

Stand Alone  
34B York Way  
London  
N1 9AB

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to declare the commitment of The University of Southampton to the Stand Alone Pledge in supporting estranged students.

The University of Southampton aims to attract and nurture talented students from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. We seek to provide opportunities and support to our students across the whole student lifecycle to enable them to fulfil their potential, develop their ambitions, and make a positive contribution to the world.

We acknowledge the difficulties and challenges estranged students face with their finances, accommodation and mental health compared to their peers who are fortunate enough to have a safe and stable family safety net behind them. As a result, we have created a bespoke toolkit of support by offering a dedicated point of contact through both the University's Student Engagement team and the Students' Union Advice Centre to collegially guide and assist them from their pre arrival through to successful completion of their course.

Our financial support package is available to new students who commence their studies in 2018/19 in addition to existing support which includes but is not limited to:

#### **Finance**

- A bursary of £2,000.00 per year for under 25 year old undergraduates and postgraduates for their first year of study
- Students who apply and are awarded funds from the Student Support Fund may be eligible to receive additional financial support depending upon their assessment outcome.
- Assistance for students encountering difficulties in establishing independent student status through estrangement by helping them liaise with the relevant funding bodies.
- Budgeting guidance to help manage their income and expenditure if required.
- A Welcome Pack in their first year to help them settle in containing vouchers for Amazon, local supermarkets, an annual gym membership or bus pass as well as Students' Union vouchers to use towards any societies or in the campus shop.
- A graduation pack covering the cost of robe hire, photograph pack and a ticket to the Graduation Ball.

- Estranged students are also eligible to apply for a £1,000.00 bursary through the Aspire Awards which were purposely created for WP students to help fund projects to enhance their study and broaden their educational development.

#### **Accommodation**

- Guaranteed access to 365 days of accommodation in our Halls of residence
- Access to 24/7 support from our in house residence based Student Life team.
- Access to out of hours private rented support through our PRSupport service and evening drop in sessions at our halls sites across Southampton.
- A housing contract checking service should they wish to live in the private rented accommodation.
- And if necessary, to provide access to emergency halls accommodation to ensure they never find themselves without a place to stay.

#### **Mental health and wellbeing**

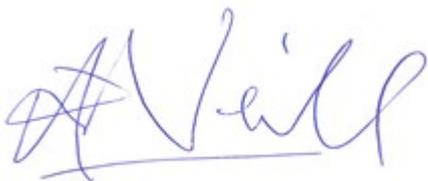
- We will work with staff across the institution to promote understanding in the challenges estranged students face and the support on offer.
- A dedicated point of contact within the Student Engagement team at the University and within the Student's Union for any estranged student wanting to discuss their circumstances.
- Signposting to the support available through our Enabling Services who offer daily drop in sessions with practitioners, one-to-one counselling appointments, Mindfulness and mental health workshops as well as academic skills support.

#### **Outreach and transition**

- The Widening Participation team are able to provide a dedicated point of contact for estranged students to support their application and transition to university.
- Individual visits are available and which provide the opportunity for estranged students to speak to our staff and students prior to application or enrolment.
- Estranged students who are interested in studying at the University of Southampton are encouraged to apply to the Access to Southampton programme in Year 12 or the first year of their A-Level studies. The programme includes a residential summer school and additional support with the transition to University.

The University of Southampton is proud to add our name to the Stand Alone Pledge and will strive to continually improve and adapt the provision we offer to our estranged students by giving them the best possible chance to succeed, irrespective of their background.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Neill', with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Alex Neill  
Vice-President (Education)