

nhs* group

ESG Report 2024

Report by the project team
“Sustainability at nhs* group”

nhs* | Member of
winglobally 



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Project team



„We want to
make nhs*
sustainable.“



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Project timeline



“So, what’s the point of this?”

Importance of ESG compliance

ESG describes a framework for sustainable corporate development based on three pillars:

- * **E**nvironment
- * **S**ocial
- * **G**overnance

What was initially considered an additional compliance requirement is now seen as an essential part of corporate strategy. Integrating these value-adding practices offers strong synergies for innovation, competitiveness, and corporate growth.

The project schedule for 2024:

- * Our sustainability project in 2024 was marked by personnel changes and training measures, which slowed us down somewhat.
- * With the addition of two new colleagues, Yuka Hinrichsen and Christian Kumme, we were able to maintain a team of six members.
- * Due to leave of absence to prepare for tax advisor and auditor exams, two colleagues were absent for an extended period and were not available for the project. At the end of Q3 2024, one of our colleagues also went on maternity leave.
- * In 2024, we continued to hold our regular meetings to discuss the status of the nine goals we had defined in the previous year. One goal was unanimously terminated and will be replaced by a new goal in 2025.

Goals & Status Quo



Environment

The “Environment” section refers to a company's impact on the planet and covers topics such as:

- * Environmental protection
- * Climate protection
- * Energy efficiency
- * Waste and environmental management
- * Resource management
- * etc.

Goal #1: Digitalization and a paperless office

- * Our goal is to process only digital receipts in financial accounting and payroll accounting.
- * Our reporting to customers should be completely digitized.
- * We no longer want to send invoices to our customers by mail.
- * We want to digitize our internal processes so that all employees in the areas of financial accounting, payroll accounting, and tax consulting can perform their tasks from home. This also opens up potential employees outside the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area.
- * In the area of auditing, the goal is paperless auditing, but this should mainly take place at the customer's premises. We value proximity to the customer in the annual audit process and are convinced of the greater effectiveness of auditing at the customer's premises.
- * In the area of administration, it is important to us that there is always an employee on site in the office, regardless of the degree of digitization of the activities.

Status Quo:

- * In financial accounting, there are still a few clients who do not make their documents available via DATEV Unternehmen Online (DUO). We upload these documents to DUO ourselves. However, we have noticed that the discussion about the electronic invoicing requirement to be introduced in 2025 will increase willingness among customers due to the need to work digitally. Since e-invoicing will still be more of an option from January 1, 2025, and will only become a real requirement from 2027, we expect this to be a process over the next two years.
- * Our international customers often use our Dracoon cloud solution to provide us with digital receipts. With a great deal of emphasis and persuasion, we were able to convince the majority of our customers to use Dracoon as a means of transferring documents in compliance with data protection regulations. In 2024, it became clear that the key to the acceptance of this tool was that the system must always be fully functional and that our colleagues must be trained to such an extent that they can exploit all the possibilities of the system. Only in this way can the most convenient solution for the customer be found.

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Goal #1: Digitalization and a paperless office

Status Quo (continued):

- * In the area of payroll accounting, we have significantly increased the proportion of digital transaction data since the beginning of 2023. We intend to increase this proportion further. We have also introduced the HR platform Personio. This represents an important step in the digitalization of our work processes. The platform enables centralised management of HR data, automates recurring tasks and creates transparency in processes such as onboarding, payroll accounting and holiday management. This not only increases efficiency but also frees up valuable time for strategic issues.
- * Since 2023, compilation reports and audit reports have been signed entirely digitally and delivered to our customers. In the previous year, there was still a deficit in the area of report criticism, where printouts were still being used. By using tablet computers, we have now been able to implement this entirely digitally.
- * We wanted to switch to digital invoicing for outgoing invoices in 2024, but this failed due to technical limitations of the DATEV invoicing program. Ultimately, we decided against implementing a billing method that would have been disadvantageous for us but would have been a prerequisite for the DATEV Digital Law Firm 2024 label.
- * We have achieved our goal of enabling colleagues to work from home in the areas of financial accounting, payroll accounting, and tax consulting. Some of our colleagues work from home full-time.

Goal #2: Office vs. work from home, travel

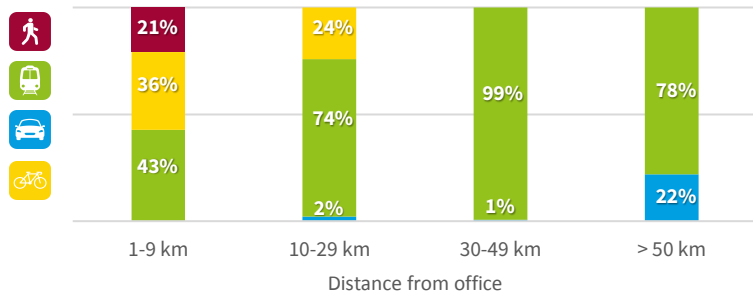
- * Our goal is to strike a balance between working from home and being present in the office.
- * A good community and working atmosphere within the nhs* group is very important to us, and we believe that this cannot be achieved exclusively online.
- * With regard to avoidable travel, we are also convinced that it is beneficial to hold many meetings virtually. Nevertheless, we consider personal contact with customers in person to be extremely important.
- * Every year, we create a movement profile of our colleagues' commuting and travel activities. Among other things, we focus on the means of transportation used. The results are shown on the following slide.

Status Quo:

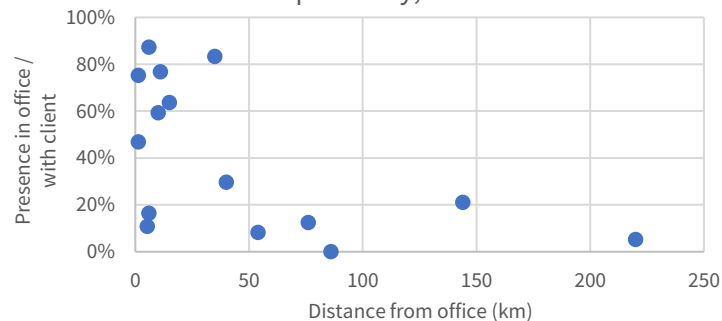
- * Even after the pandemic ended, we have maintained full flexibility for most of our employees to work from home. We prefer a certain level of presence in the office or at our customers' premises, especially for trainees, new employees in the induction phase, and employees in administration and auditing.
- * At the beginning of each year, we send a data collection file to all colleagues to record the distribution of activities between the office and home office, as well as the forms of mobility used. This allows us to assess the current situation and track its development.
- * We hold a weekly meeting with all colleagues via MS Teams and place great importance on participation in these meetings.
- * Our office is very much geared towards the use of public transport or bicycles. There are virtually no parking spaces for cars.
- * In 2023, we established a company bicycle scheme, which is subsidized by the nhs* group with €25 per month per employee.

Goal #2: Office vs. work from home, travel

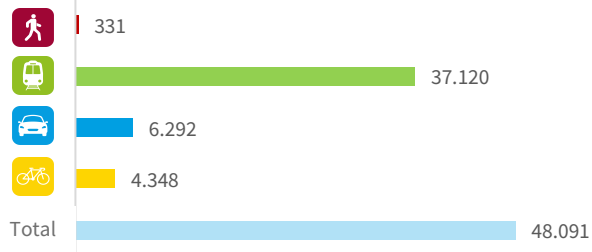
Mode of Transport for Commuting in 2023



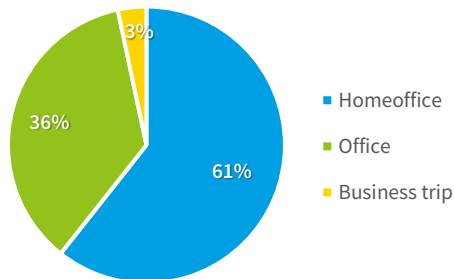
Closer proximity, more office time



Total Distance (km) in 2023



Workdays per Employee in 2023



Goal #3: Energy and resource efficiency of IT

- * We have defined the goal that we want our selection decision regarding the IT provider to be guided not only by performance and cost efficiency, but also by its energy efficiency.

Status Quo:

- * When founding the nhs* group, we decided to rely entirely on DATEV's offerings. In doing so, we also made a decision regarding our current DATEV solution partner.
- * In the course of this sustainability project, we realized that our goal depends in particular on the data center used and its handling of hardware and energy consumption.
- * In addition, we found that all DATEV solution partners ultimately work with the DATEV data center, so that a possible change of solution partner would have no impact on our goal achievement.
- * DATEV's sustainability efforts can be found at the following link: <https://www.datev.de/web/de/ueber-datev/das-unternehmen/corporate-responsibility/>
- * In the coming year, we will define a new goal for the Environment area that we can pursue more independently.

“Social responsibility” refers to a company's behavior toward its employees, customers, and the public and includes, among others:

- * Occupational safety
- * Health protection
- * Equal rights
- * Diversity & inclusion
- * Social commitment / volunteering
- * etc.

Social

Goal #4: Equal Pay

- * At nhs*group, we firmly believe that remuneration should be based on performance and experience and should be completely independent of other characteristics such as gender, origin, religion, etc.
- * As part of nhs*'s sustainability reporting, the Equal Pay Officer is required to report on her activities, work results, and the response of the company management.

Status Quo:

- * In 2023, we attempted to develop key figures that would represent equal pay between the sexes. However, we found that the total number of our colleagues was too small to develop figures that did not refer to individual persons.
- * As a result, we decided to appoint an equal pay officer to compare the salaries of our colleagues in terms of qualifications, experience, and respective working time models, and to identify any critical cases to the partners and report on how to deal with them.
- * This was implemented in 2024. The equal pay officer had full access to all salary data for all employees.
- * After completing her analysis, she reported what she considered to be critical cases in a written report to the management. These cases were discussed and the management responded to these findings in full with appropriate salary adjustments as part of the salary increase round in October 2024.
- * According to the management, this procedure will be implemented again in 2025.

Goal #5: Social commitment of the nhs* group and its employees

- * Overall, we want to support the social commitment of our colleagues and create a lasting social commitment for the nhs* group.
- * We do not want to limit our involvement to providing financial resources but also want to offer active support on site.

Status Quo:

- * In 2024, we have selected two projects to support:
 - Projekt Jumpers in Düsseldorf-Hassels
<https://www.jumpers.de/stadtteilprojekt-duesseldorf/>
 - WDR 2 Weihnachtswunder
<https://www.aktion-deutschland-hilft.de/wdr2-weihnachtswunder>
- * After supporting the Jumpers in Düsseldorf-Hassels in 2023, we have started planning a sports festival this year. It is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2025.
- * We made the strawberry jam produced at our summer “jam session” available internally in exchange for a small donation. After the amount is topped up by the company management, the total sum will go to the WDR 2 Weihnachtswunder (“Christmas Miracle”). This year, WDR is working together with Aktion Deutschland Hilft to combat hunger in the world.

Goal #6: Employee satisfaction

- * We want to maintain and further improve a high level of employee satisfaction. We are convinced that a good working atmosphere is an important factor in the success of our company.
- * We believe that the initiative shown by our colleagues is important for the nhs* group and also for employee satisfaction.
- * Well-trained employees are able to cope with the daily challenges of our work without feeling overwhelmed or frustrated.
- * In order to promote sustainable employee satisfaction, we will conduct an annual employee satisfaction survey and report on the results.

Status Quo:

- * As part of the project, an employee questionnaire was developed and completed by a total of 12 colleagues in spring 2024. The results were evaluated, with a focus on the five top and bottom results.
- * To better distribute the workload, nhs* hired a total of eleven new employees in 2024. In addition to young talent, we were also able to recruit experienced specialists. By hiring a project and process manager, we now have more capacity to improve internal processes and promote more efficient working practices.
- * The growth in the number of employees made it necessary to adjust our personnel structure. This has resulted in a clearer distribution of tasks and responsibilities.
- * The whiteboard that had been decided on could not be implemented as planned due to a lack of anonymity. A feedback box was therefore set up in the Düsseldorf office.
- * We were very pleased with the results of the top five and will, of course, continue to maintain the established rules and approaches.
- * We will review the impact of the measures taken in the next survey.

Goal #6: Employee satisfaction

Results for 2024

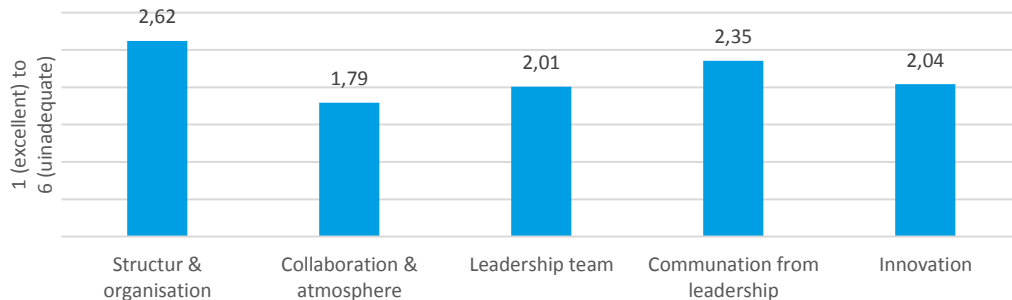
Top 5

- * It is the competence of the individual that counts, not gender, origin, or age
- * Work-life balance
- * Flexible working hours
- * Importance of initiative and responsibility
- * Promotion of independent action

Flop 5

- * Daily workload
- * Not enough time to keep work knowledge up to date
- * Opportunity to focus on tasks
- * Amount of administration
- * Deadline pressure/time pressure

Average for Each Topic



Corporate governance deals with the responsible management of the company and covers the following topics:

- * Corporate values
- * Corporate guidelines
- * Partnerships
- * Risk management
- * Reputation management
- * etc.



Governance

Goal #7: Select our clients and comply with ethical principles

- * We identify with our clients and our work. It is important to us that our clients meet certain requirements and do not fall under our defined negative list.
- * At the beginning of 2023, the Institute of Public Auditors in Germany (IDW) published a code of values for public auditors in Germany ([IDW Code of Values 2023](#)). The code describes the values that auditors stand for and the principles that guide them in their work. Trust and sustainability are among the core values. The code is intended to be applied by professionals and to give the public a better understanding of the services provided by auditors.

Status Quo:

- * We are continuing to work on our negative catalog but have not yet completed it at this point in time.
- * Adhering to our ethical principles also remains one of our goals. Here, too, we are still in the early stages. The basis for this will be the IDW Code of Ethics for Auditors.

Goal #8: Continuing education and developing proficiencies

- * The skills available within the nhs* group must be geared towards the requirements of our customers. Skills development must be closely linked to the company strategy.
- * As with the goal of employee satisfaction, the following applies here: well-trained employees are able to cope with the daily challenges of our work without feeling overwhelmed or frustrated.
- * The skills available within the company must also be known and accessible to all colleagues.
- * The nhs* group should continue to develop; to this end, all colleagues must also continue to develop.

Status Quo:

- * The partners and group leaders of the nhs* group began by defining the skills required to provide our services to clients. These include technical skills in the areas of accounting, payroll, and taxes, as well as operational and IT-related issues.
- * In the next step, these competencies were assigned – where possible – to employees who cover these competencies or who are expected and willing to cover them in the future.
- * During the annual employee appraisals, if development potential was identified, measures were agreed with the employees to further develop, maintain, or deepen their skills.
- * As a further measure, we are currently comparing our service catalog with the skills overview we have created. The aim here is to refine our service portfolio or, if necessary, expand it in line with the skills available.

Goal #9: Client satisfaction

- * Of course, the satisfaction of our customers is important to us.
- * Our goal is to know the degree of satisfaction and, above all, dissatisfaction in order to identify potential for improvement.

Status Quo:

- * We first identified the top 25 customers of the nhs* group based on annual sales in 2022.
- * An evaluation form was developed.
- * The current situation with individual customers was discussed with administrators, group leaders, and partners in order to determine the likely level of customer satisfaction.
- * It was very interesting to see how different colleagues assessed the situation with the customer.
- * The exchange between colleagues also led to a better understanding of the existing customer relationship within the team.
- * Upon non-binding request, some customers agreed to provide us with references, which we have published on our website:
<https://www.nhsgroup.de/aktuelles#Referenzen>
- * Customer satisfaction surveys are not currently planned but will be pursued in future years.

Company



Die nhs* auf einen Blick



2016

Establishment

office in
Düsseldorf



Our services

Audit
Tax
Accounting
Payroll
Consulting

Second
office in
Cologne



40+
employees

Clients in more than **15 countries** with focus on Japan



Member of

wingglobally 

Network partners in 35 countries in Europe,
Asia and North and South America



International Network



The nhs* group is the German member of wingglobally.

Network partners in over 35 countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

We collaborate with our network partners to provide our clients with fast and competent service when they have international accounting needs.

Further information at: <http://wingglobally.ch>



Closer to clients. Deeper in the topic.

The nhs* group's consultancy portfolio is designed to deliver individual strategies that reflect the client's specific needs.