

# Annual Report 2022-23



2013



2023

Celebrating **10 years** of  
*Independence Matters*

# Welcome to our *Annual Report*

#everchangingworld in 2022-23 we finally emerged from the long and dark covid tunnel. Colleagues and customers had been amazingly resilient, and we were enormously proud of everyone. However, it was tiring, people were fatigued, and with a year of recruitment challenges and rising inflation costs, recovery was tough.

2022 was challenging with the impact on the public purse which funds all our contracts and the wider economic pressures well publicised in the media.

The start of 2023 and a new calendar year felt different, brighter, and more hopeful. It was nice to start the year with the cessation of mask wearing as this signalled the end of those three years of Covid restrictions.

In 2022 we celebrated Home Support Matters 4th anniversary, and 2023 marks ten years since Independence Matters (IM) was formed as an independent social enterprise. An amazing achievement and a reflection of the dedication and commitment of all our colleagues to make the organisation a success.

We have come a long way in that time, faced many challenges, and eaten a lot of cake. We are bigger, thanks to the acquisition of contracts and colleagues into Home Support Matters, and we have come

through the worst pandemic in 100 years. We certainly did not see that coming back in 2013!

Whilst we will continue to evolve and adapt in a constantly changing world, we have celebrated our anniversary in a very traditional way with summer fetes at our larger hubs and smaller get-togethers across all our services. We had some wonderful celebrations and the pictures in this report capture the sense of fun and togetherness.

It has been an amazing collaborative journey, and we are both enormously proud to have steered the organisation through these last ten years.

Despite the challenges, we finished the year in a positive financial position overall.



**Karen Hester**  
Chair



**Sarah Stock**  
Managing Director

*I Matter*  
*Choice Matters*  
*Carers Matter*  
*Colleagues Matter*  
*Excellent Support Matters*

*I'm 10*

**Independence Matters**



**Home Support Matters**



**NORFOLK INDUSTRIES**  
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE  
Part of Independence Matters

# Financial performance

2022-23 was a challenging trading year for the Group, which saw a decrease in turnover to £16.69M and an increase in costs arising principally from the cost-of-living crisis and double-digit inflation. This resulted in an overall loss after tax of £0.31M.

Our most significant challenge across the Group was around supporting and retaining colleagues to enable us to continue providing high level quality care across all services. We continued to be a significant employer of choice, on average employing 727 colleagues, equating to 383 full-time equivalents.

Despite the trading result the Group ended the year with healthy reserves of £3.27M and cash at bank of £3.23M and is well-positioned to take advantage of new opportunities in 2023/24.

The Group continued to invest in its services and during 2022/23 capital spend amounted to £0.13M.

The big numbers for 2022-23

Turnover: £16.69M

Surplus after tax: £3.23M

Reserves: £3.27M



What's new on the Board?

A substantial change in 2022-23 was the decision for IM to transfer its colleagues' shares to Norfolk County Council (NCC). When we spun out back in 2013, employees owned 51% of the shares with NCC owning 49%. In March 2023 IM became a wholly owned subsidiary company of the council strengthening the existing partnership that we have with them.

Home Support Matters remains a wholly owned subsidiary of IM. The new Board will continue to champion the two companies and maintain our values and purpose, raising our profile and further establishing our place within the market.



We recognise that the future is digital and have invested in a new post, welcoming Digital Director Rob Grant, to support our digitalisation journey.

With over 25 years' experience at managing IT teams across a variety of sectors, Rob will be responsible for defining and implementing a digital strategy for IMG with the aim of improving confidence, security, and processes in our use of technology, ensuring data access, automation, visibility, and use is maximised.

We welcomed Craig Chalmers from Norfolk County Council to the Board.

Craig has been a director of both Local Authority and NHS Services for over 20 years, and a Director of his own company for 10 years, specialising in health, social care, housing, and restructuring of services.

He is also a Board member of Reigate Rugby Club and an enthusiastic coach and player.





# Home Support Matters

We're here because we care

## Our new website goes live!

Our new website launched in December with improved navigation and content focused very much on recruitment. The site covers the benefits of working for HSM, including career progression opportunities, with clear links through to our job vacancies board.

Our fantastic colleagues feature throughout in the photos and video endorsements which give potential applicants a clear and honest view of what it's like to work for us.

Hearing first hand from our team is a really powerful way of demonstrating what differentiates us from other providers and helps persuade job seekers to click the vacancies button, putting them on the road to becoming an employee.

We've already seen a positive impact on recruitment with an increase in quality applicants coming through. Work to improve the online form and streamline the application process is now underway and should lead to further benefits.

Visit the website here:  
[homesupportmatters.org.uk](https://homesupportmatters.org.uk)

Our  
**2022-23**  
year

Care  
hours  
*delivered*

- Domiciliary Care Norfolk **77,207**
- Domiciliary Care Suffolk **40,599**
- Enhanced Home Support Service **14,362**
- Rapid Response Norwich **14,650**
- Continuing Health Care **2,888**
- Private Customer **2,370**
- Supported Living **13,222**
- Collaborative Committed Volume Hours (new service) **19,807**



## Home Support Matters is 4

We combined our 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations with a launch party for our new website with colleagues from HSM and Independence Matters previewing the website and enjoying tea and cakes.

Special guests included the colleagues and family members who feature in the website photos and videos. Watching the videos was a special moment which had everyone inspired and feeling super proud.



- About Us
- What We Do
- Working With Us
- News & Events
- Contact Us
- Our Vacancies**

### Why work with us?

Our employees are our greatest asset, that's why working with us comes with some great benefits.

[Working with us](#) →



The stories  
of *our*  
year



## Home Support Matters

We're here because we care

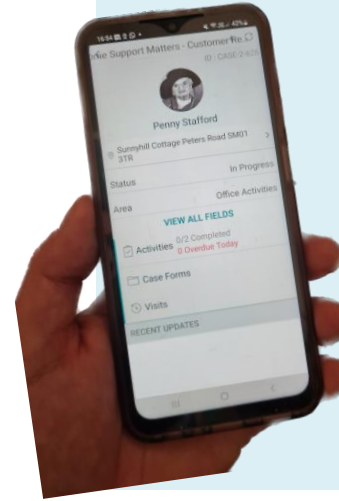
### File migration

After much preparation, HSM's electronic files were successfully migrated to SharePoint. Office employees attended webinar training sessions with additional 1:1 training offered where needed. The migration was straightforward, and the office team has very quickly adapted to using this new cloud-based document storage solution.



### Alcove pilot

Along with a number of other providers, HSM was invited by Norfolk County Council to take part in a pilot for a digital ecosystem called Alcove. The pilot ran for six months with providers identifying customers who could potentially benefit from the system being installed in their home.



### Improved *e-care* plans

We've taken a blended approach to create the electronic care plans that best meet the changing needs of our customers.

Combining industry-standard assessment forms (from software provider The Access Group) with detailed bespoke forms, we can now keep customers' plans updated with real-time information and all care interaction with care workers in one, secure, place with easy access.

### Making our meetings *more effective*

We invested in a hybrid meeting room technology solution at our Beccles office, allowing a mixture of in-person and remote attendees to come together in one space.

The equipment, which includes two large monitors/display screens, high quality cameras, microphones and speakers, provides a seamless and immersive experience for attendees, regardless of location, and enables us to conduct more engaging and effective meetings and training sessions.

A strategic investment, the equipment is already paying off. It has increased resource capacity and made visible improvements to the overall efficiency of our training sessions.



The stories  
of *our*  
year



## Home Support Matters

We're here because we care

### Doing our bit for the environment

We are all more aware of our impact on the environment and, like many organisations, HSM is actively taking steps to reduce its carbon footprint.

We joined forces with local company, Radical Waste, to support National Clean Up Day by hosting clean up events at Pakefield and Gorleston beaches.

National  
**CLEAN**  
DAY  
**UP** 



Colleagues from across the IM Group took part in the clean up along with friends, local residents and canine companions.

Over 25 individuals attended, enjoying fish and chips and picnics in the sun above the cliffs and swimming in the sea after the litter picking was done. We are grateful to Radical Waste for their support in disposing of all the bags of rubbish collected on the day.



# Independence Matters

'the life you choose...'

## Service figures 2022-23

As the post covid new normal became embedded we saw several changes in customer behaviour and support requirements. We also had a greater turnover of employees as colleagues reflected and made lifestyle changes.

Our **Respite/Replacement Care services** saw less requirement for planned respite and an increase in requests to accommodate customers in an emergency /crisis.

The number of customers returning to our **Learning Disability Community Hubs** increased steadily throughout the year with a rise in the level of support customers require also identified as a trend. Combined with our **Dementia Care Hubs** our day services supported a total of **411** customers.

There was less demand for **Personal Assistance/ Floating Support** services as customers started to request 1:1 support in hubs rather than the community. At year end **136** customers were being supported by this service.

Our **Supported Living** continues to support **40 tenants** to live in their own homes. We were able to fill some long-term vacant tenancies and give opportunities to customers to increase their independence through moving on.

Our  
2022-23  
year

I'm 10



## A new team for a new decade

A new Care Operations leadership team has been put in place to take us into our next decade. The structure supports Norfolk County Council commissioning requirements by aligning our services under contract types, enabling us to focus on great outcomes for our customers and tenants.

We are very proud that the four new Heads of Service and Deputy Care Director posts have all been filled by internal promotions within Independence Matters.

## Planning for Pathways

We continue to plan towards the 'Pathway' approach for providing support in our Learning Disability Hubs and were delighted to have been successful in becoming a 'pilot provider' for the Enriching Lives Pathway. Customers at our Dereham Community Hub are now participating in this pilot.





## Stories of our year

I'm 10

### Our new branding gets the pink light!

We've loved seeing the reactions of customers as our new branding has rolled out across our Hubs.

Wall bubbles that feature the Hub's own customers bring a personal touch and have created a lot of joy.

# Independence Matters

'the life you choose...'



Tapping into our 'secondary' colour palette helps to brighten up the spaces with a wider range of colours

Working Together groups contributed to the wording for the bubbles, which describes how they feel about coming to their Hub.

We've also invested in digital screens to display team photos in clear and tidy format.



'the life you choose...'



The welcoming neon-style signs bring a touch of colour that really brightens up our reception areas and are a super fun way to get our brand message across.



# Stories of our year

I'm 10

## Independence Matters

'the life you choose...'

### We celebrate our tenth year!

We celebrated our tenth anniversary in style with a series of memorable summer events that were as varied as the weather and featured everything from daleks to dinosaurs.

Each Hub put on an event that did us proud and allowed everyone to join in and feel part of the celebrations.

Our travelling pink gazebo toured the events and brought fun to the party with selfie frames, fabulous props, balloons and a bubble making machine.

We ate a lot of cake, hung a lot of bunting, got dressed up, and had a totally terrific time. We can't wait to do it all again!



# Gateway delivering skills for life

I'm 10

Our **Gateway Assured learning programme** has gone from strength to strength. We've seen a big increase in registrations and modules completed and customers are relishing being able to learn in a way that works for them and the wide range of topics available.

## New 'Our Living World' modules

We listened to feedback from our customers to create a set of new Gateway modules called 'Our Living World'.

The modules cover subjects that customers have said are important to them and they want to learn more about, and include pet care, the human body, emotions, different cultures and countries and the environment.



## Key Gateway numbers

**301** customers registered on our Gateway Assured learning programme.

**821** modules completed across our learning disability hubs and through our EVOLVE programme.

A choice of **132** modules available.

## Celebrating Gateway learning successes

With so many customers now taking part in our Gateway programme, we felt that some official recognition was due to celebrate and reward their achievements.

Our 'graduation' events honour those customers who have achieved a full 12 months with Gateway and helps encourage them to continue with their learning.

The first event was held at Dereham Hub and saw customers walk up a red carpet to receive a certificate from Managing Director, Sarah Stock. A total of 21 certificates were handed to deserving customers and the pride and joy on their faces was evident as they celebrated each other's accomplishments.

Families and carers joined the celebration along with representatives from the council and commissioners, recognising the importance of Gateway and its impact on our customers.

Colleagues took to the stage to talk about Gateway and its development, as well as express their pride in the graduates and the diverse accomplishments and experiences of everyone involved.

A remarkable and heart-warming event, honouring the hard work and dedication of the Gateway learners, it creates a blueprint for us to rollout across IM and we look forward to holding many more graduation ceremonies in the coming year.



## Brewkery learning Employment skills

I'm 10

# EQUAL BREWKERY

The Brewkery is a wonderful enterprise that IM supports. It is part of our Gateway Assured Learning Programme and is a place of growth, celebration, and collaboration. They are passionate about empowering individuals to be involved in the whole brewing, bottling and baking processes. The unwavering dedication of the team, coupled with support from the community, has helped them achieve some significant milestones this year, and we are sure will contribute to their continued success in the future.

## Brewkery logo gets a *makeover*

The Brewkery received an image update thanks to local graphic designer, Johnny Shirley, known for his work with brands such as Guinness and Smirnoff.

The logo looks amazing on the labels and the new branding has helped the products stand out and make an even more positive impact in the marketplace.



## Rewarding *achievement*

Individuals learning hospitality skills at The Brewkery were presented with certificates during a visit by Managing Director, Sarah Stock. It was a heart-warming moment to witness the sense of accomplishment and see the pride on their faces as they received these certificates, marking their progress and achievements.

## Reaching more *customers*

Our Golden Ale has now found its way into 18 different East of England Co-op stores, with buyers enjoying the beer at locations as far away as Felixstowe.

Our beer is also on the menu at the Flint Barn Café at Whitlingham Country Park, all helping to spread the word and get more people interested in our products.



## Work placement *success*

We were delighted to have one of our customers secure a work placement with Bread Source, a local artisan bakery with shops across Norwich. He leaves with valuable hospitality skills and increased confidence and self-esteem.

His transformation is inspiring, and his progression is a testament to his determination and the supportive environment at the Equal Brewkery.



# Supporting disability in the workplace

I'm10



**NORFOLK INDUSTRIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

Part of Independence Matters



## New contracts, new products

New contracts wholesaler Bestpets and online retailers Jollyes and Vital Pet Group, have allowed NIDP's own-branded products to be made available across the UK for the first time.

The contracts have also resulted in three new NIDP-branded products being developed to meet their needs; Compressed Bales Strips, Cloth Bedding 100g and 5kg Compressed Bales.



## Investment pays off

New factory equipment, including a metal detector, fork truck, and pallet wrapper, have helped increase efficiency and improve manual handling.

The new compressed baler machine has also resulted in a new product in the NIDP branding for both new and current customers.

The new Compressed Flake Bales proved very popular with Jollyes and we plan to roll these out to more customers over time.



Investment in decals for our windows has brightened up the exterior of the factory and is a great way to promote our products to everyone passing.

## Our year in numbers

During the 2022-23 year we've produced:

**505,093** bags of bedding material, **409** of which were plastic free

**3097** bales and **5003** compressed bales

**31** Furry Friends Farewell, **2440** Chewy Tubes and **35** Animal Houses

## Trade show networking

We attended PATS Sandown and had a productive two days meeting both current contacts and new potential customers.

The event provided us with lots of leads to follow up, including people who were interested in our contract packing service offer.



## Working together matters

I'm 10



During her first year in the role, Stakeholder Engagement Co-ordinator, Maria Bond, has supported the development of our Stakeholder Groups including a new name that is easier to understand and better represents what the groups do.

Following a vote, customers gave the thumbs up to the new name '**Working Together Group**'. Everyone is welcome, and we all matter equally.



## Dementia carers support events

IM hosted two events at our Community Hubs for carers of people living with dementia. There was a presentation about 'Managing Behaviours linked to Dementia' by The Alzheimer's Society.

## Making it easy (to) read

We've been working hard to make information accessible to all people. We've completed lots of easy read forms which have plain words and use Photosymbols images.



## Key Working Together Group achievements

**Customers** interviewed candidates for the new Head of Service roles, asking questions and feeding back to the main interview panel.

**We've** been giving our ideas for new Gateway Assured units that customers can work on to gain new skills.

**We delivered** a 'best practice easy read session' to the Colleague Advisory Board (CAB) and supported The Harbour Centre to make their leaflets easy read which has received really positive feedback.

**More people** with complex support needs have joined our meetings and we've done lots of networking with people and groups outside Independence Matters.

**We set up** a working group to look at skills and employment opportunities so that customers can be paid for the work they do.

**Customers** are now supporting with colleague training, and some have made videos that are used with IM's new person-centred communication training.

## Congratulations to Rachael!

Rachael has been appointed onto the Learning Disability Partnership Board by ASD Helping Hands where she will represent Independence Matters customers and people with learning disabilities to have a voice.



# Working Together stories of our year

I'm 10

## Working Together *Groups*

Our groups continue to go from strength to strength, meeting every month in Holt, Attleborough, Dereham, Great Yarmouth and Norwich.

We've worked with our Dementia Care services to find what works best for them and they have chosen to have informal supported chats so that everyone's voices are heard equally.

## How we work together in practice

We've been chairing our own meetings and taking meeting notes. We talk about how things could be done better or differently and about things we'd like to change. We've recently welcomed senior leaders and other professionals to our meetings so they can see and hear the important things we talk about and work on.



## Supporting colleague training

We've been doing presentations to welcome new colleagues to Independence Matters and tell them about all the things we do. We've been explaining that co-production means that we all think together, plan together and work together.

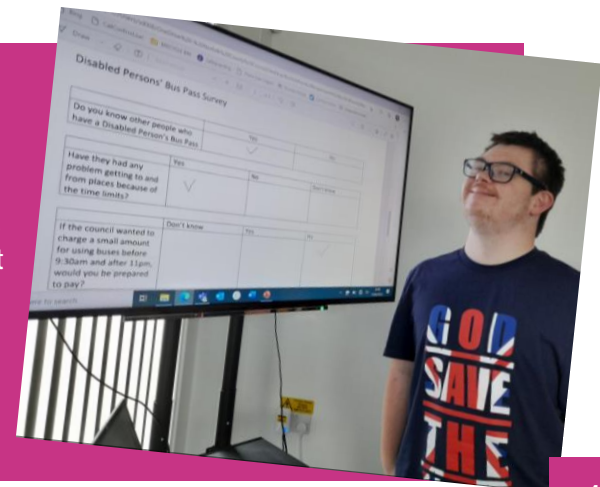
## They passed!

Stakeholder Engagement Co-Ordinator Maria, and Business Support Officer Hollie, passed their Easy Read 10-week Foundation Course and now have more skills to help make words and pictures easier to understand.



## Working to help others...

The Working Together Groups were asked to work with Assist Trust to give feedback on the 'Disabled Person's Bus Passes' to see if they enable us to get to and from places at times that suit us.



Quality matters

I'm 10

## Our year in numbers

CQC inspections across IM and HSM 0

PAMMS (applies to IM only) 6

QMV's (hub services) 2

Health and safety visits 16

**Internal audits** - over 222 completed in the last 12 months

## Keeping a focus on Health and Safety

Ensuring the delivery of health and safety management action plans and operational programmes is essential to driving a positive safety culture across the Independence Matters Group. Our training comprises the basic courses to ensure compliance with legislation and safe working practices. These are delivered through eLearning and face to face sessions, competed at induction with scheduled refreshers at regular intervals.

## Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Delivering class-based **Mental Health First Aid courses** that provide helpful resources and every-day things colleagues can do to help themselves and others in need.

Providing topical information and advice through our quarterly **in-house newsletters**, sharing external information about mental health and wellbeing, including free training and local events.

Raising awareness of the **Norfolk Support Line**, promoting this valuable resource, available 24/7 365 days a year.

Our Supervision and Appraisal process now has a **greater emphasis on wellbeing**, and our Company Induction Day lets new colleagues know how we can inform and support them.

Teaming up with learning providers Turning Factor to commission two **wellbeing webinars** focusing on resilience and self-care.

The Training and Quality Team are also, able to **advise and support** with the mental health and wellbeing of our customers.



## Oliver McGowan and autism training

The Oliver McGowan eLearning was assigned and completed by all operational roles and is now assigned to all head office roles including Finance and HR teams. The interactive training is being planned with Norfolk County Council.

Our Autism eLearning has been updated to embed the Autism Partnership Boards version into Learning Management System. This has been launched to everyone in the company.

## Learning & Development

Our learning and development programme continues to develop to meet national and local regulatory requirements.

Each role has its own training pathway designed to meet the training and development needs of those working in the company – from newly appointed employees with little experience to those with a wealth of experience and skills.





## Our Colleagues matter

I'm10

## IM's year in numbers

IM average headcount **653**

**4000+** IM training

**3000+** IM e-learning hours

## Embracing digital evolution

In 2022-23 we have been working with our colleagues to streamline paper processes and adopt more integrated and collaborative approaches for sharing data and information for the benefit of our colleagues and customers.

Our online recruitment tool allows applicants quick and easy access to our job vacancies. Self-service access to payslips, booking holidays and updating personal details have been improved and all front-line employees can now collaborate via SharePoint. We are also looking to implement digital care plans going forward to ensure we have quick and easy access to all the important information we need to support our customers.

## Seeking a better work life balance

The break in traditional working practices made necessary by Covid has led to us adopting a hybrid and flexible approach to work location. Former office-based colleagues now split their working time between one or more workplaces and agreed remote working locations, including their home.

This approach has been welcomed by our HR and Finance teams; they can meet face to face when knowledge sharing, developmental work and creativity are required, but work from home when, for example, reports need to be written or data analysed. Working in smarter and more sustainable ways is better for the environment and helps colleagues to keep a healthy work/life balance.



## Recruitment update

Our appointment last year to the new role of Recruitment Officer, alongside the purchase of an applicant tracking system, has enabled IM to maintain a high profile in an exceptionally competitive market. Using the new software, we can target recruitment campaigns by location and role meaning we reach a wider pool of applicants in the most cost-effective way. Managers can review applicant's CVs as they apply and offer interview slots electronically allowing the applicant a choice of times to best suit their availability.

## Future proofing our HR services

The last 12 months has seen the HR team adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of the business and its operating environment.

We have been focusing on building our skills through knowledge sharing to ensure key HR services can always be maintained. To support this aim we have created an HR career pathway and reimagined our two HR Support Officer roles to allow for a Trainee position.

The Trainee position will be supported through the Level 3 CIPD on an Apprenticeship programme making use of the Levy fund while growing our own HR future talent.

Our  
Colleagues  
matter

## HSM's year in numbers

Headcount = **166**  
New starters = **89**  
Mileage = **285,033**  
Long Service Awards = **40**  
e-learning hours = **4305**  
Classroom training hours = **4011**



## Successful TUPE transfer

HSM welcomed seven new care worker colleagues who transferred via TUPE from Patina Homecare, a small homecare company in Great Yarmouth who had ceased trading.

The transition to HSM was successful for both care workers and customers who are now part of our homecare provision delivery in the east of the county.

## Extension of Norfolk Support Line

HSM purchased a licence to make the Norfolk Support Line services available to a wider audience, giving colleagues' next of kin and children over 16 living at the same address access to the service.

Callers can speak in confidence to fully qualified counsellors and support specialists 24/7, 365 days a year to discuss any emotional, personal, or work-related issues they may individually or collectively be experiencing.

During the first call, a few simple questions will be asked so the best possible service can be provided. Following this, a fully trained counsellor and support specialist will deliver the appropriate level of support.

## Mental health support sessions

HSM's clinical nurse lead hosted a series of reflection sessions to recognise and support our care workers who provide support in high dependency care packages. During the sessions colleagues shared memories of customers and talked about ways they can celebrate customers' lives in the absence of a funeral/ceremony.

## Dignity Action Day

This event shines a light on those care and support workers who demonstrate dignity and respect to their customers through daily actions as they provide care and support.

HSM's quality team sent letters to all customers asking them to send in examples of colleagues who excel at offering dignity and respect on each care visit. As always there was a huge response, and we were inundated with positive feedback from customers expressing how amazing their care and support workers are.



## Follow us on YouTube

HSM created a [YouTube account](#) using it initially to share the video content created for the new website. We've since added further content including interviews and vlogs, along with training videos.

The future  
*matters!*

*I'm 10*

We believe our brand is trusted, and we have worked hard over the last 10 years to establish that. Both companies exist for our customers and their families. We are '*here because we care*' to support people to '*live the life they choose*' and to elevate the moments that matter in life. We are not complacent, and we strive to do better every day and every year, as a group.

Our Group brand colour, magenta (not pink!), is the official Pantone colour for 2023, so we are bang on trend this year 😊. Described as "a nuanced crimson tone that balances warm and cool, Viva Magenta is an unconventional shade for an unconventional time. Brave and fearless, Viva Magenta is a pulsating colour whose exuberance promotes optimism and joy."

We are looking forward with optimism and joy to a brave and fearless next 10 years for the Independence Matters Group.

*#togetherwecan!*



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