

Shape Accredited Training Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 54342

Name of lead inspector: Tim Gardner HMI

Last day of inspection: 21 October 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Richard Crosthwaite Centre
Sotherby Road
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Information about the provider

1. Shape Accredited Training Centre (Shape) was established by its parent organisation, Cleveland Youth Association, in 1978. It is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Shape's head office is situated in Middlesbrough. Its parent organisation has a board of seven trustees. Shape employs 25 training and six administrative staff.
2. Shape contracts with the Skills Funding Agency for apprenticeships in care and child care, and for advanced apprenticeships in care, childcare, and dental nursing. Shape also contracts with the Young People's Learning Agency for a foundation learning programme. Since the last inspection, the Entry to Employment (E2E) provision has fully migrated into foundation learning.
3. Unemployment in the Tees Valley in August 2010 was 5.7% compared to 4.7% in the North East and 3.6% nationally. The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the region is high at 8.3%. Forty per cent of wards in the Tees Valley are in the 10% most deprived in England. The 2001 census figures show that 2.8% of the Tees Valley population are from minority ethnic groups compared to 9% nationally.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: Foundation Learning, including Entry to Employment	141 learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships Train to Gain	198 apprentices 10 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	Grade
Health, public services and care	2
Employability training	2

Overall effectiveness

- Shape is a good provider with some outstanding features. It targets provision effectively to engage with young people, many of whom have not had positive educational experiences. Outcomes for all learners in health, public services and care, and foundation learning are good. Learners develop good skills to prepare them for employment, further education and training. They enjoy their training and the time they spend in the training centre.
- Teaching and training are good. Shape has invested significantly in technology, resources and facilities. Foundation learning programmes offer a wide range of accredited qualifications to meet as many learning needs as possible. The health, public services and care programmes meet the career aspirations of learners well. Shape makes good use of partnerships to enhance the experience for learners. Care, guidance and support for learners are very good. Staff are well qualified and provide learners with good advice and guidance.
- The leadership and management of Shape are good with some outstanding aspects. The chief executive provides excellent leadership to both staff and learners. Trustees provide outstanding oversight of the provision and are led by a very knowledgeable chair who has a detailed understanding of the political,

strategic, financial and human aspects of Shape's provision. Shape's approach to safeguarding is outstanding. All aspects of management of the provision are good.

Main findings

- Learners achieve good outcomes in health and care and employability training programmes. Many learners start with low attainment at entry. Careful initial assessment ensures that Shape places each learner on the best programme to suit his or her needs. Success rates for apprenticeships are high and completion within planned times has improved each year and is now well above the national average.
- Learners enjoy their learning experience. They develop good employment and vocational skills, particularly those on the Foundation Learning programme. Achievement rates for accredited qualifications are good and a high proportion progress to further training or education.
- Learners feel safe in both the training centre and in their workplace. Staff give good attention to safe working practices at all times. All activities, trips and visits are carefully risk assessed before learners take part. Good activities are included to improve learners' understanding of their own health and well-being.
- Off-the-job training is good. Well planned sessions incorporate a variety of activities and fully engage the learners. Good resources enable learners to access opportunities to develop practical skills alongside their knowledge and understanding. In a minority of lessons, facilitators do not use effective questioning techniques and miss opportunities to use technology so that all learners are sufficiently challenged.
- The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners very successfully. The achievement of additional qualifications assists learners in their workplace and improves their employability.
- Shape works very effectively with a range of partners to enhance the provision. The strong relationships with other organisations and employers enable Shape to enhance the learning experience and employment opportunities for their learners. The learners increase in confidence and their self-esteem and aspirations grow as a result.
- The support for learners is good and enables learners who begin from a low starting point to achieve well. The learning facilitators have a good knowledge of their learners' needs and go to great lengths to meet these on both a one-to-one and group basis. Facilitators use very effective initial and diagnostic assessment to support learners early.
- The leadership of the provision at Shape by the chief executive is excellent. Mutual respect and dignity at work permeates throughout Shape and applies equally to staff and learners. The management team is highly effective at communicating with and involving all staff in the decision-making process. A

range of focus groups incorporates staff and learners and includes a very active quality group.

- The very knowledgeable chair and active trustees of Shape provide excellent oversight of the provision. Detailed reports are analysed at the regular board meetings, and queried and challenged robustly ensuring Shape stays true to its vision and mission. Trustees have a range of relevant skills to support Shape. The chief executive and chair meet regularly to discuss developments.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. All staff and employers undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks before having access to learners. All activities and events are scrupulously planned and risk-assessed before taking place. All staff and learners receive regular training and updating. Staff take very effective and swift actions to remedy safety issues.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Relevant plans place a strong emphasis on equality and diversity issues. Shape actively recruits learners from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are not in education, employment or training and makes good attempts to recruit more learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Further development of these strategies would assist in promoting the provision more widely.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement are highly inclusive of all staff. Managers use good systems to gather feedback and input from other users and stakeholders. The organisational structure is clear and works well and all staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures effectively focuses staff on improving learners' experience.
- The system for the observation of teaching and learning is very effective. Paired observations, both internally and with external partners, standardise judgements effectively. However, the written observation records focus too much on what the facilitator is doing rather than on the learning.

What does Shape need to do to improve further?

- Develop the strategies to engage with under-represented groups to include learners from minority ethnic backgrounds, those who are not in education, employment or training or those who are disabled so that the learning provision offered at Shape is more widely promoted in the communities served and that the barriers faced by these groups are removed or lessened.
- Take appropriate actions to ensure that all staff are better able to use the full range of questioning techniques to check learners' understanding. Develop target setting in all areas to ensure they fully challenge the more able learners and encourage all staff to use technology to its full potential to support learning.
- Develop the system for the observation of training so that observers place less emphasis on what the facilitator does and more on the learning taking place

and complete written records which focus more on the learning that is taking place.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly and helpful staff who are very supportive and are always there if they are needed
- the fact that Shape is a friendly and helpful provider which builds learners' confidence and creates an enjoyable atmosphere
- how they help learners to settle into training and learning and help with a range of different skills which enables them to prepare for the future
- the relaxed atmosphere in the centre so that staff and learners are easy to get along with
- having a named assessor throughout the programme who can be contacted at any time and who is aware of their progress
- the range and quality of the learning resources at the centre and the small class sizes
- the way the tutors teach learners like adults
- the organisation of trips and activities.

What learners would like to see improved:

- longer lessons - two hours are not really enough each week
- places where learners can sit for breaks
- the timing of sessions so that long journeys are not made for just a short training session
- more detailed preparation of some of the lessons and better use of the resources rather than just using them for presentations.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the very flexible and skilled staff
- the excellent communications with Shape
- how well they support the learners
- the good initial response and approach to engaging with them
- the professional response to issues raised and the help provided for students when they have difficulties
- Shape's thoroughness, especially with health and safety.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no suggestions for improvements.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. Since the last inspection the provision at Shape has improved from satisfactory to good across all aspects with some outstanding features in leadership and management. Success rates for apprentices have been maintained at a high level and completion within planned timescales has improved significantly and is now well above the national averages. Success rates for advanced apprentices are particularly high.
8. Positive outcomes for learners on the entry to employment programme have improved each year. Since the start of the foundation learning programme in 2009/10, the achievement of accredited qualifications has been good and is improving. Progression rates to further training or employment are good.
9. The management and staff at Shape have a good understanding of the use of targets and those set are realistic and achievable. The vision and mission clearly articulate appropriate priorities for the organisation and place a strong focus on improvements to achieve excellence. A fully inclusive self-assessment process results in a detailed quality improvement plan. Good systems are in place to gather and use the views of users and stakeholders.
10. The management structure is clear and roles and responsibilities are fully understood by all staff. Management is inclusive and open in style and there is good management of physical and human resources to support further improvements. All staff understand and support the drive to improve learners' experiences. Shape maintains a strong ethos and culture based on mutual respect for all. Governors provide outstanding oversight of the provision. A carefully selected group of trustees, who have a good mix of highly relevant skills, provides excellent support and challenge.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

11. Outcomes for apprentices on health and care programmes, particularly in relation to their prior achievement, are good. Achievement within planned timescales has improved each year and is now significantly above the national average. Skill development is good and learners are able to function very effectively in their workplace. Learners enjoy their learning and they are making good progress. Foundation learners achieve good positive outcomes from the programme. Achievement rates are good and have improved over the two years of provision. Shape successfully improves both the confidence levels and aspirations of these learners. There is no discernable difference in performance by any groups of learners.
12. Learners feel safe in both training and work environments. Shape ensures that all learners develop a good understanding of safeguarding issues in relation to

both themselves and others. Many learners undertake and achieve health and safety, first aid and food hygiene qualifications during their induction period. Shape's facilitators maintain a good focus on developing safe working practices and handling hazardous substances and materials.

13. Shape provides appropriate sessions covering health and well-being issues such as sexual health, and drug and alcohol misuse. Learners make a good contribution to community activities both within Shape and with external groups. They have made a good contribution to charity fundraising for a Sri Lankan project.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

14. Teaching, training and assessment are good. In the majority of lessons detailed planning helps facilitators use a good variety of interactive teaching methods. In the better lessons facilitators use an appropriate range of questioning techniques to challenge learners' understanding and promote better progress. In a small number of lessons the use of questions is more limited. In many cases good use is made of learning technology but this is not the case in all lessons. In foundation learning good use is made of one-to-one review sessions to encourage learners and build their confidence levels. In most cases good use is made of target setting to encourage learners to progress. In a small number of cases targets do not challenge learners sufficiently or focus on the wider aspects of the learning programme.
15. The extensive range of accredited qualifications offered to foundation learners successfully meets their needs and interests. Additional qualifications for care learners support them in becoming more employable and job-ready. Shape is managing the move to employed status for all apprentices very effectively.
16. Shape has developed good partnerships with a wide range of employers in the sectors in which it delivers training. In childcare, this enables learners to access a range of settings in which to consolidate their knowledge and vocational expertise. A good range of external organisations provides training in a number of relevant topics, adding value to the learning experience.
17. Shape provides good care, guidance and support to its learners. Good use is made of initial and diagnostic testing to ensure that learners are on the correct programmes. Individual and group support is highly effective in developing good cohesion between learners. Support is very effective in retaining learners and enabling those who start from low levels of attainment to achieve their qualifications. Shape is an accredited information, advice and guidance centre and has well-managed systems to ensure that learners are skilfully supported and guided through their time on programme.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

18. Leadership from the chief executive is excellent. Shape maintains a strong focus on developing a culture of respect between all staff and learners. This culture results in good strategies to manage and promote support for staff in both their personal and professional lives. A wide range of staff and team meetings and conferences is in place. Staff involvement in all relevant processes is good. Financial management is strong and has successfully remedied past issues. Shape promotes good relationships between managers and staff. Focus groups, which include learners and staff from all areas, review key areas of the provision and address issues. The organisational structure is clear and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Managers are extremely accessible to staff and learners.
19. The governance of Shape is outstanding. Highly skilled trustees provide excellent oversight of the provision and strategic development. Trustees participate fully in a range of activities and events at Shape. The chair is extremely knowledgeable about the sector and uses his detailed understanding of the political, strategic, financial and human aspects of the mission of Shape as a charitable trust extremely effectively. Regular communication and meetings between the chair and the chief executive support the chief executive in striving for improvements. Trustees receive detailed reports and presentations from key managers and these are scrutinised rigorously and robustly.
20. The promotion of the safeguarding of learners is outstanding. The detailed policies and procedures covering learner safeguarding and general health and safety are rigorously applied by all staff. This ensures that all learners at Shape are fully protected at all times. All staff and trustees undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks. The chief executive maintains a comprehensive single register of all staff details and training. Two named safeguarding officers and the chief executive provide a choice of male or female staff for learners to approach. Strong attention is placed on risk assessment of events and activities. Detailed vetting of employers and sites before visits helps ensure the safety of participants. Employers are required to sign up to a health and safety related contract before learners start their work. A combined staff and learner safety committee actively oversees developments related to safety. Shape promotes internet safety very thoroughly and carefully manages which sites are available to learners. Good coverage of these arrangements takes place during learner induction sessions. Shape responds very quickly to any protection issues that arise.
21. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A detailed strategic plan has been developed that Shape utilises very effectively to maintain a strong focus on equality and diversity throughout all of its activities. Shape prioritises the need to recruit under-represented and/or disadvantaged learners. The strategy to engage with learners who are not in education, employment or training is well-developed. Eye-catching promotional materials support Shape in challenging stereotypes regarding gender, race or age. Good attempts have

been made to engage with specific community and religious groups to promote access to Shape's programmes. However, formal strategies to challenge the barriers for these under-represented groups could be developed further. Extensive training is delivered to staff, learners and the board of trustees and Shape is piloting the use of an intermediate-level equality and diversity qualification.

22. Shape uses very effective systems to engage with its users and other stakeholders. A good marketing and recruitment plan details key targets and activities. Regular surveys are used to gather feedback from learners, staff, employers and trustees on future developments and the quality of provision at Shape.
23. Self-assessment is used very effectively to promote improvements in the quality of provision. It is a fully inclusive process during which all staff attend a one-week conference. A strong emphasis is placed on judgements based on evidence and results in a detailed quality improvement plan. Shape promotes quality as a key component of both its vision and mission. Observation of teaching, training and assessment is well-established. Trained observers undertake paired observations internally and with external partners to standardise judgements. However, the written observation records focus too little on what is being learned.
24. Value for money is good. Shape has invested significantly in facilities and staff. The quality of resources and equipment is good.

Subject areas

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Context

25. Shape currently has a total of 98 learners on health and social care apprenticeship programmes. Of these, 52 are on childcare programmes, 13 are on courses for adult social care and 33 are on dental nursing courses. Shape provides courses at intermediate and advanced levels. The majority of learners are on advanced programmes and the largest group of learners are aged 16 to 18.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good and learners enjoy learning. Success rates are high overall particularly for dental learners. Learners make good progress relative to their prior achievement and most attain their learning goals. Facilitators encourage learners to work at a pace suited to their individual needs. Their work is of a good standard; they develop good practical skills and improve standards in their workplaces.
- Learners develop good personal and social skills and demonstrate increased confidence. They have a good level of awareness of key issues, such as the importance of promoting independence, respecting rights and dignity, and encouraging development through structured play. All learners are aware of their progress and they know what they need to do in order to complete their courses.
- All learners significantly improve their employability through the development of useful skills that are highly valued by employers. They develop a good working knowledge of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. A high proportion of learners' progress into jobs and are given increased responsibilities upon gaining their qualifications. Learners are ambitious, and motivated to be successful and gain valuable additional accredited qualifications.
- Learners feel safe in their workplaces. All staff give very good attention to safe working practices and to raising awareness of health and safety guidance and procedures. They have a good understanding of the importance of safeguarding the people they work with and care for, and know what to do to report concerns.
- The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good. The planning of most training is generally thorough and assessors use a good variety of interesting methods to motivate learners and assess their competence, including valuable off-the-job training and individual coaching sessions. However, schemes of work in childcare are underdeveloped and do not sufficiently plan for off-the-job training. Assessors are skilled and experienced and assessments are rigorous.

- Induction and initial assessments are thorough and used effectively to prepare learners for their programme and to plan support and assessment. Learners written action plans following individual reviews do not include personal objectives and some long-term targets are not sufficiently clear. Assessors do not encourage learners sufficiently to develop broader interests or take greater responsibility for their learning.
- Learners receive sufficient challenge and engage fully in their learning activities. Tutors feedback on learners' work is good and provides constructive suggestions on how they can improve. Portfolios are very well organised and reflect the high standard of work completed.
- Since the last inspection, Shape has improved the way it delivers training by introducing a more thorough initial assessment, more regular and thorough review processes, and more effective use of data to monitor performance. These changes have improved the learners' experience.
- Assessment and support for literacy and numeracy are good. Planning for progression opportunities from apprenticeships into work is good. There are strong and productive partnerships with many employers including dental practices, care providers and local schools. Employers support learning very well but too few attend progress reviews to help plan for additional learning opportunities.
- Care, guidance and support are good overall. Learners receive good and timely information at induction to support their progression through training. Advice to learners on university nurse training and allied health and early year's professions are timely and accurate. Arrangements for individual support and meeting specific additional needs are particularly good. The arrangements for monitoring the welfare and safety of learners are good.
- Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance arrangements have included good developments to improve performance and quality. Staff make good use of data to set performance targets. All staff share a firmly held determination to make sure learners' interests remain a central focus in all decision making across the company. All staff support senior managers and are aware of Shape's priorities and strategic direction.
- The self-assessment process is effective and has led to significant improvements including communication that is more effective, better use of technology, and more precise target setting. The self-assessment report is evaluative and largely accurate.
- Shape is an inclusive organisation that gives close attention to ensuring it meets individual needs, particularly for learners facing significant barriers to learning. The promotion of equality and diversity during induction is memorable and good. There is no discernable achievement gap between groups of learners.

What does Shape need to do to improve further?

- Develop detailed schemes of work to enable staff to plan better for the delivery of the off-the-job training in childcare.

- Ensure that all learning and assessment plans contain personal objectives and clear targets in order to improve success rates further and develop learners' wider interests and skills.
- Ensure more employers are involved in the planning of learning and training during progress reviews so that they thoroughly integrate the training into workplace activities.

Employability Training

Grade 2

Context

26. At the time of the inspection there were 59 learners on Foundation Learning. All learners are aged 16 to 18. Some 90% of learners are female and 18% of learners have a disability. Learners take a broad range of accredited qualifications including literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good and improving. In 2010/11, 72% of foundation learners progressed into further training, education or employment and 70% achieved a qualification. Eighty per cent of current learners have already achieved a qualification. Many learners secure employment. For many learners achievement and progress are good when compared to their low prior educational attainment.
- Attendance is good. Learners' behaviour is good and they enjoy their learning. Learners develop their personal and social skills and become ready for employment. Shape does not record sufficiently learners' successes in developing personal skills such as self-confidence and communication.
- All learners say they feel safe and pay close attention to safe working practices when in the centre and in the workplace. Thorough and robust risk assessments are in place for all learners. Learners know how to protect themselves and each other and they contribute to the review and improvement of local arrangements to ensure they are safe. Learners are confident enough to refer their concerns to staff.
- The delivery of drug, alcohol and sexual health awareness sessions and health screening sessions delivered by external agencies successfully enables learners to make informed choices about ways to improve their own health and well-being. They engage fully in a variety of community projects including fundraising events and voluntary projects. This provides useful experience for learners and a positive contribution to community cohesion.
- Training and assessment effectively promote learning and development. Initial assessment activities enable learners to choose the correct course. A lively and interactive induction to the programme quickly engages learners, enabling them to understand their rights and responsibilities. Learners receive encouraging verbal feedback at reviews. However, the action plans arising from these reviews do not always contain sufficiently detailed targets.
- Shapes' learning facilitators know the learners well. They teach learners in small groups and they receive highly personalised support from experienced, enthusiastic and caring staff. Many learners, particularly those developing functional skills in English and mathematics, receive good individual coaching

and focused support. However, not all facilitators always use the full potential of the available technology to support the delivery of training.

- The provision successfully meets the needs and interests of learners and employers. Individualised provision has clear progression routes for learners. A wide range of courses is available and taster sessions encourage learners to identify appropriate vocational pathways, particularly in childcare, care and construction.
- Partnerships with employers, schools and community groups are good. The wide range of partnerships helps to improve outcomes for learners, many of whom progress to further training, and enable learners to gain work experience placements.
- The care, guidance and support received by learners are highly effective. A well-planned induction, early identification of support needs and a series of effective delivery strategies help learners to understand the challenges and responsibilities expected of them. The facilitators motivate and encourage learners to develop and achieve their individual goals.
- Management of the Foundation Learning programme is good. Communication between staff is excellent, fostering a supportive team ethos. Strategic objectives link well to continuous improvement activities. Training suites are well maintained and equipped. Staff are passionate about the learners' development. Managers encourage, and staff access, a range of appropriate professional development activities. The self-assessment process is robust, the grades are accurate and judgements reflect the quality of the provision.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All staff have completed appropriate training. Staff assess and promote learners' understanding of equalities at induction and at regular intervals using a standard bank of questions to test learners' knowledge. They skilfully contextualise the questions to help learners understand their relevance to the workplace. Staff take swift action to resolve issues affecting learners' safety and well-being.

What does Shape need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that learners' action planning and review processes recognise and record the progress made towards the achievement of personal skills.
- Ensure that all staff are fully conversant with, and confident in using, all of the available learning technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Information about the inspection

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's chief executive, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Shape Accredited Training Centre

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	157	157
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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