

Frequently Asked Questions - General

1. **Surrey has an ageing population and the number of older people is set to grow in the coming years. Will there be enough care home places for older people if Surrey County Council closes these eight homes?** The council is aware that it needs to plan for the future and is looking at different ways to provide care and choices for the older population. The consultation into the future of these older people's care homes forms part of that plan. We want to provide a range of services so that needs can be catered for on an individual basis. As an example, Surrey County Council is already committed to providing 725 Extra Care apartments by 2030. With Extra Care, a resident has their own apartment whilst having the support of carers on site who can help with personal care and support if required. Some people will still need support in residential care homes, nursing homes and specialist services. There are currently 406 registered care and nursing home beds in Surrey, offering a total of 11,599 registered beds^{*(1)}. As of 10 November 2021, Surrey County Council commissioned a total of 2268 residential and nursing beds in the county which equates to just under 20%^{*(2)}. There is a lot more capacity available in the Surrey care home market so, in addition to the Extra Care and specialist services, we believe there will be sufficient care choices for older people in Surrey.

*Source: (1) Care Quality Commission
(2) Surrey County Council Internal Finance Reports

2. **The majority of residents at my relative's care home have dementia. Will there be sufficient care home places in Surrey to care for people with dementia if these eight care homes close?** The council will be looking at the provision for dementia as part of its overall plan for adult social care. We are currently unable to accept into our homes everyone who is referred to us as things like open staircases may not be safe for people with advanced dementia, so these people are already cared for elsewhere in Surrey. Surrey County Council has a block contract of 293 beds for residential dementia care across seven homes with a private sector provider^{*(1)}. There is capacity available in these homes, so we do not envisage there being a shortage of places across the county.

*Source (1) Care UK

3. **How will Surrey County Council calculate the numbers of care home places they will need in the future and does the council know what older people's specific needs are likely to be so that the correct services can be commissioned?** Surrey will project future trends based on past patterns of activity, whilst bench marking data with statistic and regional Association of Directors of Adult Social Services data. We are also looking at planned strategic changes with our offer of care in the future. We know we will

continue to see an increase in need for more specialist dementia and nursing dementia provision in the future.

4. **Surrey County Council has said it is investing in extra care apartments as part of its future plans for adult social care. Where are these extra care apartments, how many are there, and will they be run by Surrey County Council or contracted out?** Surrey County Council is committed to delivering 725 units of affordable Extra Care Housing by 2030. The programme is making good progress and a number of Surrey County Council owned sites will be developed by a strategic development and housing management partner/s that will be identified via a tender to the market. The sites that will be delivered via this route are as follows:

- Pond Meadow, Guildford
- Pinehurst, Surrey Heath
- Brockhurst, Runnymede
- Lakeside, Surrey Heath
- Salisbury Road, Epsom and Ewell

In total these sites will deliver circa 300 units of affordable Extra Care Housing. Work continues to prepare the business cases and agree the delivery models for further sites that have been allocated in-principle for Extra Care Housing that will enable Surrey County Council to achieve its ambition of delivering 725 units of affordable Extra Care Housing by 2030.

5. **My relatives would not be able to live independently in Extra Care Housing, I am concerned that Surrey County Council is trying to push people into residential settings that are not safe for them.** Extra Care Housing is just one option that the council wants to have available for older people in Surrey. People supported by the council are assessed and only care settings that fully meet their needs are considered. This could be care in their own home, residential or nursing care or an extra care setting.
6. **Surrey County Council has said it wants to care more for people in their own homes. I am concerned there will be a lot of people who are unsafe and stuck at home.** The council does want to support people to remain at home for as long as possible. Many people have told us this is what they would like. However, we recognise that this is not appropriate for everyone and social workers will continue to assess the needs of older people so that we can provide a service according to individual needs.
7. **Surrey County Council says it wants to provide more home-based care to enable people to stay at home as long as possible. How can the council provide that service when there is a national shortage of carers? Isn't it more efficient to care for people in residential care homes?** It is important that Surrey County Council supports people's wishes to remain independent for as long as possible by supporting them with their care needs at home. The availability and recruitment of care staff is a national issue and will be part of the ongoing discussion into the future of adult social care.

8. **Your letter said that residents would also be spoken to regarding the consultation. My relative is over 90 and I worry that this will cause them undue worry and anxiety.** It is right that residents are informed about the consultation and given the opportunity to express their views. We are encouraging everyone who will be affected by this consultation to participate so their voice can be heard. We understand that some residents may not be able to understand or participate and may become anxious so we will work with families to do this as sensitively as possible.
9. **We are concerned about the residents; this is their home and if they need to move out it may negatively affect them.** Our main consideration is the residents at our homes. If residents need to move out of the homes because of major refurbishment or closure, a full, updated assessment of need will be undertaken with social workers to assist in this process, and we will make sure any care home they move to fully meets their needs. Residents and families will be fully involved in this process.
10. **Many residents are over 90 and very frail. How will you ensure that any moves do not have a negative impact on their wellbeing?** If somebody has to move this will not be rushed and we will do everything we can to ensure that the move goes as smoothly as possible. People move care settings ordinarily for a variety of reasons and Surrey County Council staff are experienced in doing this in a professional and supportive manner.
11. **Are you still admitting people into the care homes whilst the consultation is happening?** There will be no new permanent placements accepted until a decision about the homes is taken. However, we will be accepting people for respite and short-term placements, individuals coming out of hospital through discharge to assess or in an emergency, but in these cases, we will be notifying residents and relatives that the consultation is happening.
12. **The day-care facilities at Keswick and Barnfield were fantastic. Is there a plan to re-open these again?** These facilities closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and have not yet reopened. A decision was made not to reopen whilst the consultation is taking place. This will be reviewed once the decision has been made. There are other providers of day-care within Surrey that people can attend.
13. **If you were to close any of the homes, would you reassess residents to see if they could return home with carers supporting them?** This is highly unlikely. People already in a care home have already been assessed and deemed to require 24-hour care. If any of the care homes were to close a further assessment would be conducted to ensure that any future care provision met the individual's needs.

14. **If the care homes close or are refurbished and the residents are moved to another independent care home, will you ensure that any new home provides the facilities you would want Surrey's care homes to offer, e.g., en-suites and larger rooms?** We would ensure that any new care home could fully meet the needs of each resident. That would not necessarily mean en-suites and larger rooms as the priority is the welfare and wellbeing of each person.
15. **If my relative had to move because the care home was closing or being extensively refurbished, would they be transferred to a care home that was local?** Surrey County Council would work with families to ensure that a suitable care provision that met the individual's needs was found. Wellbeing is part of a person's needs so our aim would be for all our residents to move somewhere where they could still maintain contact with friends and relatives.
16. **If some of the care homes closed and residents were moved to another Surrey County Council run home, would some of the staff also move with my relative? I would feel better knowing there were familiar faces in the new setting.** If any of the care homes were to close, the council would work with the staff to try and find them alternative employment within Surrey County Council which could include in any homes that remained open. However, the location of the homes and individual staff members' circumstances may mean that staff may not wish to transfer to another care home.
17. **If a decision to modernise and refurbish was taken and residents had to move out whilst building work took place, would they have to move back once the works were completed?** We would look at every situation individually and take into consideration the residents' and relatives' wishes.
18. **Is this just about lack of finances?** No, Surrey County Council wants to invest in services for older people and this consultation will help members decide where and how those investments are made.
19. **If the care homes were to close, how can I be assured that my relative will move to a suitable care home rather than the cheapest on offer?** The council would work with families to discuss the options available to them, but only homes that could fully meet your relative's needs would be considered.
20. **My relative's placement is being subsidised by Surrey County Council. If the care homes close and they have to move to an independently run home, would they be worse off financially?** A new financial assessment may be completed if residents were to move to a new home. In most circumstances there would not be any change unless the person's financial situation has changed, or government legislation is updated.
21. **My relative is self-funded. Does he have less protection than those that are subsidised by Surrey County Council if the homes were to close?** If the homes were to close, we would fully support all residents, including those that are self-funded, to find another suitable placement.

22. Won't buying care from the private sector be more expensive for Surrey County Council than running its own homes? Buying care from the independent sector is not always more expensive. The council commissions care in a variety of ways including block contract beds and spot purchasing from the independent sector to ensure good value for public funds.

23. My relative lives in a care home in Surrey but I and the rest of their family live in Hampshire. If their care home were to close, would it be possible for them to move to a care home more local to me and the rest of their family? If a home was to close, the council would consider all options when reassessing care needs, including helping people to live closer to relatives.

24. Having half empty homes is not economical. We are also told there are older people 'bed blocking' in hospital as they cannot go home. Why is Surrey County Council not taking steps to fill these empty places and relieve pressure on the NHS? The low numbers in the homes currently are due to a number of factors which includes the homes being closed to admissions most of last year due to COVID-19, a reluctance by some people to move into residential care and more people going home from hospital through the Discharge to Assess process. This has meant that more older people have been discharged from hospital to their own homes with the support of care staff whereas they may previously have been discharged to a care home. It is also important to note that we have not been able to accept all people referred to us as we have been unable to meet the needs of some people with complex needs which is partly due to the limitations of the buildings. Going forward there will be no new permanent placements accepted until a decision about the homes is taken. However, we will still be accepting people for respite and short-term placements, individuals coming out of hospital through discharge to assess or in an emergency situation.

25. Numbers of residents in the homes are very low at the moment. Have numbers been purposely 'run down' to make them easier to close? No, the numbers have not purposely been run down. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on occupancy, and we have also received fewer referrals as a result of the government's new initiative called 'Discharge to Assess'. This has meant that more older people have been discharged from hospital to their own homes with the support of care staff whereas they may previously have been discharged to a care home. It is also important to note that we have not been able to accept all people referred to us as we have been unable to meet the needs of some people with complex needs.

26. **There are low numbers of people in all the homes. Was this the same situation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?** Prior to the pandemic the homes were running at approximately 90% occupancy^{*(1)}. The low numbers in the homes currently are due to a number of factors including the homes being closed to admissions most of last year due to COVID-19, a reluctance by some people to move into residential care at this time and more people going home from hospital through the Discharge to Assess process.

*Source (1) Surrey County Council Internal Older People's Home Occupancy Summary Report

27. **Would the homes have more chance of staying open if we were at full occupancy?** The number of residents in each home will not be a factor in the decision-making process.

28. **If the decision is made to close one or more of the homes in February 2022, how long would it take to close the homes?** It is difficult to say how long any planned closure would take. No decisions will be made until February 2022. If the decision was to close any of the homes further discussions would take place and an implementation plan would be developed. Our prime concern is the welfare of our residents and staff. Surrey County Council would work closely with residents and their families to ensure that suitable, appropriate care in another home is secured for all residents should the decision to close be made. If a decision was taken to close a home, the closure process would not be rushed.

29. **I have viewed all the information published online and the information provided on each home seems almost identical. Why is this and does that mean that the decisions for each home will be the same?** The information on each of the care homes is very similar as the buildings were built in the same period and are of identical or similar design. Each care home will be considered individually so a separate decision for each home will be made.

30. **Which of the care homes are in the best condition and would be best placed to stay open and possibly accept residents from any homes that may close?** It is difficult to say as we are aware of issues with all the homes which include problems with drains, boilers, pipe systems, lifts and flat roofs. The independent surveyor's reports for each home which outlines the issues will be considered by the cabinet as part of their decision-making process. These reports are available on our website at surreysays.co.uk.

31. **What's the criteria for keeping homes open?** There are no criteria. Each home will be assessed individually on its own merits as each is different. It is therefore important to have your say by completing the survey on surreysays.co.uk as all opinions will be considered.

- 32. Will the fact that our home's CQC rating has improved have a bearing on the decision or is it just the state of the buildings that will be considered?** Surrey County Council recognises the hard work and dedication of all staff in the eight homes being considered and is proud that the CQC has rated all our older people's care homes as 'Good'. All aspects of the services will be considered when Cabinet make their decision.
- 33. How many of the eight homes are you thinking about selling or closing down?** No decisions have been made yet. This is a listening exercise, and our overriding priority is the wellbeing of the residents and staff at the homes - we want to involve them fully and sensitively. Surrey County Council's cabinet will make a decision about each care home in February 2022.
- 34. Will it be one decision for all homes?** No, each home will be considered individually.
- 35. Why have you placed so much emphasis on the provision of en-suite facilities when many residents would either be unable or unsafe to use them?** Many residents and families tell us they would like en-suite facilities when they are considering a care home and list this as a concern when viewing our homes. However, we do realise that en-suite bathrooms are not appropriate or safe for everyone to use and considerations into upgrading shared bathrooms will also be made.
- 36. It does not appear that en-suites were needed to control infections prior to COVID-19, is this just a knee jerk reaction to the pandemic?** En-suites are not essential to infection control and each home already has stringent systems in place to manage infections if they occur. However, whilst not essential, en-suites may make infection control easier as it reduces the use of shared facilities.
- 37. How viable is Option 1, 'Maintain and Sustain'?** Surrey County Council would continue to maintain the buildings for as long as possible until there was a major failure of the infrastructure. This could mean that residents may need to be moved out of the homes at short notice so that any such failures could be dealt with. The council would always prefer to plan for such remedial work rather than have to react in a crisis.
- 38. With Option 2, 'Modernise and Refurbish', what would the extent of the renovations be and how long would it take?** Various refurbishment options would need to be looked at as each home has its own issues such as lifts, water pipes and flat roofs. Modernisation options could include converting every third bedroom into an en-suite for the neighbouring rooms or knocking together two rooms to make a larger room. If this option was chosen, then further discussions would need to take place to plan how this would be implemented. We would not know the timescale for the works until we know what exactly the plans are.

39. **As there are so few residents could you not just move the residents to another wing whilst any building work was done?** This would depend on the extent and nature of the building work to be done. If the work was extensive and involved all areas of the building it would not be pleasant for residents to live amongst the noise and disruption.
40. **What are the care homes not currently providing that you would like them to offer?** The level of care that the staff in all eight homes are providing is of a high standard. However, issues like open staircases and small rooms mean that we are sometimes unable to accept referrals for people with complex needs such as advanced dementia and mobility issues where a hoist or other equipment may be required.
41. **As there are so few residents in each of the care homes, would Surrey County Council consider combining two or more of the care homes?** If people felt like they were living in an empty building, consideration could be given to combining two or more of the homes.
42. **The documentation provided on the website says that knocking down and rebuilding the care homes would not be an option as the sites are too small. Given that any modernisation would probably result in a reduced number of beds being available, is this really a feasible option?** Providing better facilities such as en-suite bathrooms and larger rooms for the same number of residents would not be possible under the modernise and refurbish option. A decision therefore needs to be made as to how viable the homes would be with reduced capacity. The sites may be suitable for building other specialist services such as dementia care which are more suited to smaller services.
43. **The documents supplied do not say what the benefits of modernising or closing these homes would be, please clarify.** The benefit of modernising and refurbishing the homes is that facilities can be provided that better meet expectations of a modern care home and can cater for more people with complex needs. As part of modernising the building major failures of the infrastructure could also be avoided. In the event of any closure current and future residents would have their needs met in an alternative care homes whilst the sites could be used for other facilities to which they may be more suited.
44. **There is an unused three bed roomed house in the grounds of Birchlands, could this be converted and used for older people's care or sold to pay for renovation costs?** We have been advised by Surrey County Council's Land and Property Service that it is not always appropriate to sell off parts of land holdings at a time of consultation and uncertainty as this may compromise best use and layout of the site in the future. It may also have implications regarding shared rights across entrances and access roads.

45. **There appears to be room on the site to build a new care home alongside the existing one. Could residents remain in the old home and be moved to the new home once it was completed, thereby minimising disruption?** This could be another option to be considered subject to planning and feasibility. It is therefore important to include any suggestions such as this in the survey on surreysays.co.uk.
46. **I have heard there is a plan to knock down Meadowside so that the land can be used for either a leisure centre or flats; is that true?** No, there is no plan to build a leisure centre or flats on the site. The consultation is a listening exercise and no decisions on the future of any of the care homes will be made until February 2022. A decision to close any of the homes would mean that Surrey County Council would conduct a review of the affected properties to determine whether the sites would be used by another service within the council. Adult Social Care would seek to ensure where at all possible, that there is a preference towards the future use of the vacated asset being used to provide services, or facilities, or support for older people and meet corporate objectives.
47. **If a care home is knocked down and rebuilt what would happen to the staff?** Every effort would be made to find alternative roles in another service whilst the building works took place.
48. **Why were the care homes allowed to come back from Anchor Hanover Trust in such a poor state?** Surrey County Council were unable to access the buildings to conduct detailed surveys prior to the date they were handed back at the end of the contract. Once the buildings were handed back and condition surveys were completed, the true condition of the buildings became apparent.
49. **Why did you bring the homes back from Anchor Hanover Trust if you were planning to close them all along?** The homes came back to Surrey County Council as it was the end of Anchor Hanover Trust's contract. There was no plan to close the homes and any decisions on the future of the homes will be considered by Cabinet in 2022.
50. **The surveyor's reports mention that there are no sprinkler systems in the homes. Is there anything else from a Health and Safety point of view that is lacking?** Whilst there are no sprinkler systems in place, Surrey County Council ensures it meets all fire regulations. We also ensure that all other regulatory health and safety requirements are met.
51. **An estimate of £220,000 has been cited in the surveyor's reports to install a sprinkler and alarm system in one home. Would the council get quotes before going ahead with installation?** The estimates are based on Savills' experience as property experts. Surrey County Council follows the rules for public sector procurement before any work is undertaken.

52. Will the decision on the future of the homes be a purely financial one meaning the lowest cost option will be chosen? No. This isn't about saving money or finances; it's about making sure we invest our resources in the right way so that people get the right level of care for their needs.

53. How many people are Surrey County Council supporting financially in older people's care homes? As at 10 November 2021, the council financially supported 2,268 older people in residential or nursing care homes in Surrey out of a total of 11,599 registered residential and nursing beds* (1).

*Source (1) Surrey County Council Internal Finance Reports

54. How much does it cost Surrey County Council to place residents in an independent care home? I need this information to compare options. Surrey County Council Council's average guide price for older people's residential and residential dementia care is £689 per week when purchasing care from independent providers. Within this average figure of £689 per week, the guide price is £663 per week for older people's residential care and £714 per week for residential care for people with dementia*(1). However, the actual cost will vary based on the individual needs of each person and local circumstances.

*Source (1) Figures from Surrey County Council's placement's information.

55. Does the council want a mix of council and independent care home places as part of a hedging strategy and does the council's provision of places act as a brake on prices in the independent sector? The council's focus is on ensuring we can access the right provision based on people's assessed needs regardless of the provider. Our 'in-house' homes account for 3.7% of the total care beds in Surrey and the council purchases 20% of provision within the care home market*(1). These factors may influence local market conditions.

*Source: (1) Externally commissioned analytics company

56. Is there a goal to purchase a certain percentage of older people's care home places from the independent sector and if so, what is the figure? No. Surrey County Council currently purchase approximately 20% of provision within the care home market* (1). Surrey County Council purchases care dependent on the needs of the individual, ensuring all avenues are explored to meet their best interests. The strategic aim is to support people to remain as independent for as long as possible at home and in their community. This includes supporting people at home, Extra Care facilities, residential and nursing homes and specialist services.

*Source: (1) Externally Commissioned Analytics Company

57. Will Surrey County Council have a say in how any of the independent care homes are operated if they are paying for residents' care? No.

These homes will be registered with the Care Quality Commission who will regulate their operation. However, Surrey County Council does have a Quality Assurance team who audit homes where we support individuals or where there are concerns raised about the service.

58. What proportion of residents in the homes have dementia? We consider that 117 individuals out of a total of 166 residents within the eight older people's care homes run by Surrey County Council are currently living with dementia* (1). This is 70% of all residents. However, this is an estimate as a formal diagnosis has not been made in all cases.

*Source: (1) Estimated by In-House Care Home Managers

59. What is the total number of registered care home beds for older people in Surrey, and what proportion of those are provided by the council? As of 10 November 2021, there were 4,485 registered beds in residential care homes in Surrey. There were 7,114 registered nursing beds in nursing homes in Surrey*(1). Of these 11,599 beds, 433 are provided by the council in the eight homes that are the subject of this consultation*(2). This is 3.7% of the total care beds in Surrey*(3). NB: by registered care beds we mean beds registered with the Care Quality Commission.

*Source (1) Care Quality Commission
(2) Surrey County Council Internal Figures
(3) Externally Commissioned Analytics Company

60. What are Surrey County Council's obligations with regards to looking after residents? The council has duties under the Care Act with regards to looking after residents to meet an individual's eligible needs when they are unable to pay for those care needs themselves. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities must also:

- carry out an assessment of anyone who appears to require care and support, regardless of their likely eligibility for state-funded care
- focus the assessment on the person's needs and how they impact on their wellbeing, and the outcomes they want to achieve
- involve the person in the assessment and, where appropriate, their carer or someone else they nominate
- provide access to an independent advocate to support the person's involvement in the assessment if required
- consider other things besides care services that can contribute to the desired outcomes (e.g. preventive services, community support)
- use the new national minimum threshold to judge eligibility for publicly funded care and support.

- 61. How do the eight homes fit into the overall strategy for adult social care?** Surrey county Council's overall strategy is to support people as long as possible at home and it is looking at different ways to provide care and choices for the older population. We want to provide a range of services so that needs can be catered for on an individual basis. As an example, Surrey County Council is already committed to providing 725 Extra Care apartments by 2030. With Extra Care, a resident has their own apartment whilst having the support of carers on site who can help with personal care and support if required. Other services would be residential care homes, nursing homes and specialist services. Our strategy is based on the government's [National Service Framework for Older People](#). The consultation into the future of the eight older people's care homes run by Surrey County Council forms part of the overall strategy and will help cabinet members decide on how to invest in services for older people. The updated strategy will be considered by the council's cabinet at the end of November 2021. A link to the strategy will be added to the next edition of our FAQs.
- 62. Will the Care Quality Commission (CQC) get involved in the process or influence the decision on the care homes?** No. The CQC is a regulatory body and monitors and inspects services that are registered with it.
- 63. This consultation is a PR exercise. The people at the top know what they will do anyway so why bother responding?** It is important to stress that no decision has yet been made on the future of the care homes. This is a listening exercise, and our overriding priority is the wellbeing of the residents and staff at the homes - we want to involve them fully and sensitively. We believe it is right for us to be asking for people's views on options for the homes to support Surrey County Council's cabinet to make decisions about their future. It is therefore important that you take time to complete the survey with your views and opinions by visiting surreysays.co.uk.
- 64. Does the general public know about the consultation?** We have informed interested parties and local contacts and have shared details of the consultation with a range of organisations. The consultation is published on the public surreysays.co.uk and there have also been articles in the local press.
- 65. Thirteen weeks does not seem long enough for the consultation to me, why is the time frame not longer?** We were advised by our legal department on the duration of the consultation. Our view is that thirteen weeks is sufficient time for people to read the documents, consider their views and contribute to the survey.

- 66. Why are you holding the consultation now whilst we are still in the COVID-19 pandemic? Wouldn't it be better to wait until it is over?** Whilst it may not be ideal to hold the consultation at this time, it is important that Surrey County Council considers the future of the homes now because of the condition of the buildings. We need to make sure that we plan for any work to be done rather than wait for parts of the buildings to fail and have to react in a crisis. It is important to reiterate that no decisions have yet been made and the consultation is a listening exercise. It is therefore important that as many people as possible put forward their views by taking part in the survey on surreysays.co.uk.
- 67. Can I attend the cabinet meeting when they decide on the future of the care homes?** Yes. All cabinet meetings are open to the public, but spaces need to be pre-booked. This can be done by e-mailing huma.younis@surreycc.gov.uk although we cannot guarantee that there will not be COVID-19 restrictions in place that may prevent attendance. Cabinet meetings are also live streamed so can be viewed online by visiting our [website](#), choosing the meeting date and then the media tab where a link to the webcast will appear.
[Surrey County Council - Browse meetings - Cabinet \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)
- 68. Can I complete the survey any other way than online?** Yes. Although the quickest and easiest way to have your say is to complete the survey online via surreysays.co.uk, paper copies are available from the care home manager, by requesting them via e-mail from servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk or by calling 01372 832257 (Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm) if you prefer. Once you have completed your paper survey please scan and e-mail it to servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk, post it to Mr C Hastings, Area Director, Service Delivery Management Team, Fairmount House, Bull Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7AH or hand it to your care home manager. Your answers and comments will then be entered onto the electronic survey.

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