CASE STUDY

London Borough of Hounslow: Rebuilding School Readiness through One Platform and One Process

Hounslow's Early Years service has long faced a common challenge, transition information often being stuck on paper, arriving too late, and being shared inconsistently across schools. As Claudia Rodrigues, Service Manager (Early Years), explained, "Previously we relied quite heavily on paperwork, so this is definitely the best way forward."

That "best way forward" is StepIntoSchool, a single, secure platform that allows nurseries, preschools, and childminders to share structured learner profiles with Reception teams in good time, enabling early action.

The pilot was led by Jen Rowe, Professional Lead for the West locality.

> "Before StepIntoSchool we had no quality assurance of what schools received. There were so many different processes and methods to deliver the paperwork and it could get misplaced. This caused problems with visibility and tracking."
> – Jen Rowe, Professional Lead for Hounslow

THE CHALLENGE

For years, Hounslow relied on paper-based transition for each child, which often didn't reach the right person in the school. In some cases, parents were responsible for passing the information along.

StepIntoSchool transformed this process by replacing scattered paperwork with a single, coherent profile for each child. The profiles – the "Pupil Passport" include developmental insights, emerging SEND indicators, contextual notes, key documents, and even voice recordings.

The transition to digital was smooth. Many settings were already familiar with digital tools for parents, and as Jen notes:
"The system was so simple to use... it was really easy to upload a child."

Confidence grew quickly thanks to the step-by-step training provided by the Pupil Pathways team, which Jen described as "brilliant":
"They felt so confident after they attended the training."

Karen Youds, Head of Operations at Pupil Pathways, explained:
 "Training is where confidence and consistency are built. We guide teams through real workflows, including role-based access, consent, uploading documents, and voice notes, so they leave the session knowing exactly what 'good' looks like. This shared practice ensures no child is left behind during transitions, reduces gaps in information sharing, allows timely preparation for SEND and safeguarding, and frees up more time to focus on the children's needs rather than chasing paperwork. All of this is having a real impact on the quality and success of every learner's transition."

THE SOLUTION AND IMPACT

Early feedback from receiving schools was immediate and positive, the benefits multiply when everyone uses the same secure system.

Leaders also see an additional advantage, a shared baseline for school readiness that supports moderation and CPD.

> **"This will give us a clear, consistent picture of school readiness and provide a strong shared baseline. When Reception teachers complete their assessments in the first half term, they'll be able to confidently compare them with nursery information to strengthen accuracy."**
> **– Claudia Rodrigues, Service Manager (Early Years) for Hounslow**

The pilot has already accelerated timelines for support. In Jen's cluster, a school was able to claim SEND inclusion funding earlier than usual because all the necessary information was available, enabling the application for this term rather than waiting until January. That provided an extra term of funding to support the child.

StepIntoSchool made this possible by allowing settings to upload documents, share voice notes, and provide detailed reports, the kind of information that drives faster, better-informed decisions.

Claudia also noticed a significant difference in school readiness, with headteachers reporting: "The feedback we got from headteachers in particular is that we've sent children who are better equipped and prepared because they had the right information at the right time."

Because many early years providers are private businesses, Hounslow addressed consent upfront.

Jen Rowe notes:
"We have actually created our own parent declaration template. Once that was in place, feedback from parents regarding the online system and GDPR compliance has been really positive."

As the team concluded,
"It is about that collaboration and that data sharing."

WHAT'S NEXT

Immediate priorities include widening participation (including childminders), improving on-time submissions, and moving to full-cohort usage so Nursery and Reception teams receive one consistent set of profiles. Jen adds:
"We can't wait for the full rollout."

Claudia is optimistic about the ongoing impact: "**One platform, one process.** Everything is more streamlined, and we will keep measuring impact year-on-year."

Hounslow's direction of travel is unmistakable, from paperwork to a shared, early picture of each child, so schools plan sooner, families repeat themselves less, and more pupils feel known before they set foot in Reception.

And as Hounslow show, good practice makes a huge difference to the quality and success of every learner's transition.

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