



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

21st March 2019

Susan Mueller
Project Director
Stand Alone
34B York Way
London
N1 9AB

Dear Susan

**The University of Lincoln's commitment to the Stand Alone Pledge:
to support estranged students**

As Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lincoln, we wish to publicly commit to the Stand Alone Pledge and support estranged students. Our students come from a diverse range of backgrounds to study in a supportive and inclusive environment. We are a modern, growing institution and place students at the heart of everything we do, working in partnership to achieve an exceptional student experience. We have a strong emphasis on employability skills, much of which is achieved through our student engagement activities.

We are aware that there is evidence that barriers exist that may prevent equality of opportunity for students who become estranged or disowned from their family or key family member. Research carried out by the Lincoln HE Research Institute in 2018 identified a group of eight estranged students whose participation in an action research project helped highlight the specific concerns and needs of estranged students at our institution. The findings echoed that of research by Stand Alone which identifies finance, accommodation, mental health and support as key areas of concern. One of our key findings was that estranged students were not always aware of the support that already exists at the University of Lincoln and we are keen to make the Pledge to Stand Alone to highlight our continuing support for students estranged from their family as they access, participate and succeed in higher education at our institution.

We are pleased to offer our public commitment to supporting students who are estranged from their families using our existing support measures which we detailed in our Access and Participation Plan 2019/20 including:

Support from our Student Funding Team, The Advice Service and the Student Wellbeing Team.

(cont.)



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Finance: We provide financial advice to estranged students via our Student Support Centre in relation to applying for funding and evidencing independent status.

We have a range of bursaries including the Foyer/Support Housing Bursary, the University of Lincoln Scholarship and the University of Lincoln Financial Assistance Fund (ULFAF) Term Time and summer.

Accommodation: We provide access to accommodation 365 days a year/52 weeks a year if required.

Waive requirements for accommodation guarantors where possible.

Mental Health: We have a well-established, free, confidential, counselling service and we provide access to Big White Wall's 24/7 online service.

We have a point of contact for estranged students through the Student Support Centre who can then refer or signpost students accordingly.

We are committed to developing our offer and reviewing it annually.

We recognise that estranged students often face a lack of understanding about family estrangement and feel apprehensive about disclosing their status. We aim to ask students at enrolment (from 2020) if they wish to self-identify with a range of groups, including estranged students. This will enable staff to tailor support more specifically to the individual needs of the student.

We recognise that assumptions about traditional families can deter estranged students from disclosing their status. We aim to better communicate our range of support to students who do not have access to family support through webpages, emails, social media and at Open Days and pre-applicant events.

We are delighted to be able to support the work of Stand Alone and to work towards improving the experience of estranged students at the University of Lincoln.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Mary Stuart
Vice Chancellor

Professor Liz Mossop
Deputy Vice Chancellor

Professor Mary Stuart CBE, Vice Chancellor