**Meeting Minutes – Flying Start Business Network**  
**Date:** 01/10/2024  
**Speakers:** Mike Kenny (NHS), Alistair Clarke MBE (Flying Start Advisor and Entrepreneur), Emma Bolton (Bolton HR), Glenn Duckett (Eat Grow Thrive)

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**1. Mike Kenny – Associate Director of Innovation and Industry Partnerships, NHS**  
Mike Kenny outlined how he supports businesses with innovative products in establishing connections with NHS clinicians and assists organisations in navigating the often complex process of selling to the NHS. He is open to hearing from Lancashire businesses that believe their products could be a good fit for the NHS and are seeking guidance or opportunities to engage with the healthcare sector.

Mike discussed the availability of grants and funding opportunities that can help organisations or projects in areas such as Lancashire. With staff shortages being a concern for the NHS, innovative products that improve system efficiency and alleviate pressure on staff are in high demand.

Mike emphasised the importance of careful planning and risk management when entering into partnerships with the NHS, and highlighted the benefits of testing and pilot projects as a way to secure NHS partnerships. While the process of selling to the NHS can be lengthy, Mike can provide practical advice and support to help businesses navigate the challenges and succeed in bringing their innovations to the healthcare system.

**2. Alistair Clarke MBE – Flying Start Advisor**  
Alistair Clarke, MBE, a Flying Start Advisor and entrepreneur, shared his extensive experience in journalism, PR, and marketing. He has trained journalists for ITV, Sky, and The Daily Mail and has established several radio stations, including Radio Wave FM, Wish FM, and Wire FM. Alistair has trained hundreds of journalists, focusing on building confidence and public speaking skills using techniques such as square breathing.

He advised on pricing services by evaluating overhead costs and understanding the client, whether they are individuals, community organisations, or corporate entities. Alistair highlighted the importance of focusing on the "3 M's" in marketing: Market, Media, and Message, and ensuring that the right audience is targeted.

**3. Emma Bolton – Founder, Bolton HR**  
Emma Bolton discussed her transition from a 20-year career with Blackburn with Darwen Council to founding her own HR business, Bolton HR. She explained how support from the Boost Flying Start programme helped her overcome challenges in planning and marketing. Bolton HR focuses on helping businesses manage their HR policies and procedures, especially for those who lack the time or expertise.

Her services include monthly retainers to assist businesses at any stage, particularly during periods of transformation or scaling. Bolton emphasised the importance of fostering company culture and investing in people, noting that investment doesn’t always have to be financial. She also offers coaching as part of her HR services.

**4. Glen Duckett – Owner, Eat Grow Thrive**  
Glen Duckett, owner of Eat Grow Thrive, shared his experiences as a social entrepreneur, channelling his energy into community-focused projects. With a background in environmental sciences and catering, Glen has taught people how to grow food and cook. He focuses on helping individuals with special educational needs access opportunities, particularly in catering. He believes that entry-level positions can help young people secure apprenticeships and revitalise communities. He has also worked on climate change initiatives, some of which have become national schemes.

Glen discussed his experience with business liquidation and how it shaped his approach to entrepreneurship. He emphasised the importance of resilience and mental health management, which led to the creation of a toolkit for navigating life and business challenges, *Growing Resilience*, with Richard Wallwork.

**Next Meeting:** 07/11/2024  
**Location:** Community CVS Boulevard Centre, Conference Room, 45 Railway Road, Blackburn BB1 1EZ  
**Prepared by:** Leah Harrison

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