

Bridging the Gap: How Data-Driven Collaboration is Transforming Transitions in Hackney

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In the world of local government, we often speak about "statutory duties"; the legal obligations we have to track and support our young people. But behind those duties are the real faces of our community: the Year 11 student unsure of their next step, or the young person with SEND navigating a complex transition to adulthood.

Historically, like many local authorities across the country, we navigated a complex and often fragmented data landscape during the transition seasons. While our teams worked tirelessly, the reliance on delayed, manual data feeds meant that maintaining a real-time, comprehensive view of students moving between key educational milestones each year was a challenge.

My objective was to modernise this approach; ensuring that our digital infrastructure matched our commitment to providing every young person within our Local Authority with clear choices, inclusive opportunities, and a seamless journey into adulthood.

To truly serve our community, I knew we needed to move beyond retrospective data. I initially set out to create a borough-wide system that would allow us to monitor Post-16 applications across our borough in real time. My goals were clear:

- **Proactive Intervention:** *Identifying students at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) before they fall through the gaps.*
- **Supporting SEND Transitions:** *Gaining clear visibility into where our SEND students are progressing to ensure we have the right support in place.*
- **Provision Mapping:** *Understanding student choices in real time to inform whether we have the correct educational offer in the borough or if we need to adapt our local provision to meet actual demand.*

However, we quickly realised that building a robust, secure, and integrated platform of this scale from scratch was a massive undertaking for a Local Authority to manage independently.

The turning point came during a conversation with one of our local schools who introduced me to the Applicaa platform. I was, quite frankly, impressed. The infrastructure I had envisioned was already established, active in our schools, and already securely managing the data of our students.

Rather than attempting to "reinvent the wheel," I met with the Applicaa team to explore how we

could bridge the gap between school-level data and Local Authority strategic oversight. It was the start of a unique co-production journey.

*Since then, we have been working hand-in-hand with Appicaa to build a unified Local Authority Dashboard. This is not merely about software; it is about creating a **"Family"** view of student journeys.*

By integrating our systems, we are achieving:

- **Reduced Workload:** Automation is replacing the "spreadsheet fatigue" that often plagues admissions and transition teams.
- **Real-Time Action:** Instead of waiting months for census data, we can now see "pulse checks" of our borough's destinations as they happen.
- **Unified Support:** From Youth Justice to Social Care, practitioners can access a chronological audit trail of a student's journey, identifying exactly where they might require additional support.

Our pilot is a strategic step towards ensuring no young person is left behind. By working together within a single system, we are empowering our teams to move more proactively, reducing the administrative burden, and, most importantly, improving the long-term outcomes for every young person in our borough.

We are building more than a dashboard; we are building a digital safety net for the next generation.