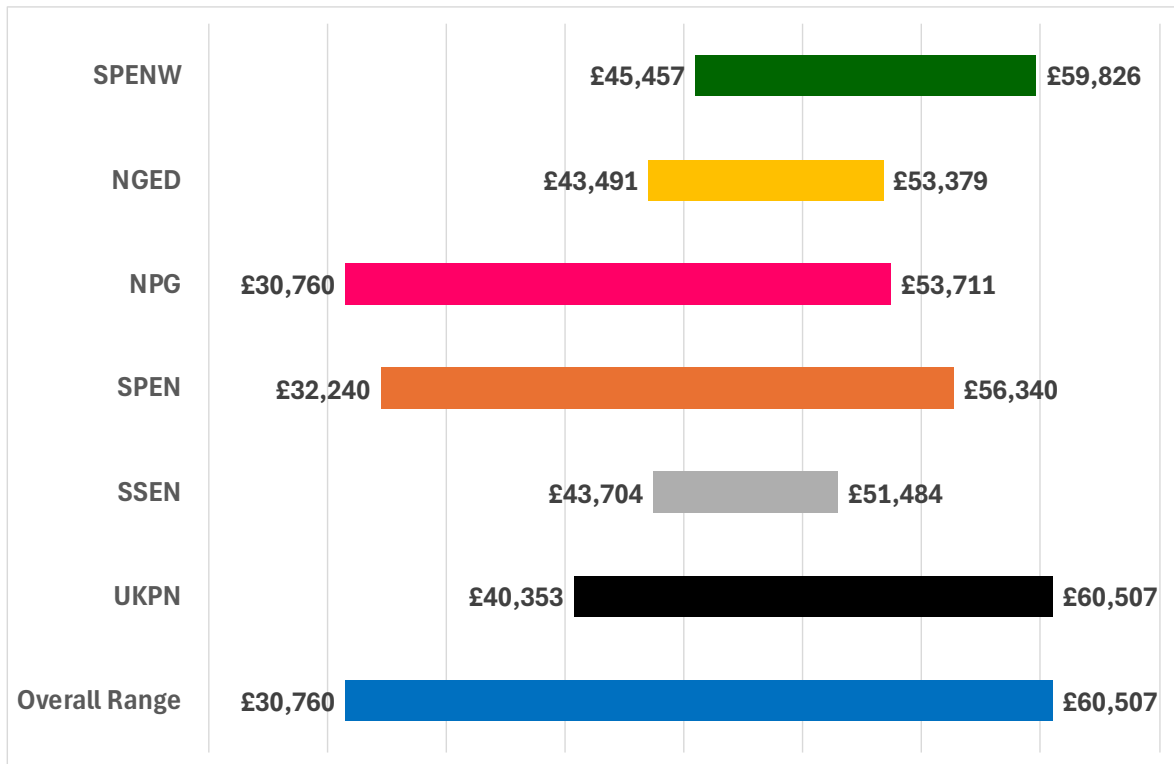
### Pay Grades by DNO

Job roles in this group map against the following pay grades in each DNO:

<b>DNO</b>	<b>Pay Grades</b>
SP Electricity North West (SPENW)	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5
National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)	Grade 4, Grade 5
Northern Power Grid (NPG)	Level A
Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)	EN3, EN4
Scottish & Southern Energy Networks (SSEN)	Band 6
UK Power Networks (UKPN)	EPN, LPN, SPN, Band F

## Pay Ranges

The chart below shows the pay range for jobs in this group within each DNO and the overall picture.



## Group 2

Job roles in this group are lower-level engineering and junior management roles. These roles tend to sit at the lower to middle end of pay structures, the typical pay range is between £40,000 and £70,000.

### Typical Job Roles

- CAD Designer
- Control Engineer - HV
- Design Engineer – 11kv/33kv/66kv
- Engineer – 11kv/33kv/66kv
- Engineer – Single Voltage
- Junior Project Manager
- Operational Engineer
- Project Coordinator
- Project Engineer
- SAP – 11kv/33kv/66kv
- SAP – Single Voltage
- Team Leader
- Wayleave Manager

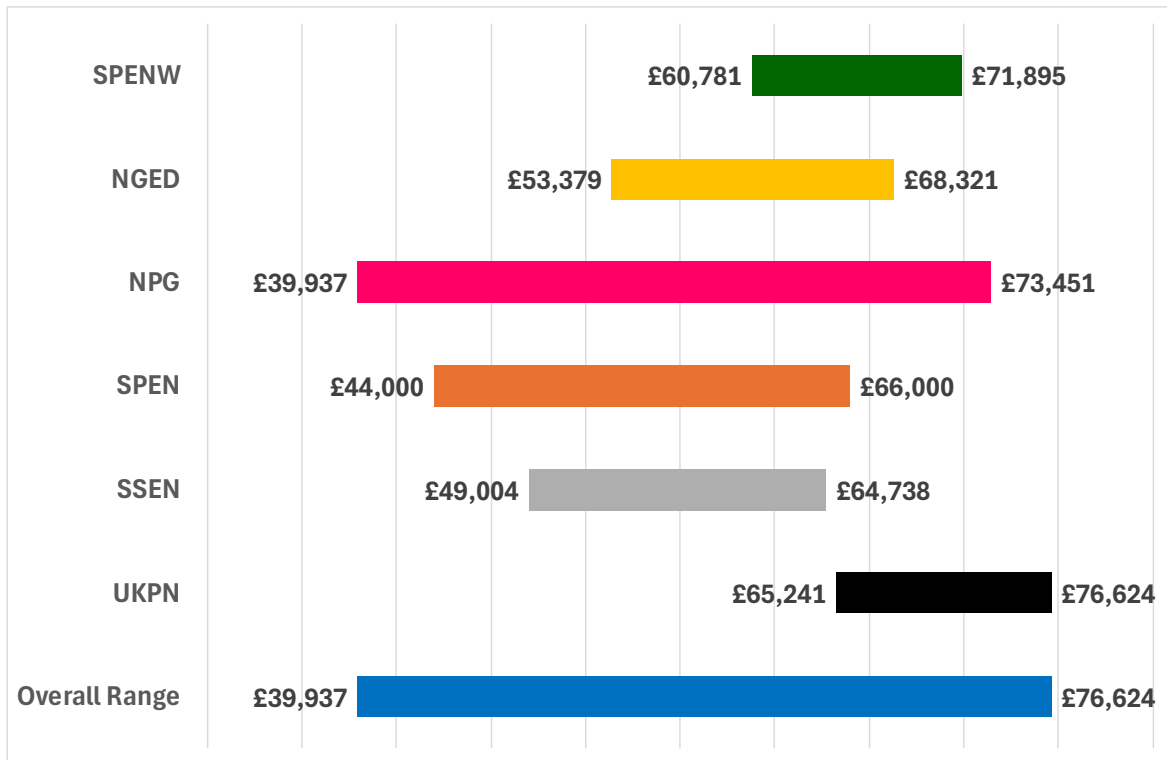
### Pay Grades by DNO

Job roles in this group map against the following pay grades in each DNO:

<b>DNO</b>	<b>Pay Grades</b>
SP Electricity North West (SPENW)	ENG 1, ENG2
National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)	Grade 6, Grade 7
Northern Power Grid (NPG)	Level A+, Level B
Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)	EN5
Scottish & Southern Energy Networks (SSEN)	Band 7, Band 8
UK Power Networks (UKPN)	Band E

## Pay Ranges

The chart below shows the pay range for jobs in this group within each DNO and overall.



## Group 3

Job roles in this group are typically senior/specialist engineers, higher level SAPs and middle to upper managers. These job roles tend to sit towards the middle to upper pay end of pay structures, which a typical pay range between £60,000 and £90,000.

### Typical Job Roles

- Control Engineer – Multiple Voltage
- Design Engineer – 132kv
- Distribution Engineer
- Engineer – 132kv
- Engineering Specialists
- Major Projects Delivery SAP
- Protection & Commissioning Engineer
- SAP – 132kv
- SAP – Multiple Voltage
- Senior CAD Design Engineer
- Senior Consents/Property /Claims (Wayleaves) Managers
- Senior Design Engineer
- Senior Project Engineer
- Team Manager
- Transmission Engineer

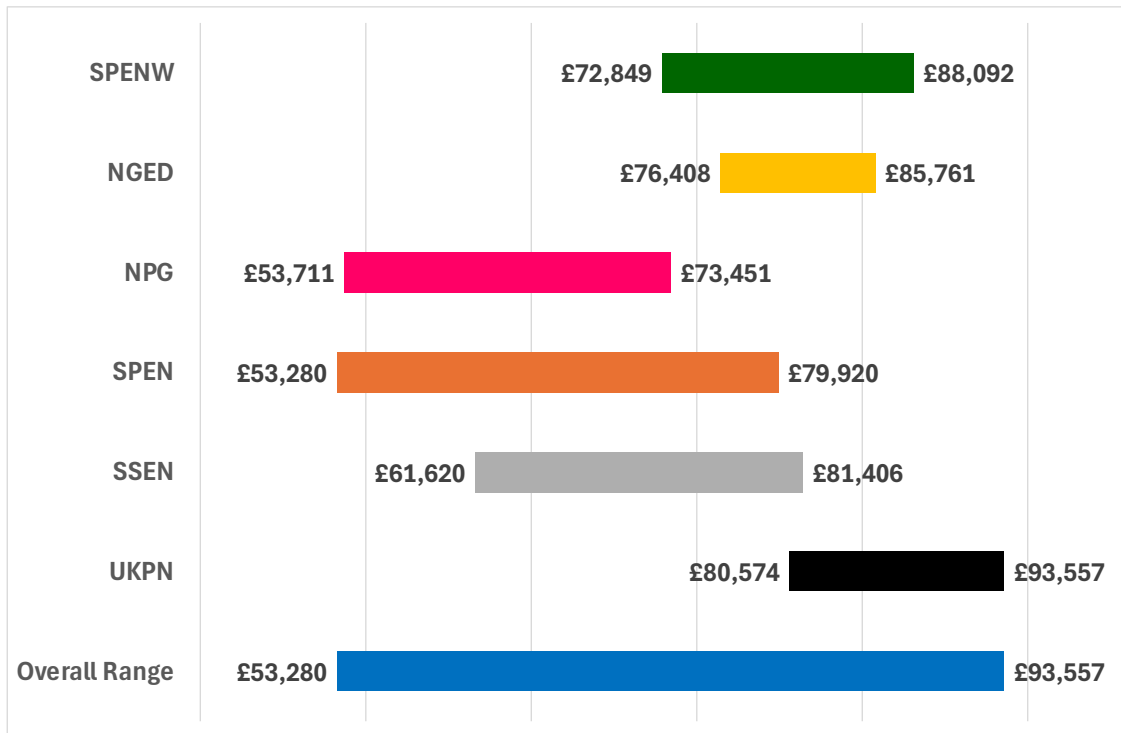
### Pay Grades by DNO

Job roles in this group map against the following pay grades in each DNO:

<b>DNO</b>	<b>Pay Grades</b>
SP Electricity North West (SPENW)	ENG3, ENG4, ENG5
National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)	Grade 8
Northern Power Grid (NPG)	Level B
Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)	EN6
Scottish & Southern Energy Networks (SSEN)	Band 9, Band 10
UK Power Networks (UKPN)	Band D

## Pay Ranges

The chart below shows the pay range for jobs in this group within each DNO and overall.



## Group 4

Job roles in this group are typically senior managers and very senior engineers. These job roles tend to sit on the top grades in pay structures and have a typical pay range between £70,000 and £110,000.

### Typical Job Roles

- Lead Commissioning Engineer
- Lead Design Engineer
- Lead Engineer
- Major Project Delivery Manager
- Network Control Manager
- Primary System Design Engineer
- Senior Asset Engineer
- Senior Policy Engineer
- Senior Control Engineer/Manager
- System Control Engineer

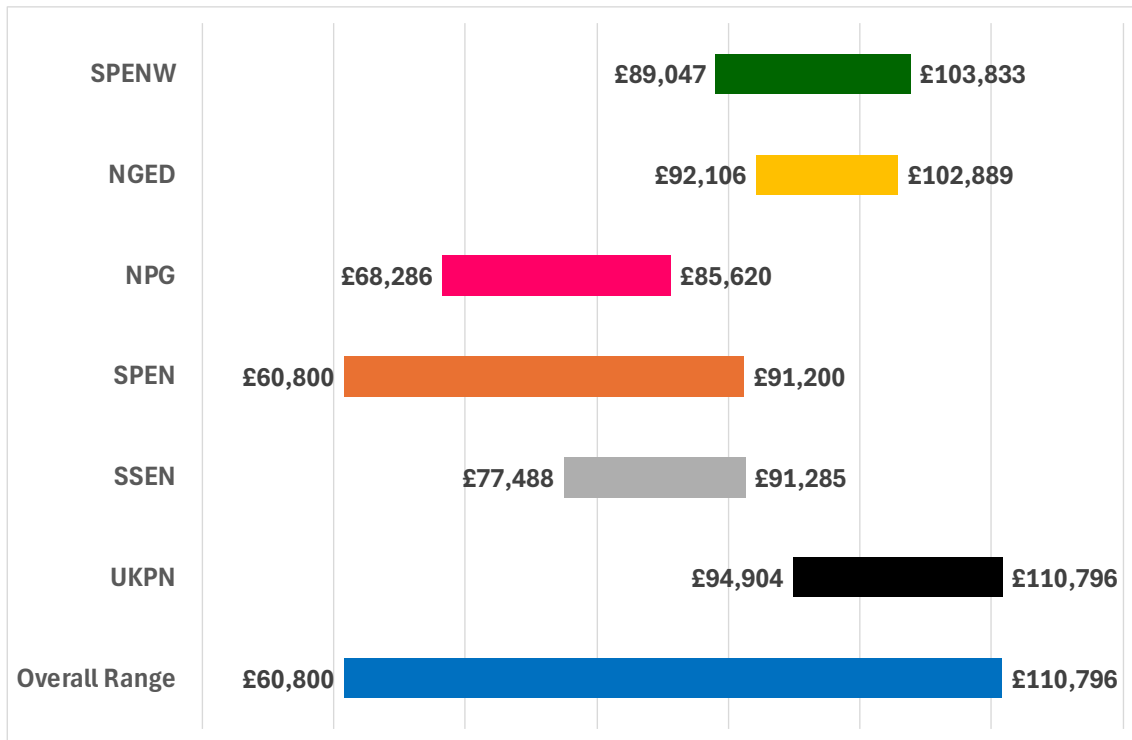
### Pay Grades by DNO

Job roles in this group map against the following pay grades in each DNO:

<b>DNO</b>	<b>Pay Grades</b>
SP Electricity North West (SPENW)	ENG6, ENG7
National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)	Grade 9
Northern Power Grid (NPG)	Level C, ETL
Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)	EN7
Scottish & Southern Energy Networks (SSEN)	Band 11
UK Power Networks (UKPN)	Band C

## Pay Ranges

The chart below shows the pay range for jobs in this group within each DNO and overall.



## **Data Limitations**

Whilst the research for this briefing has been extensive, with significant assistance from branch representatives, the allocation of job roles into groupings remains a “best fit approach”. Additionally, all quoted pay scales represent the basic pay scales, as published by each DNO in 2025. There are however nuances and differences around rostering with standby and callout that may have an impact on these pay scales in a more holistic sense.

## **Next Steps**

The aim is also for this to be a living document, which is updated annually to consider subsequent years pay settlements and rates of inflation.



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