



**BISHOP
GROSSETESTE
UNIVERSITY**

11th September 2017

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Becca Bland
Chief Executive
Stand Alone
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Dear Becca

RE: The Stand Alone Pledge

I am writing this letter to confirm Bishop Grosseteste University is committed to the Stand Alone Pledge.

Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) is committed to being a community that welcomes and supports a diverse population of students and staff, with an ethos of mutual respect, trust and care. We are an open, forward looking community that celebrates diversity and welcomes students and trainees regardless of their race, disability, gender (and its reassignment), marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, age, or religion and belief.

The Quality Assurance Agency identified BGU's "integrated, institution-wide academic and pastoral support for students that supports the development of their academic, personal and professional potential" as an area of good practice in 2016¹. With a significant proportion of students from groups under-represented within Higher Education within our student population, this endorsement reflects the whole institution approach to facilitating student success at BGU. We currently provide estranged students support from application to graduation with support from our outreach, admissions, advisory, pastoral and employability teams.

The University offers a package of support to estranged students, in recognition of the additional needs that may arise from their circumstances. The support measures we offer include the following:

- Financial support
 - A £1,000 enhanced bursary is available to estranged students
 - The enhanced bursary aims to assist with costs of accommodation, e.g. security deposits and rent in advance.

¹ (Higher Education Review of Bishop Grosseteste University; The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, January 2016).

- Estranged students are a priority groups for support from the University's Learning Fund, which provides discretionary hardship payments.
- Accommodation
 - 365-day on campus accommodation available for estranged students
 - support with finding local housing, if required.
 - The University identifies and liaises with accommodation providers willing to waive the requirement for guarantors and security deposits where possible.
- Counselling/Mental Wellbeing support
 - free, confidential and independent counselling service available for students via Park Practise.
 - 24/7 support available via its subscription to the Big White Wall online service.
 - Academic teams aware of available support so that students can be reliably directed towards effective support during their studies
- Outreach
 - Next Steps 4 Study outreach programme identifies students facing barriers to education, including estranged students, in High Schools and Further Education
 - Aspiration raising through mentoring, to help students achieve their full potential.


In addition, the University intends to develop further support for estranged students through its outreach activities, and develop systems so that estranged students are able to disclose their circumstances at the earliest opportunity so that support can be put in place.

BGU makes its commitment to the Stand Alone Pledge in order to highlight the package of support outlined above, but equally embraces the opportunity to monitor, review and improve our services to estranged students. We are committed to developing excellence in the provision of support for all our students, and we welcome the Stand Alone Pledge as a means of focusing our response to the particular requirements of estranged students.

I am grateful for the opportunity Stand Alone has provided in launching the Pledge for estranged students, and wholeheartedly embrace the Stand Alone Pledge as a means to demonstrate supporting the achievements and success of students estranged from their families.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely



Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil

Vice-Chancellor