Software by Design
Nextcloud-Apps

Personal app home screen

HomeCheck

User manual

End-user documentation for the web app

App version	Language	Date
1.1.4	**English**	**7 November 2026**

Contents

Introduction i
1 Roles and permissions 1
2 Getting started: your first tidy home screen 1
3 The home screen 3
4 Folders 5
5 Hiding apps and folders 7
6 HomeCheck as your start page 8
7 Saving, conflicts and limits 9
8 The Dashboard desklet 10
9 Help and feedback 11
10 Mobile browser and touch 12
11 Accounts, access and shared instances 12
12 Settings: the admin seed template 13
13 The layout format and the seed import 14
14 Errors, FAQ and how do I… 15
15 Accessibility 17
16 Glossary 18
17 Surface catalogue 19
About Software by Design 19
Support & how to contribute 20
Index 21

Introduction

HomeCheck is a Nextcloud app for your personal app home screen: arrange the apps you can open as tiles and folders, hide what you do not need, and optionally make HomeCheck the page that greets you after sign-in — including synchronisation with the top menu bar. The web app is free (AGPL); administrators may store an optional start template, after which every person keeps full control of their own layout.

Audience: signed-in users · NC administrators (seed template) · browser with JavaScript.

How to read this manual (17 chapters): Ch. 1 roles and permissions · Ch. 2 the guided first run · Ch. 3–5 the home screen, folders and hiding · Ch. 6–7 start page, top-bar sync and the save mechanics · Ch. 8–10 desklet, help and touch use · Ch. 11–13 accounts, admin settings and the layout format · Ch. 14–17 errors, accessibility, glossary and the surface catalogue.

HomeCheck **1.1.4** (commit `1c1d9cf`), as of 7 November 2026, language English.

Register: This handbook uses professional English and quotes the app's English UI verbatim — button and dialog labels appear like **Edit**, status messages appear in "quotes".

Quick start: HomeCheck → **Edit** → rearrange or hide tiles → **Done** → **Use as home**.

Also covered: folders and hidden apps · live-region save/conflict mechanics · start page and top-bar sync · the Dashboard desklet · admin seed template (JSON) · keyboard and screen-reader paths · every error message the app can emit.

1 Roles and permissions

HomeCheck separates two worlds that never overlap: the *personal home screen*, which belongs to one signed-in account, and the optional *admin seed template*, which only Nextcloud system administrators may write. There is no shared team layout, no group-owned home screen and no way for one person to see another person's arrangement — the API binds every layout read and write to the account in the session.

1.1 Who can do what

Capability	Signed-in user	NC system administrator
Read own layout and entries	yes (own account only)	yes (own account only)
Rearrange, group, hide, restore	own layout	own layout
Set or unset the start page	own account	own account
Write the admin seed template	no (403)	yes
Read another user's layout	no	no
Use HomeCheck without sign-in	401 on every API	401 on every API

Three facts follow from this split and are worth remembering:

- **Your layout is private.** Administrators can store a *seed* for first-time users, but they cannot open, inspect or repair your personal home screen afterwards. The seed is a starting gift, not a managed profile (chapter 12).
- **The app never shows what you may not see.** HomeCheck builds its tile list from the Nextcloud navigation entries your account is allowed to open. An app that is restricted by group membership simply never appears — not greyed out, not locked, absent (chapter 11).
- **Every write is guarded.** Saving compares a revision counter; if your layout changed in another tab or on another device, the save is refused instead of silently overwriting the newer version (chapter 7).

Takeaway for daily use: everything in chapters 2–10 works with ordinary signed-in rights. Only the seed template in chapter 12 requires the administrator role, and even there a non-admin sees nothing but a 403 answer — the settings page simply does not exist for them.

2 Getting started: your first tidy home screen

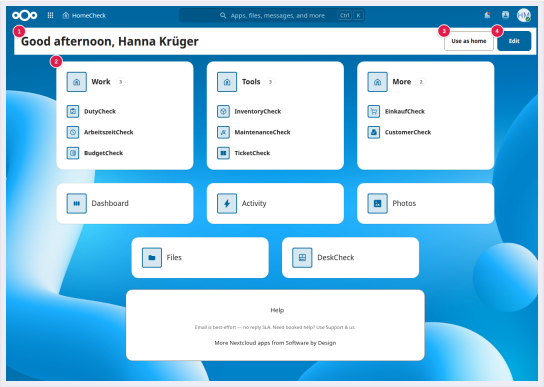
This chapter walks the shortest path from signing in to a personal home screen you actually want to keep: open the app, look around, create one folder, hide one app you never use, and decide whether HomeCheck should greet you after every login. You need a Nextcloud account and about five minutes. Every step names what you should see; if your screen differs, the cross-reference explains why.

2.1 Step 1: open HomeCheck

1. Sign in to Nextcloud as usual.
2. Open **HomeCheck** in the app menu at the top. If the entry is missing, your administrator has not enabled the app for your account — chapter 11 explains the door.

3. **You see:** a time-of-day greeting such as “Good afternoon, Alex”, your app tiles, and on the very first visit a small card asking whether HomeCheck should become your start page (chapter 6).

On first open HomeCheck does not start empty: it builds a layout from the apps your account can see, in the order the top bar already used. If your administrator stored a *seed template*, that template is applied instead — exactly once, on this first visit (chapter 13). From now on the layout is yours; later seed changes never touch it.



The home screen after first sign-in. Marker 1: the personal greeting. Marker 2: a folder pane — here *Work*, containing ProjectCheck and DutyCheck. Marker 3: **Use as home** makes HomeCheck the landing page after login. Marker 4: **Edit** switches to edit mode.

2.2 Step 2: open an app and come back

1. Tap any tile — for example *Files*. The app opens immediately; tiles in view mode are plain launchers.
2. Return to **HomeCheck**. Nothing was saved yet because nothing changed.

2.3 Step 3: create your first folder

1. Choose **Edit**. The banner “Editing your apps” appears together with the hint line “Drag panes to rearrange. Hide apps you do not need. Tap Done when finished.”
2. Open the three-dot menu on an app tile — for example *ProjectCheck* — and choose **New folder**. A folder appears immediately with a default name, holding that app.
3. Open the folder’s menu, choose **Rename**, type `Work` and confirm with **Save**.
4. Drag a second app — say *DutyCheck* — onto the folder, or use **Add to folder** from its menu.
5. **You see:** the status line flashing “Saving…” and then “Saved”. Every change is written back automatically; there is no separate save button (chapter 7).

2.4 Step 4: hide an app you never open

1. Still in edit mode, open the menu of a tile you never use and choose **Hide**. The tile disappears.
2. Choose **Hidden apps** in the toolbar to confirm it is parked there, then close the dialog.
3. Choose **Done**. You are back in view mode with a tidier home screen.

2.5 Step 5: decide on the start page

1. If the start-page card is still showing, answer it: **Use as start page** opens HomeCheck after every login, **Not now** merely dismisses the card.
2. Otherwise use the toolbar toggle **Use as home** — reversible at any time via **Unset as home** (chapter 6).

That is the complete daily loop: *open, rearrange, hide, done*. The next chapters explain each piece in depth — folders in chapter 4, hiding in chapter 5, the start page in chapter 6, and the save mechanics that make undo-impossible accidents rare in chapter 7.

3 The home screen

The HomeCheck page has exactly two moods: *view mode*, where every tile is a launcher, and *edit mode*, where tiles are rearranged, grouped and hidden. Understanding the chrome around those two moods makes the rest of the app self-explanatory.

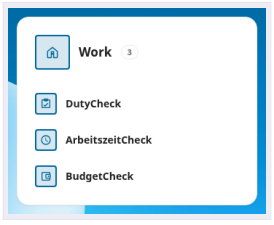
3.1 Anatomy of the page

From top to bottom the screen is a greeting, a toolbar, an optional start-page card, the live status line, and the tile grid itself.

- **Greeting.** “Good morning”, “Good afternoon”, “Good evening” or “Hello”, followed by your display name when Nextcloud knows one. The choice is time-based and purely cosmetic — it never blocks anything.
- **Toolbar. Use as home** / **Unset as home** toggles the start page (chapter 6); **Edit** enters edit mode. In edit mode three further buttons appear: **New folder**, **Hidden apps** and the primary **Done** that returns to view mode.
- **Status line.** The quiet text under the toolbar is a *live region*: it announces “Saving…”, “Saved” and every warning the app can produce. Screen readers hear it without moving focus (chapter 15); the full message catalogue is in chapter 7.
- **Tile grid.** One tile per item: an *app pane* launches the app, a *folder pane* shows its contained apps and opens the folder dialog (chapter 4).

3.2 View mode

In view mode a tile is a button, nothing more. The hint under the toolbar reads “Tap a pane to open an app.” App panes navigate straight to their target; folder panes open a dialog with the folder’s contents, so two taps reach an app inside a folder. A tile that refuses to open is reported by the status line as “This app link is not safe to open” — the navigation entry carried an address that fails the app’s safety check, and HomeCheck refuses to follow it (chapter 7).

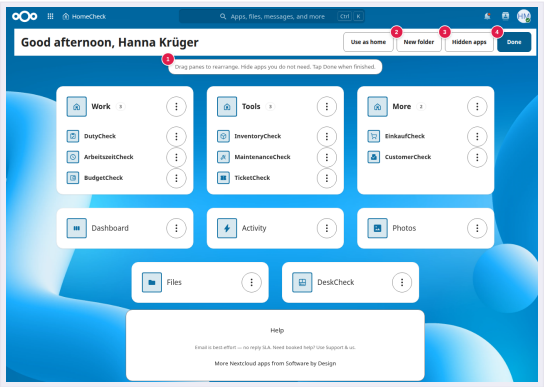


A folder pane in view mode: the *Work* folder previews its apps; tapping opens the folder dialog.

3.3 Edit mode

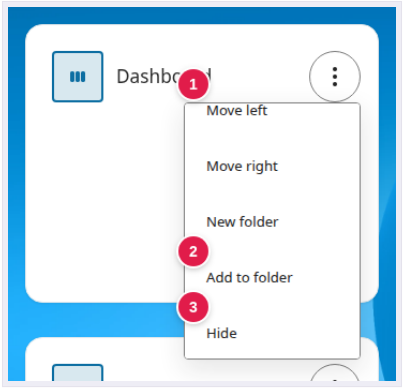
Choosing **Edit** swaps the subtitle to “Drag panes to rearrange. Hide apps you do not need. Tap Done when finished.” and unlocks three mechanisms:

1. **Drag and drop.** Grab a tile and drop it on a new position — or onto a folder to file it there. A drop target is highlighted while you hover.
2. **The tile menu.** Every tile carries a three-dot **More actions** menu with keyboard-friendly equivalents of each gesture: **Move left** and **Move right** step a tile through the grid without a mouse.
3. **The toolbar additions.** **New folder** creates an empty folder; **Hidden apps** opens the parked-apps dialog (chapter 5).



Edit mode. Marker 1: the hint line that replaces the view-mode subtitle. Marker 2: **New folder** creates an empty folder. Marker 3: **Hidden apps** opens the parked-apps dialog. Marker 4: **Done** commits the mode switch back to view mode.

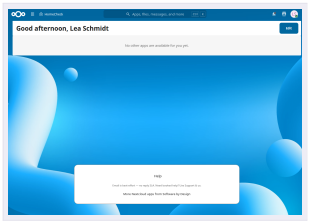
Every menu, drag and button press writes through to the server automatically — chapter 7 covers what happens on the wire, including the version conflict you can provoke by editing in two tabs at once.



The tile menu of an app pane in edit mode. Marker 1: **Move left** / **Move right** reorder without dragging. Marker 2: **Add to folder** files the app into a folder. Marker 3: **Hide** parks the app off the home screen.

3.4 The empty home screen

When nothing is visible — because every app was hidden or none is enabled for your account — the grid is replaced by “No other apps are available for you yet.” This is a state, not an error: restoring an app via **Hidden apps** brings the grid back instantly (chapter 5). If you expected apps that are missing entirely, the account’s permissions — not HomeCheck — are the limit (chapter 11).



The empty state: nothing visible, nothing broken.

4 Folders

A folder groups up to forty apps behind one tile. On the home screen it keeps related tools together — for example a *Work* folder holding ProjectCheck, DutyCheck and ArbeitszeitCheck — while costing only a single extra tap to reach each app. Folders exist only inside HomeCheck: they never appear in the Nextcloud top bar, whose order is kept flat on every save (chapter 6).

4.1 Creating a folder

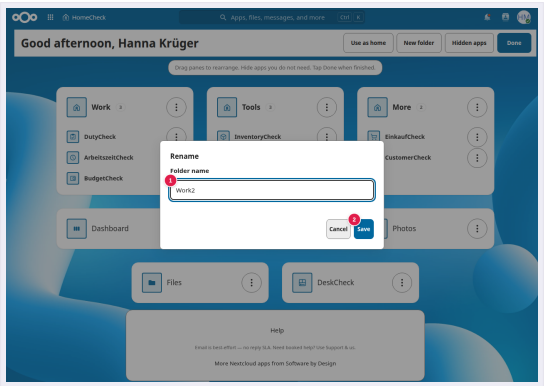
There are two ways, depending on what you already have:

1. **Empty first:** in edit mode choose **New folder** in the toolbar. A folder tile with a placeholder name appears immediately; fill it via **Add to folder** on app tiles or by dragging apps onto it.
2. **App first:** open an app tile's menu and choose **New folder**. The folder is created with that app already inside — the fastest way to start a group.

When you pick **Add to folder** on an app and exactly one folder exists, the app moves there directly. With several folders the dialog **Choose a folder** asks which one; with none yet the note "No folders yet — a new one will be created." tells you that the action creates the folder on the fly.

4.2 Renaming

1. Open the folder tile's menu and choose **Rename**.
2. Edit the name in the dialog and confirm with **Save** (or press Enter); **Cancel** or Escape leaves the name unchanged.

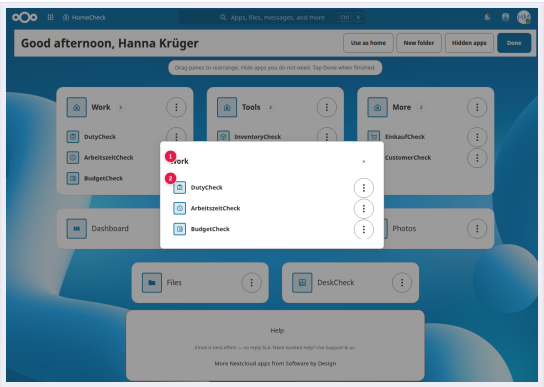


Renaming the *Work* folder — the field already holds the new name *Work2*. Marker 1: the **Folder name** field. Marker 2: **Save** applies the change.

Names are trimmed, must be 1–40 characters, and may contain letters (including accented ones), digits, spaces and the characters `_ - . / ( )`. Empty names report "Name must be 1–40 characters"; characters outside the set — emoji, markup, control characters — report "Name has invalid characters", and the offending field is flagged in place rather than through a banner.

4.3 Opening, moving, removing

Tapping a folder tile in view mode opens the folder dialog: the title is the folder name, the grid lists its apps, and each row launches the app. In edit mode the same dialog gains the three-dot menus again, so a contained app can be reordered inside the folder, moved out via **Remove from folder**, or hidden (chapter 5).

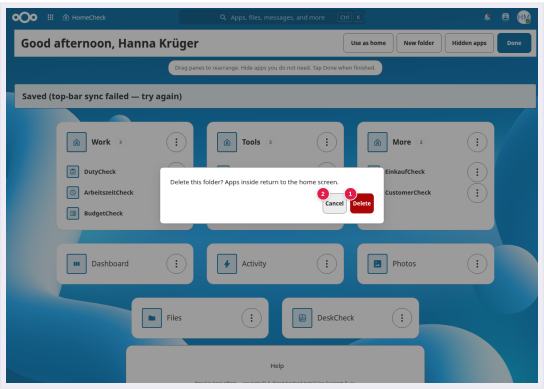


The open *Work* folder. Marker 1: the dialog carries the folder's name. Marker 2: each row launches its app; in edit mode the row menus move entries within the folder or out of it.

An empty folder is allowed — the tile stays, and opening it shows "This folder is empty — add apps from Edit." so a fresh folder never looks broken.

4.4 Deleting a folder

1. Open the folder tile's menu in edit mode and choose **Delete folder**.
2. The confirmation asks "Delete this folder? Apps inside return to the home screen." — **Delete** proceeds, **Cancel** keeps everything.
3. **You see:** the folder tile dissolves and its apps reappear as ordinary tiles. Deleting a folder never deletes or uninstalls apps.



The delete confirmation. Marker 1: **Delete** removes the folder and returns its apps to the grid. Marker 2: **Cancel** closes the dialog unchanged.

4.5 Limits and edge cases

Folders hold at most 40 apps, and folder tiles cannot be nested — a folder's menu deliberately offers no "add to folder" entry. The home screen itself is capped at 100 top-level items; at the cap the status line says "Too many items on the home screen (max 100)" and the action is refused without losing data. A folder you hide counts against a separate budget of 50 hidden folders (chapter 5), and the technical format behind all of this is documented in chapter 13.

5 Hiding apps and folders

Hiding is HomeCheck's decluttering tool: a hidden app disappears from the home screen without being uninstalled, disabled or removed from your account. It stays fully functional — you can still open it from the Nextcloud app menu or a direct link — it simply stops occupying visual space. Restoring is one click.

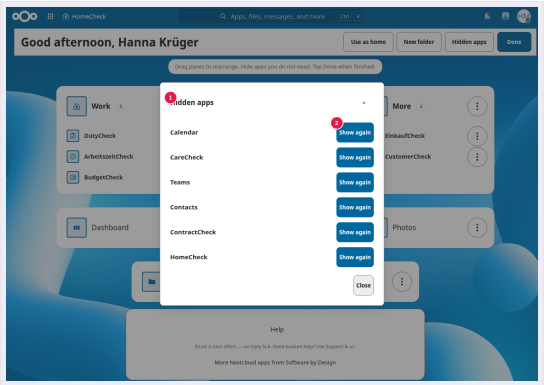
5.1 Hiding an app or a whole folder

1. Enter edit mode with **Edit**.
2. Open the tile's three-dot menu and choose **Hide**. On a folder tile the same entry hides the folder *including* everything inside.
3. **You see:** the tile vanishes from the grid and the status line confirms the save. Nothing else changes — the app keeps running, keeps its icon in the app menu, keeps its data.

Inside an open folder, an app's menu offers **Hide** as well; the app leaves the folder and lands in the hidden list. Removing a folder's apps one by one does not delete the folder — it stays as an empty tile until you delete or hide it too (chapter 4).

5.2 Restoring

1. In edit mode choose **Hidden apps** in the toolbar — the button only appears while edit mode is active.
2. The dialog lists every parked entry: apps by name, hidden folders as *name (count)* so you can see at a glance that a folder — not a single app — is parked.
3. Choose **Show again** on a row. An app returns to the grid; a hidden folder returns with its apps still inside.
4. Close the dialog with **Close** or Escape.



The **Hidden apps** dialog. Marker 1: the list combines hidden apps and hidden folders — folders show their app count. Marker 2: **Show again** restores an entry in place.

With nothing parked, the dialog shows "No hidden apps." — a good sanity check when a tile seems to be missing: either it is hidden (and listed here) or it is not available to your account at all (chapter 11).

5.3 Limits and behaviour worth knowing

The hidden list holds up to 200 apps and 50 hidden folders; both are safety caps you will essentially never hit on a normal instance. A hidden app that disappears from your navigation — uninstalled or no longer permitted — is silently dropped from the list on the next read, so the dialog never

shows ghosts. And if you hide *everything*, the home screen shows its empty state rather than a blank page (chapter 3); the way back is always the same **Hidden apps** dialog.

Hidden entries are stored inside your personal layout, so they follow the same rules as the rest of the home screen: they are private to your account, they save with the same revision counter, and they never synchronise into the top bar (chapter 13).

6 HomeCheck as your start page

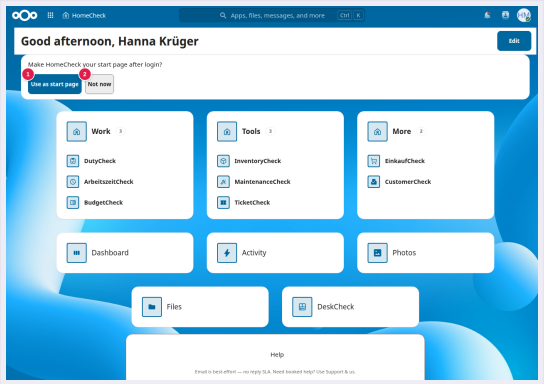
Two related but independent features live in this chapter: the *start page*, which decides which app Nextcloud opens right after login, and the *top-bar synchronisation*, which keeps the app menu order aligned with your tile order. Both follow the same principle — one account, one setting, always reversible.

6.1 The start-page card

On your first visits a small card asks “Make HomeCheck your start page after login?” with two honest answers:

Use as start page enables the landing behaviour *and* dismisses the card permanently.

Not now only dismisses the card; nothing about your login changes. The toolbar toggle remains available whenever you change your mind.



The start-page card. Marker 1: **Use as start page** turns the behaviour on. Marker 2: **Not now** dismisses the card without enabling.

The card never appears while you are editing, and it hides itself once HomeCheck already is the start page — the toolbar would only repeat the same offer.

6.2 The toolbar toggle

Once the card is gone, the state lives in the toolbar: **Use as home** enables the landing behaviour (tooltip “Open HomeCheck after you sign in”), **Unset as home** disables it (tooltip “Stop opening HomeCheck after you sign in”). The button is a true toggle — pressed state included — so its look always tells you the current state.

What it writes: your personal Nextcloud `defaultapp` value. Enabling moves `homecheck` to the front of that list; disabling removes it again and reveals whatever was next — your previous landing app is restored, not forgotten. Success is confirmed with “HomeCheck is your start page” or “HomeCheck is no longer your start page”; a failed write surfaces as “Could not update start page” and leaves the old state untouched.

6.3 Top-bar synchronisation

Every time your layout saves, HomeCheck also rewrites your personal app order in the Nextcloud top bar: apps first, then the contents of your folders, flattened in place. Two consequences are worth knowing:

- **Folders are invisible to the top bar.** The bar cannot display groups, so folder children simply appear at the position their folder occupies on the home screen.
- **Hidden entries stay hidden.** Only visible tiles synchronise — hiding an app in HomeCheck removes it from your synced top-bar order too.

When the sync write fails while the layout save itself succeeded, the status line says “Saved (top-bar sync failed — try again)” and the app retries on its own — up to three times with growing pauses, announcing “Retrying top-bar sync…”. If the third retry also fails, the warning stays: your layout is safe, only the bar order lags until the next successful save. Manual bar edits outside HomeCheck are overwritten by the next layout save — treat the tile order as the single source of truth (chapter 13).

7 Saving, conflicts and limits

There is no save button in HomeCheck — every change writes itself. This chapter explains what that means when it works, what protects you when two writers collide, and where the hard limits sit.

7.1 How a change is saved

A change — a drag, a rename, a hide — marks the layout dirty, waits half a second for further edits, then writes the whole layout to the server in one request. Writes are serialised: a new save never overtakes one still in flight, so the server always receives your changes in the order you made them. If you keep editing while a save runs, another pass follows immediately afterwards; closing the tab with unsaved changes triggers the browser’s leave warning and a final flush attempt.

The status line narrates the whole cycle:



“Saving…” — a write is in flight.



“Saved” — the server confirmed your layout.



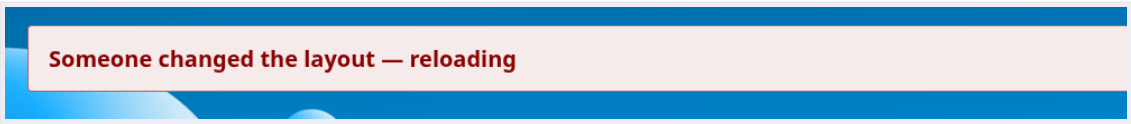
“Saved (top-bar sync failed — try again)” — the layout landed; only the bar order is retrying.

Two non-obvious consequences: a brief network outage does not lose work — the layout stays dirty, the status line reports “Could not save — try again”, and the next change retries automatically.

And a stale login or expired session is detected as such (the page reloads into a fresh sign-in rather than writing blind).

7.2 The version conflict

Every saved layout carries a *revision* number, and every write must present the revision it was based on — optimistic locking. If you edit in two tabs, on two devices, or while a colleague session of the same account was open elsewhere, the second writer loses cleanly: the status line announces “Someone changed the layout — reloading” and the page reloads onto the server truth.



The conflict notice: your unsaved change loses, the stored layout wins — nothing is silently merged or overwritten.

This is deliberately unfriendly to silent data loss: the app refuses to merge two diverging home screens because whichever one it picked would surprise somebody. Your losing edit was small (an order, a name); redo it on the fresh copy.

7.3 Safety checks and hard limits

Guard rail	What happens at the edge
100 top-level items	“Too many items on the home screen (max 100)” — refused, nothing lost
40 apps per folder	“Too many apps in this folder (max 40)” — refused
200 hidden apps / 50 hidden folders	refused on save; restore or delete first
Folder name 1–40 chars, limited charset	“Name must be 1–40 characters” / “Name has invalid characters”
No nested folders	by design — the menu never offers it
Safe launch links only	“This app link is not safe to open” for foreign or script targets

All limits are enforced on the server, not just in the browser — a hand-crafted request hits the same wall as a click. The byte size of a layout is capped at 32 KB as well, which the item limits reach long before you ever could. Folder names accept letters from any alphabet, digits, spaces and `_ - . / ( )`; the launch-link guard only allows relative addresses and absolute links back to this very Nextcloud — a navigation entry pointing at `javascript:`, `data:` or a foreign host is refused and reported rather than followed.

8 The Dashboard desklet

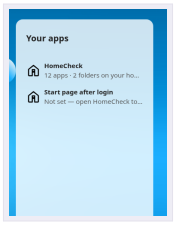
HomeCheck also lives on the Nextcloud Dashboard — the landing page that ships with every account — as a compact widget titled **Your apps**. It answers two questions at a glance: how is your home screen composed, and is HomeCheck your start page.

8.1 What the desklet shows

Summary line “*n* apps · *m* folders on your home” — the live composition of your layout, counted the way the home screen counts it: apps inside folders count as apps, a folder counts once.

Start-page line **Start page after login** with either “HomeCheck opens after you sign in” when the behaviour is on, or “Not set — open HomeCheck to choose” when it is off.

Open launcher the button that takes you into the full app.



The **Your apps** desklet on the Nextcloud Dashboard: layout summary, start-page state and **Open launcher**.

Three properties matter for trusting it. The desklet is strictly read-only — it summarises your stored layout without ever writing, so opening the Dashboard cannot create, seed or alter anything. It refreshes on a roughly five-minute cycle, so a change you just made may take a moment to appear. And it binds to your session: it can only ever show your own home, which is also why an account with no visible apps sees "No apps available for you yet." and a broken backend surfaces as "Could not load HomeCheck status." — a message to report via chapter 9, not a state to wait out.

If the desklet is missing entirely, it is not broken: Dashboard widgets are per-account. Add it through the Dashboard's own customisation (its settings button at the bottom of the page) — HomeCheck registers the widget, you decide whether it shows.

9 Help and feedback

At the foot of the app navigation sits the **Help** button — the single entry point for everything you might want to say back. Opening it reveals a small menu with three routes and one honest disclaimer.

9.1 The three routes

Report a problem opens your mail program with a pre-filled problem report. The draft carries diagnostics the developers actually need — app name and version, the Nextcloud version, your UI language and the page you were on — but never your user name, email address or any layout content. Review the draft before sending; it is your mail.

Report this problem is the same mechanism reached from inside error messages: when a status message offers it, one click pre-fills the report with the failing context instead of making you describe it.

Suggest an improvement opens a feedback draft the same way — feature wishes, rough edges, ideas.

Open GitHub Issues leads to the public tracker in a new tab, for reports you want to follow publicly or check for duplicates.

Under the menu a note sets expectations plainly: "Email is best-effort — no reply SLA. Need booked help? Use Support & us." — community feedback is read and welcome, contractual support goes through the vendor's support channel instead. The sibling link **More Nextcloud apps from Software by Design** opens the vendor's app catalogue in a new window.

9.2 What makes a good report

Name the screen you were on, the step you took and the message the status line showed — the exact wording, since every message maps to one code path (chapter 14 has the full catalogue).

A screenshot helps for anything visual. The mailto draft already contains the version data, so describing behaviour is all that is left to you.

10 Mobile browser and touch

HomeCheck is a web app — there is no separate mobile app to install, and none is needed: the same page works in the browser of a phone or tablet with the complete feature set. Sign in, open **HomeCheck**, and everything from chapters 3 to 5 applies unchanged.

10.1 What feels different on a small screen

- **Touch targets.** Buttons and menu entries are sized for fingers (at least 44×44 px, the primary actions larger), so the three-dot menus and the toolbar work without precision tapping.
- **Reordering without drag.** Drag and drop is a mouse gesture at heart; on touch screens the dependable path is the tile menu — **Move left** and **Move right** step a tile through the grid one position at a time, which is also the recommended method on any device when a drag would be fiddly.
- **Dialogs stay dialogs.** Rename, delete, folder and hidden-apps dialogs open centred and scroll internally when the content is taller than the screen, so nothing essential sits outside the viewport.
- **Same account, same layout.** The layout is stored per account, not per device: rearrange on the desktop and the phone shows the identical home screen. Edits in both places are protected by the same revision check — the second writer reloads (chapter 7).

10.2 Using it like an app

Because HomeCheck can be your start page, a practical pattern on phones is: set **Use as home** once, then reach every daily app through the tile grid after login — one tap to HomeCheck, one more to the app inside a folder. Combined with the browser's own "add to home screen" bookmark, the result is close to a native launcher while staying entirely inside Nextcloud.

11 Accounts, access and shared instances

HomeCheck is designed for instances with many people on them — a family server, a club, a company cloud. This chapter covers what that means in practice: what is shared (almost nothing), what is private (everything about your layout), and what happens when accounts, apps or permissions change around you.

11.1 Per-account everything

Each account stores its own layout in its own Nextcloud preferences. There is no way — not even for a system administrator — to read or edit another person's home screen, because every API call resolves "the layout" from the signed-in session, never from a parameter. Family members on one server each see their own tiles; a shared device profile cannot leak one person's arrangement into another's.

The seed template is the single deliberate exception, and even it is one-directional: an administrator writes it once for future first-time users, receives no copy back, and cannot tell who picked it up (chapter 12).

11.2 Getting in

- **Signed in:** full access to your own layout — nothing more is needed; HomeCheck has no per-user allowlist of its own.
- **Signed out:** every API answers `401` and the page asks for login; there is no anonymous or guest view.
- **App entry missing:** the app is disabled or not permitted for your account — a Nextcloud-level decision your administrator controls, not a HomeCheck setting.

11.3 When the app landscape shifts

Your layout never blocks on apps that come and go; on every read HomeCheck reconciles the stored layout with the apps your account can actually see right now:

A permitted app is installed or unlocked it appears at the end of your home screen automatically, in navigation order — nothing is hidden from you by default.

An app is removed or restricted its tile leaves the layout quietly; if it sat in a folder, the folder simply gets smaller. Hidden copies leave the hidden list too — no ghosts.

An app returns later it re-enters at the end, like a new app; a deliberately hidden app stays hidden only while it continuously exists, so a returning app is visible again.

The whole home screen is empty the empty state from chapter 3 shows — permitted apps may simply all be gone for this account.

11.4 Several sessions of one account

The same account open in two tabs or on two devices shares one layout — the revision check (chapter 7) decides collisions. Whoever saves second reloads onto the stored truth. This is also the answer for "my phone changed my desktop layout": same account, same home screen, by design.

12 Settings: the admin seed template

HomeCheck needs no personal settings page — the home screen itself is the setting. The one administrative surface is the optional *seed template*: a starting layout your Nextcloud administrator can hand to people who have never opened the app. It lives under Nextcloud *Settings* → *Administration* → *Additional settings* → **HomeCheck** and is restricted to system administrators; everyone else gets a plain `403` from the API.

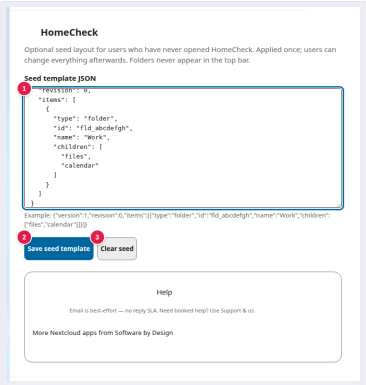
12.1 What the seed does — and does not

The hint under the field says it precisely: "Optional seed layout for users who have never opened HomeCheck. Applied once; users can change everything afterwards. Folders never appear in the top bar."

- **Applied once.** The seed is copied only when an account has no stored layout at all — the literal first open. Editing the seed later reaches *future* first-time users exclusively; existing users are never re-seeded, never merged, never disturbed.
- **Fully disposable.** Recipients can change, extend or discard every seeded element — the seed is a courtesy, not policy.
- **Top-bar blind.** Folder structure in a seed affects only the HomeCheck page; the top bar always stays flat (chapter 6).

12.2 Writing the template

1. Open *Settings* → *Administration* → *Additional settings* → **HomeCheck**.
2. Paste a layout JSON into **Seed template JSON** — the field holds a plain JSON object in the format of chapter 13, and the hint line shows a minimal working example.
3. Choose **Save seed template**. The status line confirms “Saved”; schema problems report inline in the error area, for example “Invalid JSON — fix the syntax, then save again” for unparseable input or “Could not save the seed — fix any errors and try again” when the structure is valid JSON but not a valid layout.
4. Choose **Clear seed** to remove the template again — new users then get the automatic layout built from their visible apps (chapter 2). Existing layouts never change.



The admin panel. Marker 1: **Seed template JSON** takes the layout document. Marker 2: **Save seed template** validates and stores it. Marker 3: **Clear seed** removes the template; stored user layouts are unaffected.

Every save is logged server-side with the acting administrator, so the template is auditable like other instance settings. A practical rollout pattern: draft the layout as an ordinary user on a test account, export the resulting JSON (chapter 13), then paste it here — that way the seed you ship is the seed you saw.

13 The layout format and the seed import

Everything HomeCheck stores is one small JSON document per account — plus, for administrators, the same shape once more as the global seed. You never have to touch the format to use the app; you read this chapter when you want to write a seed, audit what is stored, or move a layout between accounts.

13.1 The document

`version` always `1`; other values are rejected outright.

`revision` the optimistic-lock counter. It climbs by one on every save, and a write that presents an old revision is refused with a conflict (chapter 7). In a seed it is simply `0`.

`items` the ordered top level of the home screen. Each entry is either `{"type":"app","id":"<nav id>"}` or a folder object.

`folder` `{"type":"folder","id":"fld_…","name":"Work","children":["files","calendar"]}` — the id starts with `fld_` followed by 8–64 letters or digits, `name` follows the rename rules of chapter 4, and `children` lists navigation ids in display order.

`hidden` a flat list of hidden app ids.

`hiddenFolders` hidden folders in the same object shape as visible ones — children included, so a restored folder comes back intact.

Navigation ids are the same identifiers the Nextcloud app menu uses — `files`, `calendar`, `activity`, app ids like `homecheck` itself. An id that does not resolve to an app the reader may see is ignored on load, not stored: the layout can never point at something that does not exist for that account (chapter 11).

13.2 Using the format as an import path

There is deliberately no file-based import button — the seed template field *is* the import, and it speaks this exact JSON. The practical workflow for administrators:

1. Arrange the desired home screen on a test account through the normal UI — folders, order, hidden apps and all.
2. Read that account's stored layout (it sits in the account's preferences; an administrator can also compose it by hand from the example in the settings hint).
3. Reset `revision` to `0` and paste the document into **Seed template JSON** (chapter 12).
4. Save — the same validator that guards every user save checks the seed, so an invalid template can never reach a user.

13.3 Storage and lifecycle

Personal layouts live in the Nextcloud preferences of each account; the seed lives in HomeCheck's app config. Disabling the app keeps both untouched — re-enable and everything is back. A full *removal* runs the app's cleanup step: HomeCheck's preferences and config are deleted and `homecheck` is stripped from every account's start-page setting, so a removed app cannot break login. The synced top-bar order is deliberately kept — it is ordinary user preference data, not HomeCheck state (chapter 6).

14 Errors, FAQ and how do I...

14.1 Every message the app can show

The status line and the dialogs emit a closed set of messages — each maps to exactly one cause and one fix.

"Could not save — try again" The layout write failed on the wire or on the server. Wait a moment, change something small; unsaved work is kept dirty and retried with the next action (chapter 7). Persistent failures mean a server problem — report via chapter 9.

"Someone changed the layout — reloading" Version conflict: another session of your account saved first. The page reloads onto the stored truth; redo your last change there.

"Saved (top-bar sync failed — try again)" The layout saved, the top-bar order did not. The app retries up to three times on its own ("Retrying top-bar sync…"); a lasting warning only means the bar order lags until the next save — your layout is safe.

"Could not update start page" The **Use as home** / **Unset as home** write failed; the previous state stands. Retry once, then report.

"HomeCheck is your start page" / "HomeCheck is no longer your start page" Not errors — confirmations of the toggle (chapter 6).

“This app link is not safe to open” A navigation entry pointed outside this Nextcloud or at a script scheme; the app refuses to follow it. Update or remove the offending app — it is a server-side entry, not something HomeCheck caused.

“Name must be 1–40 characters” Folder name empty after trimming or longer than 40 characters (chapter 4).

“Name has invalid characters” The name contains characters outside letters, digits, spaces and `_ - . / ( )` — typically emoji or pasted markup.

“Too many items on the home screen (max 100)” The top level is full; hide or folder-up first (chapter 7).

“Too many apps in this folder (max 40)” The folder is full; split it into two folders.

“This folder is empty — add apps from Edit.” Not an error — a fresh or emptied folder waiting for content.

“Hidden from HomeCheck” Not an error — the status line confirms the tile you just hid in edit mode; bring it back any time via **Hidden apps** (chapter 5).

“Folder hidden from HomeCheck” The same confirmation when the entry you hid is a whole folder — folder and contents come back together from **Hidden apps**.

“No hidden apps.” The hidden list is empty; whatever is missing is not parked here — check permissions (chapter 11).

“No other apps are available for you yet.” / “No apps available for you yet.” Nothing visible on the home screen or for the desklet — restore hidden entries or ask the administrator which apps your account may see.

“Could not load HomeCheck status.” The desklet could not read the layout — a backend hiccup; report if it persists.

“Invalid JSON — fix the syntax, then save again” The seed field does not parse — check quotes, commas and braces (chapter 12).

“Could not save the seed — fix any errors and try again” Valid JSON, invalid layout — compare against the schema in chapter 13 (a bad folder id and a missing `items` list are the usual suspects).

14.2 How do I...?

...move an app without dragging? Edit mode → tile menu → **Move left** / **Move right** (chapter 3).

...make a folder with an app already inside? App tile menu → **New folder** (chapter 4).

...get an app out of a folder? Open the folder in edit mode → row menu → **Remove from folder** (chapter 4).

...bring back a hidden app? **Edit** → **Hidden apps** → **Show again** (chapter 5).

...stop HomeCheck opening after login? Toolbar → **Unset as home** (chapter 6).

...fix the top-bar order? It follows your tile order on every save — rearrange tiles, the bar follows; folders stay invisible to the bar (chapter 6).

...give new colleagues a good starting layout? Admin seed template — one JSON, applied once on first open (chapters 12, 13).

...undo a mistake? There is no undo — the conflict guard protects against other writers, not your own clicks. Small changes are the safety net: redo is always one drag away (chapter 7).

14.3 Questions people actually ask

Why did a tile disappear on its own? The app behind it left your navigation — uninstalled, disabled or restricted for your account. HomeCheck drops dead ids on every read; when the app returns it is appended at the end (chapter 11).

Why did a new tile appear on its own? A newly permitted app is appended automatically — nothing is hidden by default.

Is my layout synced to another device? Same account means same layout everywhere — phone, tablet, desktop share it by design (chapter 10).

Can the administrator see my arrangement? No — layouts are readable only by their account's session (chapter 11).

What happens on uninstall? *Disable* keeps everything; a full *remove* deletes HomeCheck's stored layouts and the start-page entry — the synced top-bar order stays as ordinary user preference (chapter 13).

Is there an undo or a second confirmation for hiding? Neither — hiding is fully reversible from **Hidden apps**, and folder deletion is the only action that asks (chapter 4).

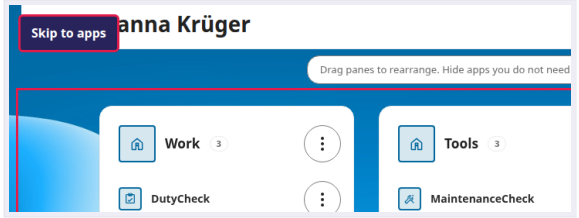
15 Accessibility

HomeCheck targets WCAG 2.1 AA, as every app in the suite does. The concrete mechanics — and the keyboard paths that replace every mouse gesture — are listed here.

15.1 Keyboard operation

Every feature works without a mouse:

- **Skip link.** The first Tab stop is "Skip to apps", which jumps straight to the tile grid (`#hmk-main`) — no need to walk the toolbar on every visit.
- **Toolbar and menus.** **Edit**, **Use as home**, **New folder** and **Hidden apps** are real buttons in tab order. Each tile's **More actions** menu opens with Enter/Space and closes with Escape; only one menu is ever open.
- **Reordering.** **Move left** and **Move right** are the keyboard path for what drag and drop does with a mouse — nothing is drag-only.
- **Dialogs.** Folder, rename, delete, picker and hidden-apps windows are semantic `<dialog>` elements: they open modally, accept Escape to close, and return focus to the control that opened them — even after a save re-renders the grid underneath.



The focused skip link (highlighted for the manual) and its target `#hmk-main` with focus ring.

15.2 Reading and hearing the page

- **Status without focus theft.** "Saving…", "Saved", errors and the conflict notice live in a `role="status"` live region — screen readers announce them politely where they are, and nobody's focus is ripped away mid-task.

- **Field errors stay on the field.** A rejected folder name flags the input itself (`aria-invalid` plus the error text beside it), never a distant banner.
- **Meaning is never colour-only.** The success/error tint on the status line always accompanies text; buttons keep their labels instead of icon-only states.
- **Structure.** The tile grid is a `list` of named items, the toolbar is a labelled `toolbar`, the start-page card is a named `region` — landmarks match what you see.
- **Contrast and themes.** Colours come from the Nextcloud theme tokens, so dark themes, high-contrast setups and custom themes carry over; focus rings stay visible in all of them.
- **Targets and motion.** Interactive targets reach at least 44×44 px, and the layout honours reduced-motion preferences rather than animating anyway.

Found a barrier? It is a bug, not a limitation — report it through **Help** → **Report a problem** (chapter 9).

16 Glossary

Domain terms a new reader meets in this manual — not button labels, which the chapters quote verbatim anyway.

Pane / tile One visual unit of the home screen grid — either an app pane (a launcher) or a folder pane (a group). “Tile” and “pane” are used interchangeably.

Layout The JSON document that is your home screen: items, hidden entries, revision. Stored per account (chapter 13).

Revision The layout’s optimistic-lock counter; climbs on every save and rejects stale writes — the mechanism behind the conflict notice.

Edit mode The state entered via **Edit** in which tiles are rearranged, grouped and hidden instead of launched.

Hidden apps The parking list for apps and folders removed from the home screen without uninstalling them.

Seed template The optional admin-provided layout applied once to accounts that have never opened HomeCheck.

Start page / landing The Nextcloud setting (`core/defaultapp`) deciding which app opens after login; HomeCheck offers itself as that app.

Top-bar sync The flattening of your tile order into Nextcloud’s personal app order — folders dissolve, hidden entries stay out.

Live region The polite status line under the toolbar (`role="status"`) that narrates saves and errors.

Navigation entry / nav id An app identifier as Nextcloud’s app menu knows it (`files`, `calendar`, `homecheck`) — the only apps HomeCheck can ever show.

Desklet A Nextcloud Dashboard widget; HomeCheck’s is called **Your apps**.

App order The per-account `core/apporder` preference that decides the top-bar sequence — written by the sync.

Conflict The state where a save presents a stale revision; the stored layout wins and the page reloads.

CTA card The one-time “Make HomeCheck your start page after login?” prompt — dismissed by either answer.

Check canvas The suite-wide visual surface (tokens, fonts, dialog recipes) all Check apps share — why HomeCheck looks like its siblings.

17 Surface catalogue

Every surface the app has — and the chapter that documents it.

Home screen `/apps/homecheck/` greeting, toolbar, tile grid, empty state — chapters 2, 3.

View-mode tiles app panes launch, folder panes preview and open — chapter 3.

Edit-mode chrome hint line, **New folder**, **Hidden apps**, **Done** — chapter 3.

Tile menus **Move left**, **Move right**, **New folder**, **Add to folder**, **Remove from folder**, **Hide**, folder variants **Open folder**, **Rename**, **Delete folder** — chapters 3, 4.

Folder dialog open grid of a folder's apps — chapter 4.

Rename dialog **Folder name** field with 1–40 char validation — chapter 4.

Delete confirmation folder dissolve with app return — chapter 4.

Folder picker **Choose a folder** when several exist — chapter 4.

Hidden-apps dialog parked apps and folders, **Show again** — chapter 5.

Start-page card **Use as start page** / **Not now**, once per account — chapter 6.

Home toggle **Use as home** / **Unset as home** writing `core/defaultapp` — chapter 6.

Status line live region: "Saving…", "Saved", conflict, sync warning, unsafe link — chapter 7.

Dashboard desklet **Your apps** summary, start-page state, **Open launcher** — chapter 8.

Help footer **Report a problem**, **Suggest an improvement**, **Open GitHub Issues**, SLA note — chapter 9.

Skip link "Skip to apps" to `#hmk-main` — chapter 15.

Admin panel **Seed template JSON**, **Save seed template**, **Clear seed** under Administration → Additional settings — chapter 12.

Layout document version/revision/items/hidden schema — chapter 13.

Touch and keyboard paths menu-driven moves, dialog Escape — chapters 10, 15.

About Software by Design

Software by Design builds Nextcloud apps for organisations that want to host their own data — from time tracking and projects to inventory, fleet management and customer relations. Every app runs entirely on your Nextcloud instance; the web interfaces are free (AGPL).

Company

- **Website:** `https://nextcloud.software-by-design.de/`
- **Partner & quotes:** `mailto:info@software-by-design.de`
- **Report a bug / suggest an improvement:** `mailto:dev@software-by-design.de`

Support & how to contribute

HomeCheck remains free on your Nextcloud (AGPL). Bug reports and sensible ideas via GitHub or email are part of open-source maintenance — without a guaranteed response time.

In the app

Under **Settings** → **Help & support** (navigation chip may still read **Support us**) you find the same options as on our website: partner quote, onboarding, commissioned feature and voluntary support.

Check Partner (invoiceable)

If your organisation needs predictable help with an invoice — setup, hour packages, prioritised email — choose **Check Partner**. That is a professional service with quote and invoice, not a donation.

- Packages and terms on the support page: `https://nextcloud.software-by-design.de/en/support/`
- Request a partner quote: `mailto:info@software-by-design.de?subject=Partner%20inquiry`

Other invoiceable options

- **Onboarding & training** — remote setup or workshop for your team.
- **Commissioned feature** — scoped change with acceptance criteria and delivery date.
- **Official mobile & terminal licences** — where offered for HomeCheck; named seats with invoice.

GitHub Sponsors (voluntary)

Voluntary support without an invoice SLA — appreciated, but optional:

`https://github.com/sponsors/aSoftwareByDesignRepository`

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Index

Access, 12
Accessibility, 17
Accounts, 12
Administrator, 1, 13
Catalogue, 19
Conflicts, 9
Dashboard, 10
Desklet, 10
Edit mode, 3
Errors, 15
FAQ, 15
Feedback, 11
First steps, 1
Folder dialog, 5
Folders, 5
Getting started, 1
GitHub Issues, 11
Glossary, 18
Help, 11
Hidden apps, 7
Hide, 7
Home screen, 3
JSON, 14
Keyboard, 17
Layout format, 14
Limits, 9
Mobile, 12
Panes, 3
Permissions, 1
Privacy, 12
Roles, 1
Saving, 9
Screen reader, 17
Seed, 14
Seed template, 13
Settings, 13
Start page, 8
Top bar, 8
Touch, 12
Troubleshooting, 15
Use as home, 8
Your apps, 10