

Exchange	Business Development
Date of Meeting	09/07/2026
Location	Microsoft Teams
GMLPN Staff	Chloe Forrest, Hannah Bolsher
Chair	Zack Grimes – Consultant at ZGMC
Speakers:	Julia Benning PR PR for Training Providers Raising Profile, Building Trust and Demonstrating Impact
Attendees:	Alexandra Blake (MCC), Lynette Grindley (Growth Company), Ben Wilson (Top Training), Chris Wall (Smart choice training), Danielle Fernley (Mantra Learning), Alex Palmer (Skills Education Group), Danae Smith (MCC), Linda Howard (1st2Achieve), Michelle Chambers (CogniSoft), Laura Meakin (System People), Joanne (Pink Academy), Summer Hilton (Mantra Learning), Bev Matthews (DH Associates), Gemma Anderson Brown, Molly Gibson (Rise Up)
Key Themes / Discussion Points	

PR & Reputation Management (Julia Benning)

- PR is more than press releases; it helps build trust, reputation, visibility and recruitment.
- Focus on telling impact stories rather than simply describing activity.
- Every learner success, employer partnership and staff achievement can become a story.
- AI search tools (Google AI, ChatGPT, Copilot) are changing how organisations are discovered online.
- Positive, evidence-based content can help outweigh historic negative coverage.
- Build relationships with journalists and become a trusted source.

Social Media Changes

- Discussion around the proposed social media restrictions for young people and potential impact on recruitment.
- Concerns raised about supporting young entrepreneurs and learner-led businesses.
- Several providers noted they already target parents rather than learners through social media.
- Face-to-face engagement, careers events and school visits continue to be highly effective.

Recruitment & School Engagement

- Importance of maintaining strong relationships with schools.
- Providers shared examples of:
 - Careers fairs
 - School visits
 - Information packs for schools and parents
 - QR code campaigns
 - Parent engagement activities

Resources / Links Shared

- Learning Lunch (Marketing & PR): 9 September – Save the date, more info to come soon

Actions

For Providers

- Create a "story bank" of learner and employer success stories.
- Share news, awards, partnerships and case studies with GMLPN.
- Consider setting up a dedicated press enquiries email.
- Start planning content for key dates (Results Days, T Level Week, National Apprenticeship Week).

For GMLPN

- Share Julia Benning's presentation and contact details.
- Explore employer engagement as a future exchange topic.
- Continue promoting member stories through newsletters and social channels

Next Steps

- **GMLPN Network Meeting: 16 September, Bolton Stadium:**
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1992354755707?aff=oddtcreator>
- Future Business Development Exchange TBC