

## Case study

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**Sector** Education  
**Service** Software Delivery & Consultancy

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Nov 2022

## Creating a platform for stellar performance

A Star Attendance Solutions was set up in 2019 to help schools monitor, track and report on student attendance.



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Founder Jill Robson, having previously worked as a school attendance officer realised that there was an opportunity to create an easier, quicker and more cost-effective way of monitoring and reporting student attendance that would help identify and remedy problems more quickly to provide a better outcome for students and their learning.

### Our involvement

We have worked with A Star since its inception, initially offering advice; its original reporting system was providing a great resource to schools but required a lot of manual input and was limiting the opportunity to grow the business.

The overarching vision was to create an attendance reporting system that was simple to use and include integrated and automated data entry that could be accessed across any mobile device, for any school, of any size.

This would result in schools simply printing off the relevant letters or arranging meetings and reporting on the attendance visits the system suggests. In turn allowing attendance officers to focus on building relationships with pupils, parents and schools, rather than on the burden of data entry.

## **What we did**

The software platform we created automated the process entirely; reducing manual input errors and overhead costs and allowing those who needed it to have real time information on attendance.

We designed an Azure application utilising App Service, Azure Functions and a SQL database that is instantly scalable for A Star's growing needs. It is secure, encrypted, and importantly for a growing business, required no upfront capital investment.

Our proposed system was built in collaboration with A Star and GCX (a data aggregation service) before beginning an extensive testing programme to prove that the system performed as required, enabling A Star to confidently demonstrate it to existing schools.

Initial feedback was fantastic, and schools rapidly began to sign-up, but then Covid hit, meaning there were very few children in schools and therefore no longer a need for an attendance system.

We immediately agreed to put the wider roll-out on hold to help A Star through this commercially difficult time; after all, we were in it together!

As lockdown lifted, we started to test the system with two of A Star's longer term customer schools who immediately gave fantastic feedback. This was then used to go out to market, and quickly attracted dozens of schools from across the North East of England and beyond as national bodies began to take notice.

## **Results**

The platform is now being used by 52 schools in England to monitor the attendance of over 37,885 pupils daily, with one North East secondary school in particular witnessing a 2% increase in attendance since introducing the system (to benchmark, 0.5% improvement is considered to be outstanding).

The A Star System is the first and only available intelligent monitoring solution that helps teachers identify issues impacting attendance at an early stage, whilst consistently building bridges with families.

It offers a comprehensive solution to attendance monitoring, tracking, intervention and reporting by managing every aspect of pupils' attendance, without the need to produce endless reports.

The company has also grown to offer consultancy services to schools, supporting them with attendance challenges such as devising policies, helping with Ofsted inspections and engaging with both students and families to resolve issues.

We continue to provide operational support for the system and look forward to continuing our partnership as A star look to further develop the system to provide an even better service to children and schools.

We're proud that our work on A Star's system won the 'Best Use of Data' and 'People's Choice' award at the [2022 Dynamites Awards](#).

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