Corporate Social Responsibility, Achievement and Plans.

For More Possibilities

NODE4 Report

Made ✛
for more

Contents

Purpose

This report offers a comprehensive overview of Node4's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) journey, highlighting our key achievements and outlining our future plans.

This document serves as a testament to Node4's commitment to CSR, detailing the concrete steps we have taken to make a positive impact on society and the environment. It demonstrates our progress in our CSR initiatives against the most recent baseline year of 2023, showcasing the improvements we have made in various areas of CSR.

Furthermore, this document outlines our future plans for CSR, providing a clear roadmap for our continued commitment to making a positive difference. It sets out our goals and strategies for further enhancing our CSR performance, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to driving more possibilities and success.

Node4's CSR Improvement Plan communicates our achievements, shares our vision for the future, and reaffirms our commitment to CSR. It is intended for all stakeholders, including employees, customers, partners, and the wider community, to provide transparency about our CSR efforts and inspire continued support for our initiatives.

Objectives

The objective of our CSR strategy is to drive continuous improvement in our four main areas of focus: philanthropic, environmental, economic, and ethical.
Our strategy is rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), a global blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future.

At Node4 we align our CSR initiatives to the UN SDGs goals and by doing so, we not only contribute to the global efforts the world is facing towards achieving the SDGs but also ensure that our CSR activities are focused on areas of significant social and environmental impact that are important to our people, our clients and our stakeholders.

Made +
for more

Scope

Our CSR strategy encompasses all operations and entities within Node4. This means that all our activities, decisions, and initiatives across the entire organisation are guided by this strategy, ensuring a unified and comprehensive approach to our CSR efforts.

Baseline year: 2023

The baseline year for our CSR strategy is 2023. This year marks a significant milestone for us as it's when all acquired entities came together as part of Node4.

The update and launch of our revised CSR strategy also took place in 2023, providing us with a clear starting point to reset our sustainability journey.

This review and revised baseline has been instrumental in guiding our improvements for 2024 and beyond. It provides a reference point against which we can measure our progress, helping us to identify areas of success and areas where further efforts are needed. As we move forward, we remain committed to building on this baseline and driving continuous improvement in our CSR performance.

Made +
for more

Improvements Implemented

Ethical

"Promoting Equality and Open Dialogue: The Launch of Quarterly Development Reviews and Pulse Survey in 2023"
In 2023, we made significant strides towards ensuring all workers, both women and men, have an equal voice in the workplace. We achieved this by launching Quarterly Development Reviews across the group.

The purpose of these reviews is to provide employees with scheduled one-on-one time with their line managers to discuss their performance, learning achievements in the past quarter, and plans for the upcoming quarter.
These reviews foster open conversations, allowing everyone to have an equal voice in the business. They serve as a platform for employees to express their views, discuss their progress, and contribute to their personal and professional development plans.

In addition to the Quarterly Development Reviews, we also launched an Employee Pulse Survey in 2023. This survey serves as an Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) tool, asking employees whether they would recommend working at Node4 Group and inviting them to provide recommendations based on their score.

The survey gives employees the option to respond anonymously or with their name, providing a safe space for them to voice any concerns or suggest improvements. The feedback received through this survey is invaluable in helping us understand our employees' perspectives and identify areas for improvement.

We believe in open communication and transparency, which is why we share the outcomes of these improvements internally. This report demonstrates our commitment to listening to our employees and taking action based on their feedback, further ensuring that all voices within Node4 Group are heard and valued.

"Empowering Women in IT: The Launch of '4Women' Initiative at Node4"
In March 2023, Node4 launched our inaugural Women in Leadership event, titled "4Women". This event was designed to promote women in IT and highlight the opportunities for women at Node4. The event was timed to coincide with International Women's Day and featured talks from women in high authority positions across Node4. These seminars and talks covered a range of topics, including imposter syndrome, pathways to a career in tech, balancing motherhood and career, and the experiences of women in senior management.

Made ✛
for more

The 2023 campaign focused on equity, highlighting its importance in creating a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, and its power in promoting inclusivity and belonging for women everywhere.

According to our Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023-24, women occupy 11% of the highest paid jobs in our organisation. Furthermore, 8% of women receive bonus pay, compared to 5% of men. These figures reflect our ongoing commitment to gender equity and our efforts to promote women in leadership roles within our organisation.

In further analysis of our gender pay gap across all roles and entities in the business as of April 2024, the mean gender pay gap was 3.52% across 1075 employees, with a median of 10.29%. It's important to note that this pay gap is not driven by paying differently for the same role, but rather is a reflection of the distribution of roles within the company.

When compared to other companies in the IT industry, our gender pay gap is relatively low, demonstrating our commitment to gender equity. However, we recognise that there is always room for improvement and we are continually working to promote gender equity within our organisation. This includes efforts to attract and retain women in higher-paying roles and to ensure that all employees have equal opportunities for advancement.

"Launch of the Employee Family Friendly Handbook: Balancing Personal and Professional Life at Node4"
In December 2023, Node4 launched our Employee Family Friendly Handbook, reflecting our belief that family is a core value worth cherishing and supporting. We understand that family, friendship, and caring for others are integral parts of our identities as individuals. We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment that recognises and respects the needs of all employees and all types of families.

The handbook is designed to help employees and their managers find the right balance between personal and professional commitments. It aims to ensure employees feel supported and empowered in their roles both in and outside of work, while continuing to deliver exceptional service to our clients.

The Employee Family Friendly Handbook covers a wide range of topics, including compassionate leave, family bereavement, fertility treatment, flexible working, maternity and adoption, parental bereavement, parental leave, paternity, shared parental leave, and our 'Work from Anywhere' policy. Through these guidelines, we strive to deliver a good experience for our employees and families.

Made ✦
for more

Philanthropic

"Prioritising Mental Health"

We understand the importance of mental health and are committed to fostering a supportive work environment. At Node4, we believe that balancing work and life is essential, and we have implemented several initiatives to promote mental health.

We take immense pride in being mental health champions, with dedicated mental health first aiders present across all our office spaces and sites. We have established a company-wide mental health forum and implemented supporting policies. All our line managers undergo mental health awareness training, equipping them to identify signs of stress and mental health issues.

Additionally, we have a dedicated community on our internal Viva Engage page titled 'Mental Health First Aiders'. This platform provides all employees with the opportunity to reach out to mental health first aiders, express their support, and participate in our mental health challenges and charity initiatives.

Our employees have the opportunity to voice any concerns during Quarterly Development Reviews (QDRs) and regular one-to-one meetings with line managers. We also provide a mental health page on our internal communication platform, offering details of our mental health first aiders and ensuring confidential support is always available.

We offer all employees access to BUPA healthcare, which includes mental health services. These services can be extended to family members, acknowledging the importance of supporting the mental health of our employees' loved ones. The BUPA healthcare Employee Assistance Programme provides access to a suite of six services, including a 24/7 UK-based GP, mental health support, a health check, nutrition consultations, and an online fitness programme. We also offer private medical insurance, which includes mental health cover, to all employees.

Made +
for more

In 2023, we supported mental health charities and participated in mental health awareness activities, including supporting mental health awareness weeks and organising employee well-being activities.

We have launched the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) system, allowing employees to voice any concerns they may have. This feedback system provides another avenue for employees to express their feelings and concerns. Additionally, our Employee Family Friendly Handbook, with its supportive policies, contributes to our mental health support initiatives. Whether it's exercising the 'Work from Anywhere' policy to deal with personal situations, or taking time off for bereavement, we are here to help and support our employees as much as possible.
At Node4, we strive to create a supportive and understanding work environment where mental health is prioritised. We are here for you, every step of the way.

"Fostering Growth and Leadership: Node4's Commitment to Employee Development"

At Node4, we deeply care about the development of our people, regardless of their age or career goals. We offer a range of development opportunities, including apprenticeships, technical accreditations, and skills-based training. Backed by our diversity and equal opportunities policies, we provide a welcoming environment for everyone to develop, succeed, and grow.

In 2023, we proudly supported a significant number of apprentices, with many transitioning into technical roles. This commitment to nurturing early-career talent is a testament to our dedication to employee growth and development.
In 2020, we launched the Trans4mation Leadership Programme, a comprehensive initiative designed to support, enable, and grow our existing managers. The programme also offers opportunities for aspiring managers and team leaders to develop their skills and integrates external managers into the company. It is designed to empower our leaders to develop their own teams' potential and support the wider business.

Made ✦
for more

The Trans4mation Leadership Programme encourages face-to-face working groups, sharing best practices, and the development of support and coaching techniques. It sets benchmarks for what exceptional leadership looks like and how to achieve it. The programme provides a wealth of resources to support the leadership learning journey, from a comprehensive toolkit to leadership bytes and on-demand support from our Leadership Talent & Development Partner. In 2023, we maintained our support for our Trans4mation leadership initiative, with a total of 84 colleagues attending one or more of the leadership courses. The program's impact was evident as 17 colleagues who participated in our aspiring leader program were promoted to People Manager roles. Additionally, five of our Senior Leaders achieved the ILM Level 5 in Leadership & Management qualification.

In addition to the strategies mentioned, we have the Node4 Academy, an internal development programme that encourages all employees to Engage, Aspire, Inspire, and Innovate. The training includes technical development, exam vouchers, ownership and accountability courses, professional conduct, managing client expectations, maximising personal performance, and presenting with impact.

In 2023, the Node4 Academy played a significant role in our talent development strategy. A total of 40 employees joined our emerging talent programmes, with 29 joining through apprenticeships, 4 through the graduate scheme, and 7 through the internal academy. These individuals filled a variety of roles, including support engineers, finance professionals, business analysts, consultants, and developers. Of the 40 people who went through the training, 33 are now employed within the roles, demonstrating the effectiveness of our training and development initiatives in creating employment opportunities and addressing skills gaps.

At Node4, we believe that to be the best in class, we need the best people. To have the best people, we need to support, mentor, coach, and develop them. Our comprehensive development programmes are designed to do just that.

Made ✦
for more

Environmental

"Commitment to Renewable Energy and Sustainability"

In the latter part of 2022, we made a commitment to power our data centres with renewable energy tariffs. Despite the energy crisis in 2023, we continued to uphold this commitment, understanding the crucial importance of our environmental and energy sustainability practices.

As holders of the ISO 50001 certification, we are acutely aware of our role as significant energy consumers, particularly in our data centres, and the impact this has on the environment. By choosing to power our data centres with renewable energy, we are actively reducing our environmental impact and conserving non-renewable resources.

We also comply with Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) regulations, ensuring that our energy consumption practices remain compliant and sustainable. We are always striving to improve our energy efficiency and environmental performance.

Our ISO 50001 and ISO 14001 certifications not only drive us to make continuous improvements but also validate our efforts in maintaining high environmental and energy management standards. Our commitment to renewable energy and sustainable practices reflects our dedication to reducing our environmental footprint and promoting sustainability in our operations.

"Expanding Emissions Reporting: Node4's Commitment to Transparency and Sustainability"
In 2023, we significantly enhanced our emissions reporting process. With the acquisition of risual, Tisski, The NAV People, and Three Two Four, the Node4 Group has grown considerably, and we recognise the increased need to control our emissions as much as possible.

We now report on emissions monthly, covering a broad scope of emission sources to ensure transparency in our reporting. Our emission reporting includes employee commuting, upstream and downstream spend, oil, diesel, transmission and distribution of energy, home working, travel, and many other sources. This means we are reporting above and beyond what is legally required, demonstrating our commitment to environmental responsibility.

Made +
for more

All of our emissions are calculated based on the government-published conversion factors, which are updated annually. We align our calculations with these updates to ensure the accuracy of our reporting.

During our ISO 14001 audits, our emissions reporting is scrutinized, and we have received praise for the accuracy and depth of our emissions reporting. This recognition validates our efforts and underscores our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint.

Economic

"Enhancing Technological Capabilities through Innovation and R&D"

At Node4, we are committed to enhancing our technological capabilities through significant investments in technology innovation and Research & Development (R&D) within our own operations. We also recruit R&D workers where relevant to bolster our innovative efforts.

We consider the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Building Resilient Infrastructure a success in our operations. Our Office of the CTO (OCTO) leads all Group technical development. As digital solution innovators, OCTO plays a crucial role in advancing our technological capabilities and driving innovation within our operations.

Made +
for more

Driving For More

As we reach the close of 2024, we reflect on our progress and look forward to continuing our journey of inspiring more possibilities.

Employee feedback

We have been fortunate to receive recent employee feedback, via CultureAmp, on employee's views around Node4's commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR). It is great to see such active interest in Node4's social connection with the appetite and desire to hear and do more in this area by many colleagues. However, feedback showed that the publication of our CSR activities has not been prominent enough with many colleagues sharing that they have little or no visibility of the activities that Node4 is involved in and that articles, such as this one, are encouraged by our colleagues. Similarly, many colleagues have challenged on our environmental considerations, particularly with reference to our Data Centres. This document gives some insight into our recognition of our environmental impact and the programme we have initiated to mitigate that along with lots of information on the other initiatives and activities we are undertaking as an organisation. We are pleased and excited that so many colleagues have shared their passion and interest in supporting Node4's CSR initiatives and we commit to shouting louder about all that we do in this area, moving forward.

Goals for the future

Building on our 2023 baseline, we have set ambitious environmental objectives, including becoming carbon neutral by 2030. To support this goal, we have partnered with an offsetting partner, supporting projects in developing countries that not only reduce emissions but also provide jobs and training. These projects aim to address equality issues by fostering a majority female workforce.

We have deepened our partnerships with local charities, giving back to our community. Our Volunteer Week in May 2024 highlighted the volunteering efforts of our employees and fostered connections with charities to discuss how we can further support their work. We continue to engage with charitable organisations and invite our colleagues to share community groups that are of personal interest to them, and explore how we may embrace.

Made +
for more

In terms of talent development in 2024, we have onboarded 13 graduates, including some through the 4Everyone Pathway, 16 apprentices, and 7 graduates from the Microsoft Reskill Programme. We aim to continue this growth. We are also pushing for efficiency and resiliency among our existing employees, aiming to upskill our workforce to ensure we have a competent and formidable team.

We have established a partnership with the Early Careers Foundation, a charitable organisation that supports students in schools across England, particularly those with higher levels of deprivation and those receiving Free School Meals. The foundation's mission is to connect business professionals with students beginning their A-Levels, to broaden their horizons and expose them to opportunities and careers they might not typically consider due to their backgrounds, thereby enhancing social mobility. This initiative is not limited to the tech industry – it spans various sectors including Finance, Administration, Sales & Marketing, HR, and more, essentially encompassing the entire business profession. As part of our partnership, we are proud to announce that a group of our employees have so far committed to volunteer time to mentor an A-Level student, supported by Node4.

In line with our 'More Possibilities' initiative, we have seen significant growth in participation in our leadership courses. In 2023, 84 colleagues attended one of the Trans4mation leadership courses. In 2024, we have had 148 people managers either attend or currently enrolled in these courses. Additionally, 23 individuals have participated in the Aspire programme, which is designed for future managers and those aspiring to become managers. This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to fostering leadership and driving meaningful change within our organisation.
As we continue to grow through acquisitions, we are leveraging the technological capabilities of our new partners to create a powerful, unified entity.

In our supply chain, we are enhancing our supplier assessment process. While we already assess our suppliers, we aim to delve deeper into this process, ensuring our suppliers are ethical and meet our controls, rights, and sustainability criteria. Finally, we continue to push our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) practices, ensuring that equality and diversity are at the heart of what we do. Our mental health ambassadors and forums are integral to our efforts to keep our employees happy and supported.

Looking forward, we are excited about the future and committed to making a positive impact on our community, our environment, and our industry. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to our mission of driving 'For More', shaping a better future for our employees, our customers, and our communities.

Made ✦
for more