

**Minutes of the Academy Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7:30am at Walton Academy.**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mrs L Crerar	LC	Appointed Governor	A
Mrs H Ind	HI	Appointed Governor	resigned
Mr J Horsfield	JH	Parent Governor	
Mr D Morgan	DM	Appointed Governor	
Mrs L Purcell	LP	Appointed Governor	A
Mrs K Hardy (Chair of Governors)	KH	Appointed Governor	
Mrs A Bellett	AB	Appointed Governor	
Ms C Marion	CM	Appointed Governor	resigned
<i>2 x parent governor vacancies</i>			

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs C Saxelby	CS	Executive Principal	
Mrs J Leonard	JL	Principal	
Mr M Hoad	MH	Vice Principal	
Mrs K Bagnall	KB	Business Manager	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum required	3	Governor's present	4
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/ when
AC/38/2425	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mrs Purcell who is currently on maternity leave and Mrs Crerar due to work commitments and these were accepted by the committee.	
AC/39/2425	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The governance professional asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Governors confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct. The governance professional advised Mrs Bellett that she will be required to complete a new declaration of interests form when she starts her new job. NB will send the link to form the AB. [Action]	NB 31/03/25
AC/40/2425	Academy Committee Membership The governance professional told the committee that Ms Marion has unfortunately resigned from the committee due to a change in circumstances, she doesn't feel she has the time to commit to the role.	

	<p>Mrs Ind has also resigned and wanted to share that <i>“she has thoroughly enjoyed her time as a Walton governor but feels she is not able to dedicate the time necessary to fulfil the role which is not fair on the school. She will always support the school in its endeavours and is still of the opinion that it is one of the best schools in the area. She wishes you all well now and, in the future, and will follow Waltons progress with interest.”</i></p> <p>The governance professional told the committee that a nomination process has been held for 2 new parent governors but unfortunately no applications were received.</p> <p>Mrs Purcell has confirmed that she intends to return to the committee from maternity leave in the summer term.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy explained that she had been planning to attend the Y6 event but a misunderstanding about the date means that she is no longer able to attend. Mrs Leonard said that she will make sure parents are encouraged to consider applying to become governors at every opportunity- parents’ evenings, open evenings and recognition events etc.</p> <p>Mr Horsfield expressed his view that it is very important that parents are represented at the governor meetings and considering recent changes and the lack of parent applicants, confirmed that he will continue for another term of office. All governors present thanked James for his continued commitment and unanimously agreed to reappoint Mr Horsfield for another term of office from 11/03/2025 to 10/03/2029. Mr Horsfield added that he will continue to help recruit parents.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard said that she has started to think again about potential members of staff that might be a valuable staff governor from the next academic year and moving forwards.</p> <p><u>Mrs Hardy asked</u> if it would be beneficial to develop connections with local businesses and companies that may have children at the academy to see if they might be interested in becoming governors and also to consider putting an article in the Grantham journal. Mrs Leonard said that Teo Cunnington (marketing lead) has a good relationship with the Grantham journal and will be able to help with this. The governance professional will get in contact with TC to discuss this further. [Action]</p> <p>Governors discussed the required commitments of being a governor and how this should be explained as part of the recruitment and induction process, ensuring the potential new governors understand what is expected of them from the offset in terms of attendance at committee meetings and academy events, fulfilment of link roles and support for the academy with suspensions/exclusions/complaints etc. The governance professional agreed to build these requirements into the induction and ensure requirements of role and the job description are clearly referred to. [Action]</p>	<p>NB 31/03/25</p> <p>NB 31/03/25</p>
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	<p>LINK governor roles were discussed, and it was agreed that this will be reviewed for the next academic year. Mrs Leonard said that she would support with this process ensuring that staff within the academy assigned to a LINK governor are engaged with developing the relationships, adding that it is important to ensure that governors are supportive of the academy but that they are also confident to question and challenge as this will help the Academy to prepare for external eyes.</p> <p><u>The governors wanted to know</u> when the next Ofsted visit is likely at Walton. Mrs Leonard explained that Walton is moving towards the Ofsted window which is expected in 2026/27 but it could come earlier in 2025/26 and once the current Ofsted consultation has been completed Walton will look to develop training and guidance for governors.</p> <p>Mrs Hardy informed the committee that she will not be able to attend meetings on Wednesday's moving forwards and the governance professional suggested that the remaining meetings for this academic year be moved to Tuesday mornings at 7:30am. There was discussion around whether the time of day could be changed to evening and it was agreed that the governance professional would reschedule the remaining meetings for this academic year and will work with everyone to develop a timetable of meetings for the 2025/26 year. [Action]</p>	NB 13/05/25
AC/41/2425	<p>Trust Training Suspensions and Exclusions training <u>The chair asked</u> if any of the governors had reviewed the training, expressing that she had found it to be a very good piece of training and would recommend to governors to review stating the slides and presentation were very good. The governance professional explained that the recording can be viewed by clicking on the link from the meeting agenda and that it is also available via the governance portal. Governors agreed to let the governance professional know when they have reviewed the session. [Action]</p> <p>The governance professional referred to the agenda for the Governance Conference scheduled for 12th June and asked all governors to consider attending explaining that it will be an excellent opportunity to network with other governors from the trust, talk to the trustees and listen to the guest speaker. Governors agreed to consider attending and to let the governance professional know if they plan to attend. [Action]</p>	Govs 13/05/25 Govs 13/05/25
AC/42/2425	<p>Governance Report The governance professional told the committee that there was some outstanding mandatory training required and asked Mr Morgan if he had completed the cyber security, safeguarding and GDPR training. Mr Morgan agreed to check his records and provide any outstanding certificates. [Action]</p> <p>The governance professional informed that committee that recent Trust LINK training sessions had not been well attended across the trust but re-</p>	DM 31/03/25

	<p>iterated that all sessions are recorded and can be access via the portal. The committee were informed of the upcoming sessions, the next session being the SEND link meeting on 26th March. It was acknowledged that Helen Ind was the SEND link governor and now the role needs to be filled. Mrs Hardy agreed to attend the SEND LINK training on 26th March. [Action]</p> <p>The governance professional told the committee that Mrs Bellett had agreed to take up the LINK role for Safeguarding and Mrs Bellett confirmed that an initial meeting has been scheduled for 27th March with Mrs Dolby. Discussion followed around the important link responsibilities and <u>Mrs Bellett agreed</u> to also take responsibility for the SEND Link role <u>and asked</u> who her contacts would be. Mrs Leonard confirmed that the SENDCOs are Helen Bingham and Tiff Bassan (due back from maternity leave on the last week of this half term) both directly managed by Mrs Dolby.</p> <p>Mr Horsfield confirmed that he will continue to be H&S LINK and will schedule a meeting with Mrs Bagnall. [Action]</p> <p>Mrs Hardy will pick up personal development and careers with Sonia Byrne and Sophie Emerald. [Action]</p> <p>Mr Horsfield offered his support with the careers fair and will share more information with the Mr Hoad. [Action]</p> <p>Mrs Hardy told the committee that she will be attending the school production next Wednesday, Sponge Bob the Musical and also fed back that the Waltonian is a very enjoyable read. Mrs Leonard thanked her for the comments and agreed that Elaine does an amazing job with it adding that she is always looking at ways of improving its reach and engagement. Mr Hoad added that it is very useful communication to staff too.</p> <p>Mrs Bellett shared that the new year 7 communication was really good through Reach More Parents, expressing that it seems much more personal. Mrs Leonard recognised that Mrs Bagnall and Teo Cunnington have worked hard on this to improve parental engagement within that app</p> <p>The governors wondered if it might be worth approaching ex teachers or ex pupils that might want to give back to the school and might consider a governor role. Mrs Leonard shared that she has recently approached some ex-teaching staff, but they were not in the position to consider the role currently, but agreed that past students might be another area to look at.</p>	<p>KH 26/03/25</p> <p>JH 13/05/25</p> <p>KH 31/03/25</p> <p>JH 31/03/25</p>
AC/43/2425	<p>Minutes of the AC meeting dated 15th January 2025.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting that had previously been received were approved and signed by the chair.</p>	
AC/44/2425	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>AC/27/2425 To schedule a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss next steps. NB carried forward</p>	<p>NB 31/03/25</p>

	<p>AC/28/2425 To put together training on how to interpret the data for governors. JL/LO carried forward</p> <p>It was agreed that training on interpreting outcomes data would be delivered in the July meeting, so the governors are in a good position to review results data in September. [New Action] governance professional to include as an agenda item in the July agenda.</p> <p>A separate training session will be delivered on behaviour and attitudes, and this will be scheduled as an additional meeting to allow the appropriate time. [New Action] Governance professional to schedule a training session.</p> <p>AC/28/2425 To share identification checklists with governors. JL complete</p> <p>AC/28/2425 To share a breakdown of the primary areas of needs with governors. JL complete</p> <p>AC/28/2425 To share a copy of the AP presentation with governors – sensitive data redacted. KD complete</p> <p>AC/29/2425 Schedule the next governors only meeting and ensure review of GP report is on the agenda. NB complete (meeting was cancelled)</p> <p>AC/32/2425 To discuss short term plan for safeguarding link responsibilities and make arrangements with KD. NB/KH complete</p> <p>AC/33/2425 To deliver training / presentation on Staff CPD etc. for governors at a future meeting. Mrs Leonard confirmed that this will be delivered in the May meeting. [New Action] governance professional to add as an agenda item in the May agenda.</p>	<p>NB 31/03/25</p> <p>NB 31/03/25</p> <p>JL 13/05/25 NB 31/03/25</p>
AC/45/2425	<p>Principals Report</p> <p>Mrs Leonard started by discussing the ERM report providing the committee with a brief summary.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard explained the data across the top of the report which concentrates on the year 11 cohort. The first set of data is the current cohort. The second is their target and the third piece of data is the achievements of last years' cohort.</p> <p>Attainment 8 is the 'working at' measure, based on the current Y11 data point 2. This means that if they were to have sat their exams on that date, that's the result they would have got. The targets are better, and predictions are usually the most accurate at data point 3. Mrs Leonard went on to say that she is cautiously confident that results will move in an upward trajectory, but it is disappointing that progress will not be measured in official figures this year as these students did not sit SATS at Key Stage 2 due to covid. Data point three will be available in 2 to 3 weeks' time and this will be a clearer measure.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that there is a forensic approach to the Year 11 plan to support students with exams, all faculties have a faculty plan that is curriculum based, and each faculty has a plan which details what they are doing with their curriculum time to ensure their students are best prepared for the exams. This is discussed as a leadership team and</p>	

	<p>with the heads of faculty and the Leadership Team link on a fortnightly basis as part of the meeting cycle.</p> <p>This year there is also a dedicated English and Maths matching meeting. Mrs Owen and Mr Hoad are meeting with the Head of English and the Head of Maths every 2 weeks to ensure that teams are working with individuals to ensure that they are moved to the next grade, and this is across the board.</p> <p><u>Governors commented</u> that the approach was very impressive. Mrs Leonard and Mrs Saxelby shared that the plan has been refined and refined every year, and it has become more forensic each time. Mrs Leonard explained that the Head of Year 11 had left at Christmas for a promoted post in another school. To ensure consistency, Mrs Dolby and Mrs Owen have come together to lead that year group through the final exams which, whilst being unexpected has been extremely positive and led to decision that next year, the Head of Year 11 will be line managed by Mrs Owen and Mrs Dolby. Mrs Leonard added that Mrs Owen is doing an incredible job in terms of all the communication around academic exams with students, parents and staff.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that the Post 16 application process has been changed and there is now a recruitment and retention plan which starts in year 6. The application process, this time has impacted positively on students with a large number having applied for next year. The academy has better utilised the next steps week, interviewing early and preparing students for the process. Students appear to have been well motivated and arrived well prepared for interviews.</p> <p><u>The governors commended</u> the academy on the approach around encouraging students from year 6 to be thinking about post 16 <u>and asked</u> how the academy is bringing parents on board. Mrs Leonard said that when parents are on site, they are bringing this into the conversation from year 6 transition and right through to options evening which is a popular event and beyond. Often you will get parents attending and trying to encourage their children to study certain subjects and staff will speak to parents about the students' strengths. The careers lead, Sophie Emerald is at all the evening events for parents and is very popular with parents and students and does a great job of providing impartial advice.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard wanted to highlight three key things that governors should be aware of that will impact overall results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Head of Music left at Christmas; a recovery plan is in place for performing arts to mitigate the impact but results are likely to be affected by this. <u>Governors asked</u> if there was a specific reason for the head of music leaving. Mrs Leonard told the committee that they had not arrived at the academy as a formally trained teacher and after a couple of years had reached the conclusion that teaching wasn't for them. - There is a group of students in year 11 that haven't studied a humanities subject and have done additional studies instead. This 	
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	<p>decision was taken for all the right reasons to help them with cognitive load, but it means that they will have an ‘empty bucket’ and this will impact the results data for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The final thing to bear in mind is that there are 9 young people in Year 11 currently in Alternative Provision, on a part time package or accessing EDclass online. They are the right solutions for those young people, but this will have an impact on the results data. <p>Mr Hoad will be discussing the alternative timetable with parents which is implemented at the start of exams, adding context that within the community there are 2 local schools that don’t have students in other than for their exams. Walton wants to encourage year 11 students to be in school whilst exams are going on however some parents will allow their children to stay at home once exams start. The timetable will provide sessions where students are given time to independently work from home as part of the timetable but will also provide structure around study sessions in school to give students the best possible support. Whilst this won’t stop some people from voting with their feet, it will help.</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>Mrs Leonard wanted to discuss attendance with governors as figures are not where she would like them to be. Attendance has improved marginally on last year but is not close enough to the national average. Mrs Dolby is doing some work to understand the persistently absent (under 90% attendance) and severely absent (under 50%) students. With regards the severely absent students, the academy is aware of the students and the reasons for absence, but they need to ensure that they can be satisfied that everything has been done to try to improve their attendance. Some young people affect attendance figures for all the right reasons for those individuals, part-time timetables are reviewed every 2 weeks, and the vulnerable pathway spreadsheet is reviewed every half term.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Mrs Bagnall shared an update with governors regarding risk. Mrs Bagnall explained that a significant piece of work was done to identify every possible risk and record this information onto the system. All risks are categorised, and the high importance risks and issues can then be focussed on. <u>The governors asked</u> who identifies the risks and Mrs Bagnall explained that the leadership core team identify risks, they discuss them and feedback for the register and high importance risks will be added to the trust risk register and brought to the local academy committee.</p> <p>There has been a reduction in the severity of the risk around PAN and a reduction in severity of the risk around H&S compliance. Adding more context, Mrs Bagnall explained that a risk is an obstacle of external factor that needs to be mitigated against, rather than an issue that can be rectified right away.</p> <p>Mrs Bagnall explained that the PAN risk has reduced due to the academy having a better understanding of the anticipated numbers going forwards,</p>	
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	<p>and having completed some considerable work around planning the curriculum and staffing (adapting already with staffing plans looking at roles for the future and planning ahead) which has mitigated the impact, however it remains a risk because the unknown element around numbers is the main area of concern.</p> <p>With regards the impact to the site, quotes are being received for the removal of the Portakabin building and looking at implementing a covered dining space. Adapting the marketing strategy going forwards which also links into the post 16 plan is also underway.</p> <p><u>Governors questioned</u> the wording within the risk report around the use of the part time timetable and asked if this was used to manage a child's behaviour. Mrs Leonard clarified the reason for the wording but took an action along with Mrs Bagnall to review the wording to ensure that it is clear. [Action]</p> <p>Governors further asked what is being doing for the teachers to support behaviour in the classrooms and asked if there should be mention of this within the register to demonstrate how staff are being supported. Mrs Leonard agreed to review this and add something into the register around this. [Action]</p> <p>Governors wondered about the PAN and asked how students are recruited and how the academy is promoted locally. Mrs Leonard told the committee that this was discussed at the marketing meeting a few weeks ago and it was agreed that more marketing should be done with the village schools. The academy will consider advertising in the village Link. Mrs Hardy said that she would send in a copy of the Harby newsletter which might be a useful vessel. [Action]</p> <p>Mrs Bagnall went on to summarise that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engagement with parents and the relaunch of the parent App has seen an increase in engagement with the parent communications. - The recruitment in curriculum risk is moving further towards an issue rather than a risk. - 5-year people planning with HR is looking at people value and a piece of work will be produced around the offer although must be borne in mind that recruitment for some posts will be temporary, and this may affect applications received. - H&S a new water tank has been fitted with significant investment from the trust to reduce the legionella risk. - One final quote is awaited for guarding the fire system. - Final piece of work around fire doors is underway. - Carpark lighting and CCTV have been implemented. - Fire procedures have been reviewed, and 3 evacuation chairs have been purchased for the stairwells. - The emergency plan is being reviewed in more detail, looking at business continuity as well as emergency. The squash club and the farrier are the emergency refuge points and there is a final piece of work to provide clarity around what needs to happen at the refuge points, and this will be brought to the next meeting for ratification. 	<p>JL/KB 13/05/25</p> <p>JL/KB 13/05/25</p> <p>KH 31/03/25</p>
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	<p><u>Governors wanted to know</u> if the emergency plan had been modified or if it was new. Mrs Bagnall said that when she reviewed the emergency plan for another academy with her counterpart, she identified improvement opportunities that are being implemented.</p> <p><u>Governors commended</u> the academy on the first impressions when entering the building, expressing that you can clearly see the level of organisation, planning and care that goes into the site.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> about the residual risk of H&S <u>and wondered</u> if there is a separate risk register for H&S which goes into greater detail. Mrs Bagnall explained that all issues are logged on the Every® system which is rolled up to the higher risk register which is shared with governors. <u>The governors then asked for clarity</u> on what happens when a risk becomes an issue. Mrs Bagnall explained that should a risk need to be archived, it will be brought to governors first of all and once approved by governors that the necessary actions are in place for it to be archived it will be moved to an archived risk register.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard asked governors if there were any more questions on the documents shared. The Chair of governors apologised that the committee had requested information that we ultimately haven't had time to review and address. Mrs Leonard suggested that a session on how to review and interpret behaviour and attitudes data would be useful for governors, the report is produced every half term, and it would be helpful for governors to understand the data so that they feel confident to ask relevant questions and took an action to arrange training for governors. [Action] The governance professional will schedule a separate session for this training. [Action]</p> <p><u>The governors requested</u> a summary of progress against the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP).</p> <p>Mrs Leonard gave an overview of the 4 objectives within the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The largest piece of work is around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) on the PDP, this is a long-term plan and will take time. - Ensuring appropriate challenge for all students, the focus being around formative assessment. All CPD twilight sessions are around staff working in faculty teams and formative assessment strategies being used in classrooms. - Vulnerable students are on the right pathways. This piece of work is ensuring that the right approach is being taken for each student and has reduced the number of students on Alternative Provision and part time timetables. Suspension data has hugely reduced since last year, but the sanction continues to be applied at the right points for the right young people. The Alternative Provision budget is looking healthier as a result. - Increasing positive parental engagement – the reach more parents app shows that engagement is over 80%. More onsite events are also helping the academy to develop and forge positive relationships with families. Coffee and conversation informal sessions with Mrs Leonard 	<p>JL /NB 13/05/25</p>
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	<p>and the Head of Year for parents to come and chat will be implemented for 25/26.</p> <p>Mrs Leonard told the committee that the new concerns and complaints policy is better and more supportive of the academy. The Academy is being more proactive in dealing with complaints as soon as they arrive.</p> <p>The Safeguarding checklist was shared prior to the meeting. The key update from Mrs Leonard is that Walton is down on capacity on Safeguarding due to staff leaving. A safeguarding admin role has been brought in for the remainder of the year and the position is likely to continue into next year. The academy is looking to increase the capacity within the team so that all Head of Years will be trained to DSL level which will allow them to attend and lead on Team around a Child (TAC) meetings and Child in Need (CIN) meetings. Currently there is pressure on significant leaders because they are having to do a lot of the doing and need to be doing the overseeing. Mrs Leonard said that safeguarding remains a pressure, but she is hopeful this will make it more manageable.</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>158 students have been offered places at Walton for September 25, 22 will more than likely appeal as Walton was not one of their choices and 2 other local schools will likely 'over offer', it is therefore expected that the intake will be between 130 and 150. Mrs Leonard explained that 158 would be an expensive cohort as the academy would need to staff to 180. Mrs Leonard said that she and her staff have worked closely with the local authority and considerable planning has been done around this. The process is currently in the second round and appeals will be considered after Easter. <u>Governors wondered</u> if the academy has any data on the applicants. Mrs Leonard said all 158 students will be treated as though they are coming to Walton so will receive the Waltonian and an invitation into the academy etc. <u>Governors wanted to understand</u> what the reasons might be for parents not choosing Walton as a first choice and asked if there are any misconceptions. Mr Hoad said as there is no data on those that haven't chosen Walton it is difficult to form qualitative picture. Governors commented that they had heard people say such things as students they didn't want to come to Walton because they didn't want to have to do a musical every year. Mrs Leonard said that we have a fairly good understanding of the broad-brush reasons, some parents vote with their eyes and Priory Ruskin have modern new facilities that Walton can't compete with and this is often a reason, she added that there is a lot of choice and a lot of good choice within Grantham and surrounding villages.</p> <p>Cat C trips</p> <p>Mr Hoad listed the upcoming trips</p> <p>France and Spain – KS3 MFL visits</p> <p>Borneo - planning is ongoing</p> <p>2 geography field work visits (beach work)</p> <p>Y11 and a P16 residential with other schools within the trust.</p> <p>P16 onsite sleepout to raise awareness and money for shelter.</p>	
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	<p>Duke of Edinburgh being relaunched this year, expeditions to be planned.</p> <p>The Iceland trip, Maths Live (Disney) trip, Ski trips are becoming prohibitively expensive and they are likely to be pulled due to low uptake.</p>	
AC/46/2425	<p>How has the AC held senior leaders to account?</p> <p>There was significant discussion and challenge from governors in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks and Issues • Safeguarding • The academy improvement plan • Pupil numbers 	
AC/34/2425	<p>How have the VMV of the Trust / Equality been upheld?</p> <p>It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality have been upheld.</p>	
AC/35/2425	<p>Complete report to Trustees</p> <p>The report to trustees was completed and submitted by the governance professional with input from all in attendance at the meeting.</p>	
AC/36/2425	<p>Determination of Confidentiality</p> <p>Equalities Act consideration</p> <p>7 Nolan Principles</p> <p>AC members considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no confidential items discussed • There had been no Equalities Act implications • Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the 7 Nolan Principles. 	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>Academy Committee meeting Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7:30am at Walton Academy</p> <p>The meeting closed at 09:12</p>	
<p>Signed By:</p> <p>Chair:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p><i>Karin Hardy</i></p> <p>Karin Hardy</p> <p>24/03/25</p>	