

UFA Case Study: Legal Eagles Summer Challenge



This case study details a work related Summer Challenge for pupils in Key Stages three and four.

1 and year 2 trainee solicitors completing their legal training who are based at Wragge & Co.

The challenge takes place over five consecutive days and is worked in partnership between UFA Birmingham and Wragge & Co a large firm of solicitors specialising in corporate law based in Birmingham City Centre.

The challenge is for the young people to take part in a realistic simulation activity where they are asked to become solicitors acting on behalf of clients.

Legal Eagles Summer Challenge has run for three consecutive years and involves twenty four young people as participants, who have ranged in age from 13 – 17 with the majority being 15 – 17, one or two UFA tutors and two UFA Peer Tutors who have also experienced the course themselves. The course itself is also jointly organised and supported by a small team of year

Firstly they have to present themselves as a firm of solicitors who have to win a contract to represent a music company 'Stony Music'. They then have to draw up a contract between 'Stony Music' and their clients 'The Popstars' and negotiate with both parties in order for it to be accepted.



The purpose of the summer challenge:

- To extend the range of study support opportunities in Birmingham.
- To work in partnership with local businesses.
- To give the young people a realistic work related experience based in a real business and using their facilities.

Impact on young people:

Over the duration of the course its impact was evident, with a noticeable change in behaviour and motivation.

The end of course evaluations show that 100% of the young people had enjoyed the course and



felt that the skills they had developed would be useful to them in the future. 90% had gained in confidence and felt their team skills had improved. 80% felt they had learned to be more independent and were now better at learning from their mistakes.

This is what some of the young people said about the challenge:

'I have really enjoyed summer school and I would like to do it again. I have gained more confidence thanks to the presentation activity.'

'I really enjoyed myself. It really made the holidays interesting and it has also given me more idea of my future.'

For some young people it is clear that they would have preferred the criminal side of law rather than the corporate.

'It would have been more exciting if we were actually taken into a court, but overall it was wicked!'

'Do more to do with crime and serious crimes in court.'

There was no formal follow up activity to the Summer Challenge although where young people had been recruited through schools – evaluation reports were sent into school and all young people were encouraged to talk to their families and teachers about their experiences. Subsequently some young people applied to Wragge & Co to have a placement for their work experience.

The young people who attended were later

contacted to enquire whether they would like to be trained as Peer Tutors for Summer Challenges in general and for this one in particular. Some took up the offer and are now trained as Peer Tutors.

The Summer Challenge:

The five-day challenge took place in two venues. Both the board and business meeting rooms at Wragge & Co were used for three days and for two days work took place at another UFA venue. Young people were asked to wear smart 'office type clothes'. They worked with the UFA staff and the small team of trainee lawyers who were given some time off from their normal working day in order to support the young people. In the first year of the challenge the UFA staff introduced to the programme ways of learning new skills, so that the young people were all engaged. This process ensured that different learning styles were catered for alongside the legal input activity from the trainee solicitors. As each year has gone by the trainee lawyers pass on their skills and learning to the next set of trainees taking part and they have learned to make their input more interactive too.

Day by day:

The curriculum on the first day settles the young people in, gets them familiar with the whole challenge and introduces the concepts. The days have different timings, with the three days in Wragge & Co being long days and the third and fifth day having a later start and an earlier

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“I have gained more confidence thanks to the presentation activity.”

- Young people on the Legal Eagles Summer Challenge

finish. The challenge therefore takes twenty five hours but it is unevenly spread over the five days.

The challenge scenario is that the music publishers ‘Stony Music’ want to sign up the group ‘Popstars’ into their ‘stable’ of pop singers. Both Stony Music and The Popstars need a firm of lawyers to represent them.

Part one of the challenge is for young people to develop a ‘pitch’ presentation to Stony Music in order to get the contract to represent them.

In part two, they are presented with the scenario of negotiating a contract between Stony music and The Popstars.

The group of twenty four young people divide into four teams of six. Two teams represent Stony Music and two teams represent The Popstars. They then interview their clients and eventually negotiate the contract that is acceptable to both sides.

Outcomes:

- Young people come back to be Peer Tutors.
- Young people applied to the company for their school work experience.
- Young people learned about other jobs in the legal profession not just about corporate lawyers.
- The year two 2 trainee solicitors now help to train a new team of tutors for the course from the year 1 trainee solicitors.

Over the course of the three years the curriculum has been extended. One of the senior partners now gives a talk as to the professional aspects of a career in the law and talks about jobs such as paralegals and becoming a legal secretary.

Outcomes for the corporate partner included:

- Ethnic monitoring, leading to the encouragement of an ethnically diverse workforce.
- Widening participation

- Contribution to the city’s equal opportunities drive.
- Continuing professional development experience for their trainees where additional skills could be learnt.
- Contact with the public, in particular school-aged young people.
- Good publicity for shareholders.

The course generally achieved what it set out to do and the nature of the partnership between Wragge & Co has developed over the three years. It is now an established yearly event.



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Key elements of the challenge:

- A different environment.
- Working with real people.
- The kudos of working with a well-known and respected local firm.
- A serious and difficult challenge.
- Experience working with a career in mind.

How can I repeat this activity?

In theory, this particular challenge could be replicated wherever a partnership with a large company specialising in this type of law could be forged. All law firms will have trainee solicitors.

The partnership with other types of companies could be modelled using the main elements of this challenge. Logistically the company needs

to be prepared to give staff time for planning, training, evaluation and workshop time.

Advice on repeating this activity:

- Spend time developing the partnership with the business, company or firm taking part well in advance.
- Be clear what the advantages and outcomes are for both sides of the partnership and make sure that they are built into the programme.
- Try to have the summer challenge taking place in the premises of the partner where possible. This makes it very real for the young people taking part.
- Incorporate activities and routines which mirror the workplace or add to knowledge about the work in terms of career development.

- Be clear on timing both for the summer challenge, itself and for the set up and training process.

- Have clear ideas about what you want when you approach the partner.

- Be clear in your own mind what are the fixed elements and those that you are prepared to be flexible on.

- Be open to any ideas/ suggestions that the partner makes.

- Don't make assumptions about what a partner can give – ask for what you want – they are often very generous!

- Make sure that young people really understand what type of environment they are going into.



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