GCIL Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living



# Biennial Report

## 2024- 2025

# Contents


3 Message from the Chair

4 Message from the CEO

6 One Service

12 One Team

13 One Voice

15 30th Anniversary

16 Financial review

18 In Memoriam

19 Staff & Board




# Message from the Chair

## Dr Jim Elder-Woodward OBE



It is my privilege, on behalf of the Board, to introduce this Biennial Report covering the financial years 2023–2025.

These two years have been marked by significant national debate and uncertainty. Across Scotland, disabled people continue to face rising living costs, workforce and budgetary pressures in social care, and persistent structural inequality. At the same time, proposals for social care reform, the evolving National Care Service, and discussions around a Minimum Income Guarantee present both opportunities and risks for independent living.

In this environment, the place and role of Disabled People's Organisations are critical. GCIL stands firmly for the principle that disabled people must remain in control of their lives, as with the support systems necessary to promote and sustain such control; and that policy must promote, not restrict, choice, independence and dignity.

Our work is grounded in lived experience and strengthened by practical delivery. From direct payments and independent living support to policy engagement and participation, GCIL provides evidence of how national decisions affect real lives. This insight underpins our advocacy with Scottish Government, local authorities, and sector partners, ensuring disabled people's voices are heard, understood, and acted upon.

Over the past two years, the Board has supported the Chief Executive and senior leadership team to embed our strategy of One Service, One Team, One

Voice, strengthen governance, and ensure GCIL is resilient and well-positioned to influence policy decisively. Independent living is not a service or funding stream; it is a right. GCIL will continue to challenge any proposals that threaten choice, control, or autonomy for disabled people.
Our 30th anniversary reminded us that progress comes from sustained advocacy, principled leadership, and collective action. While the policy landscape remains complex, GCIL is ready to respond with clarity, confidence, and authority, ensuring that reforms protect, strengthen, and expand independent living.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our members, staff, and partners. Your commitment, insight, and lived experience make GCIL a credible and influential voice. Together, we continue to defend rights, shape policy, and advance a stronger Independent Living Movement in Scotland.

# Message from the CEO

## Pauline Boyce

This Biennial Report covers my first two years as Chief Executive of GCIL. It has been a time of reflection, renewal and purposeful change.

As a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO), GCIL is led by and accountable to disabled people. Lived experience is not something we consult occasionally; it is the foundation of our work. It shapes our priorities, informs our services and strengthens our influence. That principle has guided every decision we have taken.

Early in my tenure, we introduced a new strategy built around three interconnected themes: One Service, One Team and One Voice, reflecting both our ambition and our identity. GCIL remains firmly grounded in its purpose, advancing inclusive living and ensuring disabled people have choice, control and voice in their own lives.

**One Service** commits us to delivering high-quality, rights-based and consistent



support. Across independent living advice, payroll services, policy participation and equality work, disabled people should experience a coherent and empowering service.

**One Team** recognises that this work depends on dedicated staff and trustees. Over the past two years we have invested in wellbeing, strengthened our internal culture and restructured to provide clearer leadership. I am proud to have appointed Jenny Marshall as Head of Operations, Michelle McNamara as Service Manager, and Joanne McGee as Policy and Participation Lead, roles that have strengthened accountability, quality and strategic focus.

**One Voice** reflects our role within the wider Independent Living Movement. As a DPO, we have both the credibility and responsibility to speak honestly about the barriers disabled people face. Through our Impact Group and policy engagement, we have amplified members' voices locally and nationally.

This period has also been one of celebration and loss. We marked our 30th anniversary, a milestone that reminded us how far we have come and renewed our commitment to the future. GCIL was built by disabled people, for disabled people, and that principle remains unchanged. We have also remembered valued colleagues and board members whose legacy continues to shape our work.

The strength of a DPO lies in collective voice and shared experience. Our authority comes not from policy documents alone, but from lived experience translated into action. As we look ahead, we will continue to stand alongside disabled people, challenging inequality, influencing change and shaping systems that too often overlook us.

Thank you to our members, staff, trustees, partners and funders for your trust and collaboration.

# One Service

## SDS Support

Our Self-Directed Support (SDS) Support service provides tailored guidance once a social work assessment and budget have been agreed, helping people navigate paperwork, manage their funds, and recruit the right support. We assist individuals across multiple local authorities to understand their SDS options and access the tools they need to manage their care effectively.

## Support in the Right Direction

We empower disabled people and their families to understand their rights and make informed choices about their social care. Our team offers personalised support, from navigating SDS to accessing social work services, ensuring people receive the help they need.

## Employment

Our Equality Academy supported disabled people to develop skills and access meaningful employment opportunities, while our new Voices at Work project is bringing participants together to shape more inclusive workplaces. the Equality Academy drew to a close in 2026.



## Payrolll

We provide a range of payroll services that simplify managing PA wages, pensions, and support-related payments, offering supported people across Scotland the reassurance that everything is handled accurately and on time.

## Housing

Our housing service continued to provide essential information, advice, and support for disabled people seeking accessible or adapted homes across Glasgow. Although this valued service has supported many to secure suitable housing, it will close in the period following this report due to the end of external funding.

## Young People’s project

Throughout 2025, our Young People’s Project engaged disabled young people and their families across Glasgow to better understand their needs and priorities. Through workshops, discussions and one-to-one conversations, the project gathered real insights to shape a future young people’s service, concluding in December 2025.



# Why our staff love what they do

“I really enjoy providing guidance and support to colleagues and watch them professionally develop over time.

I especially enjoy hearing colleagues question or challenge decisions taken that have a negative impact on the people we support. Although this is can be a difficult, it's good to know that people care passionately about the work they do.”



“My favourite part about the role is when you get to that point where you can tell that a supported person doesn't feel as nervous about SDS, and you can see their worry turn into hope.

It's nice to feel like you have made a difference, no matter how big or small.”

# Case Studies

Supporting a Family Through a Complex Transition.

When HF's family prepared to relocate to England, they needed to end their Direct Payment and lawfully conclude their PA's employment. HF's mother felt anxious about her responsibilities as an employer, particularly around notice, final wages, holiday pay and redundancy.
GCIL provided clear, step-by-step guidance and maintained regular, supportive communication throughout. We directed the family to payroll for accurate statutory calculations and explored the possibility of transferring the PA role to the new authority. When this wasn't possible, we helped agree a respectful final working date and ensured all legal duties were completed before closing the Direct Payment.
The process concluded smoothly and compliantly. The PA received all final payments correctly, and HF's mother felt reassured and confident at each stage of the transition.

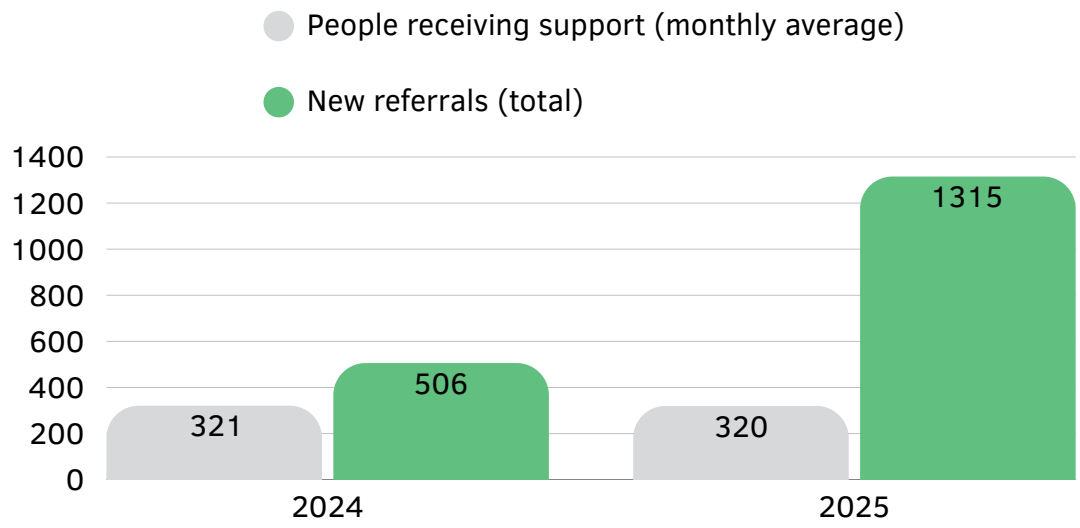
Supporting Stability Through Workforce and Funding Pressures

D lives independently with help from family and two PAs funded by a Direct Payment. Recruitment was difficult due to sector shortages and PVG costs, and changes to local authority charging increased D's financial contribution, creating additional pressure.
GCIL supported the family through PA recruitment, clarified the impact of charging changes, and identified neurodiversity-specific training needs.
When training funding was initially refused, we challenged the decision using evidence of D's needs. We also facilitated communication within the support team and raised concerns when review wording implied D's progress could justify reduced support.
Both PAs are now settled, D's independence has grown, and his anxiety has reduced with reassurance that improvement will not trigger cuts to essential support.

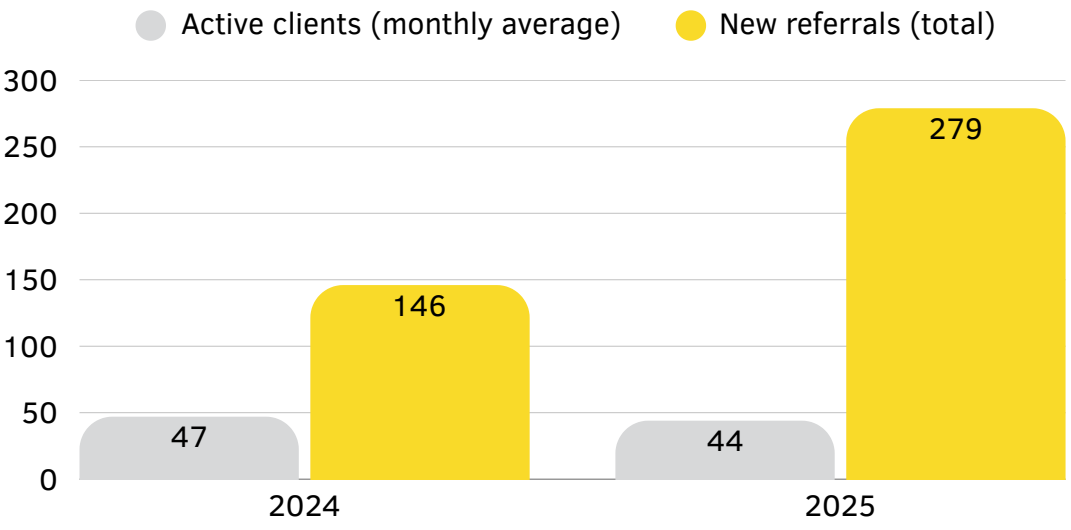
# Data

Over the past two years GCIL's services have played a vital role in enabling disabled people to live independently. The following charts below provide a snapshot of the scale of our work across all four local authorities.

## SDS Support

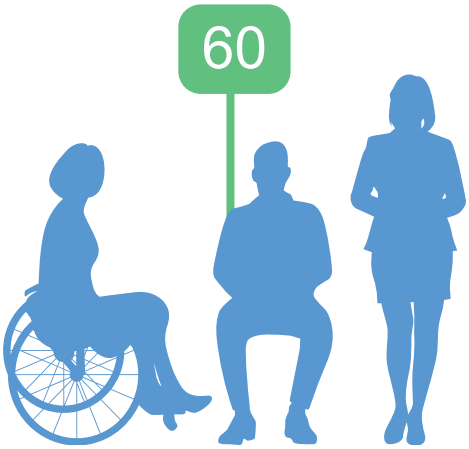



## SiRD



## Equality Academy

Thoughout the project life

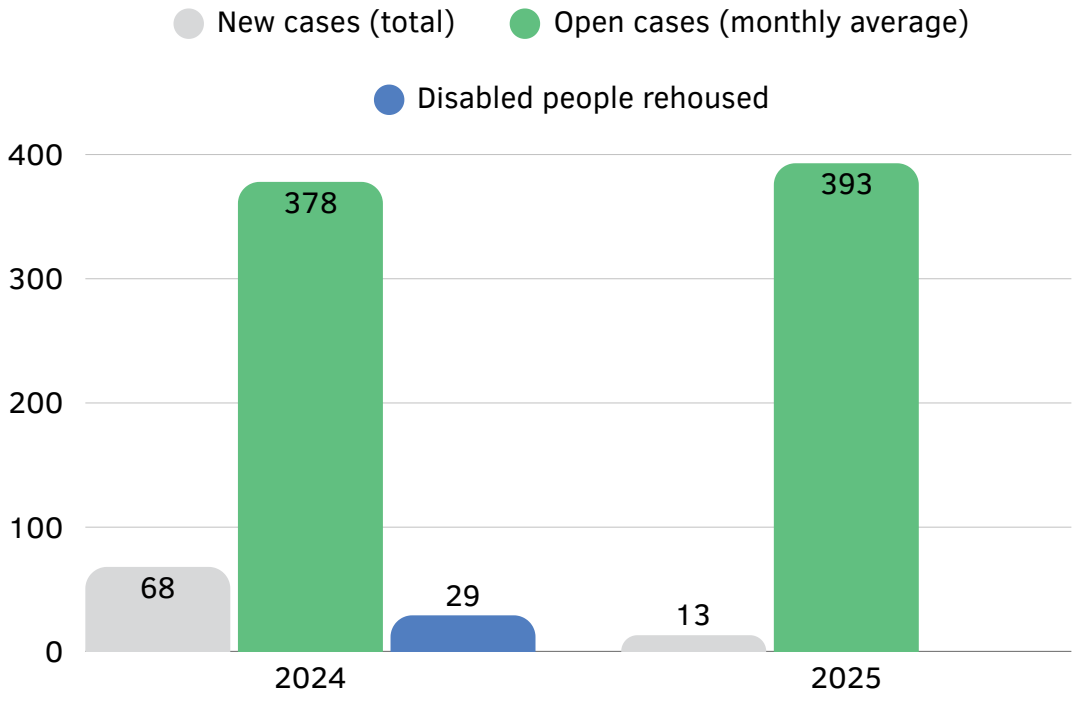



Graduates supported in 2 year work placements




Trainees who progressed into work or higher education

## Housing Service



# One Team

## Staff Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing has been a major focus, reflected in the creation of GCIL's first Wellbeing Room. The organisation also strengthened health and safety support by reviewing policies and increasing trained staff across offices, including first aiders, mental health first aiders, and colleagues trained to support bereavement. These improvements collectively reinforced a safer, more supportive environment for all staff.

## Staff Forum

The GCIL Staff Forum, established in August 2024, continued to strengthen staff engagement throughout 2025 by encouraging open discussion and positive solutions across the organisation. Key activities included running a staff survey, which achieved a 50% response rate with all feedback positive, and providing opportunities for staff contributions at monthly meetings in the Glasgow office. The Forum also delivered initiatives such as hosting a financial wellbeing session and setting plans for the future that include appointing a Green Champion, introducing a voluntary Social Fund, and arranging a staff Volunteer Day.



## Staff Training

Over the last two years we strengthened our approach to staff training by introducing and trialling a new induction process designed to give every new colleague a consistent and supportive start at GCIL. We also launched a set of core training units for all staff to ensure shared baseline knowledge across the organisation, alongside monthly Development Sessions that focus on wider professional learning and growth. These sessions complement role-specific training, giving staff regular opportunities to deepen their expertise, build confidence, and develop the skills needed to excel in their positions.

# One Voice

## GCIL Impact Group

Established in 2025, GCIL's IMPACT Group, our Lived Experience Forum, has quickly become a cornerstone of our Policy & Participation work. In under a year, members have shown exceptional commitment to amplifying the voices of disabled people across Scotland.



## Building Identity and Purpose

From the start, Impact Group members defined their purpose, shaped a collective identity, and developed their own visual brand. They launched an E-Bulletin newsletter and produced video content for the new GCIL website, ensuring lived experience is visible, confident, and accessible.

## Policy, Engagement, and Influence

The group has directly informed national and local policy, strengthening the credibility and impact of GCIL's work. Members represented GCIL at our Parliamentary event at Holyrood, contributed to discussions on the Assisted Dying Bill, and highlighted the impact of budget cuts on Direct Payment recipients. They also informed the National SDS Collaboration and helped shape the SDS Improvement Plan.

Through coordinated feedback, IMPACT members contributed to revisions of Disclosure Scotland's PVG process, improving accessibility for PA employers and Personal Assistants. They also helped raise wider accessibility concerns, including media coverage of Glasgow city centre pavement access issues.

This collaboration ensures that disabled people's voices are embedded in national decision-making, making policy and practice stronger, more inclusive, and more accountable.

Group Reflections

- "You feel valued and that you matter."
- "The group has given me a sense of purpose and belonging."
- "Knowing my rights has given me confidence to speak up."
- "The IMPACT group gives a voice to the voiceless."

In its first year, IMPACT has shown that when lived experience leads, policy and practice benefit everyone.

# GCIL's 30th Anniversary

In 2025 GCIL celebrated 30 years of championing independent living and disability rights in Scotland.

## Building Identity and Purpose

A highlight of the anniversary was the Parliamentary Reception at the Scottish Parliament, hosted by Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP. MSPs, GCIL staff, members and supporters gathered to recognise the organisation's achievements. A keynote address by Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, and speeches from Chair Dr Jim Elder-Woodward OBE and CEO Pauline Boyce reflected on GCIL's history, impact, and ongoing mission, reinforcing its role in shaping a more inclusive Scotland.

## 30th Anniversary Report

The reception coincided with the launch of our GCIL At 30 report, documenting our journey and impact. GCIL has grown into Scotland's largest Centre for Inclusive Living, supporting thousands through peer-led services, advocacy, and guidance that promote choice, control, and dignity, demonstrating the transformative effect of GCIL's work.

GCIL's milestone was further acknowledged in the Scottish Parliament through Motion S6M-18890, congratulating the organisation on three decades of achievement and recognising its contribution to promoting independence and equality for disabled people.

## Looking Forward

The 30th anniversary was more than a celebration; it was a moment to reaffirm GCIL's vision for the future and issue a call to action. Bringing together community members, political allies, and disability rights advocates, GCIL continues to commit to dismantling barriers and advancing a fully inclusive society.

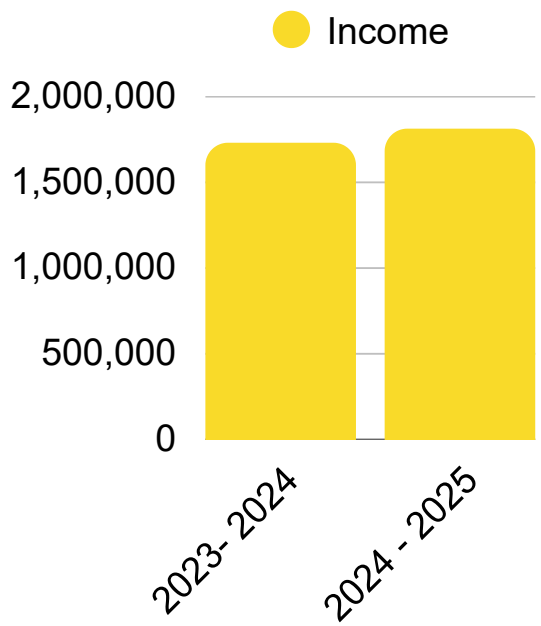


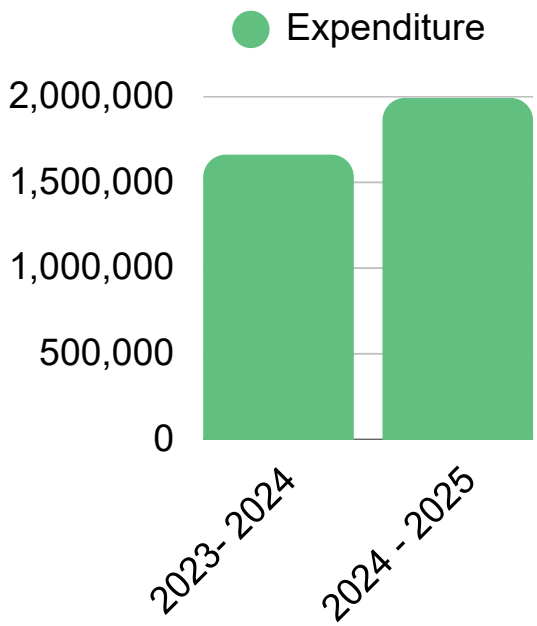
# Finance

Over the past two years, GCIL has maintained a stable and resilient financial position while continuing to invest in services and organisational development.

In 2023/24, total income was £1,731,113, with expenditure of £1,661,716, resulting in a surplus of £69,397.
In 2024/25, income increased to £1,813,253, with expenditure of £1,992,458. The audited position shows a £179k deficit. This difference is primarily due to technical accounting adjustments, rather than a change in underlying financial performance. The main factor is the timing of income recognition. Around £187k of grant income has been deferred into future periods in line with accounting standards.

Across both years, expenditure reflects targeted investment in staffing, service delivery and organisational capacity, including strengthening leadership and improving operational resilience.



Overall, the Board considers GCIL has taken a balanced and responsible approach investing in people and services while maintaining strong financial oversight and long-term sustainability. GCIL remains well-placed to meet ongoing commitments and respond flexibly to emerging opportunities and challenges.

## Payroll

The demand for the service continues to grow steadily with more people opting for the enhanced service which takes the stress out of payroll, tax, pension and various statutory payments including sick pay, maternity leave etc. For those supported people using a blend of agency and personal assistants we also deliver a bill paying service for agency fees etc.
Our team are regularly in contact with supported people providing support and assisting them with HMRC and Pension documentation. Our service helps disabled people streamline their self-directed support option with less stress and pressure. GCIL offers a one stop shop for all local authorities related to payroll.

In 2023 -24 we processed on average every 4 weeks 387 payrolls, for the year ended 2024 -25 we were processing 439 payrolls.

| Bill paying Analysis | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **No of Invoices Paid** | **Value** | **No of Clients** |
| **2023 - 24** | 1,764 | 1,998,804 | 54 |
| **2024 - 25** | 2,389 | 2,660,500 | 107 |

# In Memoriam

During this reporting period, we sadly said goodbye to former board and staff members who helped shape GCIL and the wider Independent Living Movement in Scotland. Each brought commitment, integrity, and lived experience to our work, strengthening our voice and deepening our impact.

We remember with gratitude former colleagues Theresa Houston, Morag MacKay, and Lewis MacLean, whose dedication supported GCIL and advanced independent living.

**Etienne d'Aboville**
It is with profound sadness that we remember Etienne, GCIL's first Chief Executive Officer, who passed away peacefully in October 2025. Over 25 years, Etienne's visionary leadership championed the rights of disabled people, promoted inclusive services, and shaped Scotland's Independent Living Movement. His warmth, wisdom, and commitment to social justice left a lasting mark on GCIL and all who worked with him.

**Alan Dick**
Alan served as a dedicated member of the GCIL Board for 17 years. A man of few words but a mischievous sense of humour, he brought warmth and thoughtful challenge to discussions. We treasure memories of him helping shape our strategy and joining us for our 30th anniversary celebrations. Alan's experience, compassion, and quiet strength left a lasting mark on GCIL, and he will be remembered with deep respect and affection.

**Des McCafferty**
We also remember Des, whose commitment as a Board member over 4 years advanced inclusion and equality, strengthened GCIL's voice, and touched the lives of many across the disability rights movement.

# Current Staff

**Senior Management Team**
Pauline Boyce
Duncan McInnes
Jenny Marshall

**Head Office Support**
Margaret Sanders
Brian McGhee

**Policy & Participation**
Joanne McGee

**Voices at Work**
Stacey Highfield

**Support Service**
Michelle McNamara
Helen Dorrian
Heather McArthur
Ellis Malley
Laura Drake
Isabel Wood
Lee-Ann Jamieson
Maryann McGee
Louise Docherty
Sharon Fullerton
Chevonne Fraser
Annlee Weir
Yvonne Boyce
Ross Campbell
Sarah Ford

**Support in the Right Direction**
Sophie Wall
David Sands
Kirsty Wark

**Finance Service**
Alan Bear
Elaina Connell
Craig Garrow
Michelle Coyle
Iona Macdonald
Iqra Mahmood

# Current Board

Jim Elder-Woodward, OBE
Chris Baird
Marianne Scobie
George Jose
Cathy McLay
Janis McDonald



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Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living

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We are a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, set up in 1995.
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