

To Whom It May Concern

Kingston University is proud to be taking the Stand Alone Pledge. As an institution, we are committed to supporting those students who are studying without the assistance and encouragement of a family network. We recognise that for these students, there may be specific and significant challenges to participation and success within higher education. At Kingston University we began offering financial and pastoral support to estranged students in 2010 as an extension of our enhanced and tailored support for care leavers through the KU Cares programme. In 2016/17 we are working with 43 students who are irreconcilably estranged from their families and anticipate that the number of students that identify themselves for support will continue to grow.

Kingston has a strong community outreach approach and is working with homeless charities and shelters to reach students who are coming to HE from an unstable family background. We offer estranged students a bursary to help them overcome financial struggles, a priority place in halls, accommodation over the holiday periods and a designated point of contact for advice and guidance, including referrals to internal and external support services.

In the future, our institution will work on internal outreach and identification of students for further support. We aim to break down the stigma around disclosing difficult family circumstances to staff and support professionals.

Furthermore, we will be working to improve our mental health provision for these students. Our current ideas include working with our internal and external counseling providers to give more comprehensive support, and to bring more students together to discuss their situations.

The person responsible for overseeing the pledge will be Emily Hughes, Access and Student Support Manager.

Working with Stand Alone and third sector has been extremely helpful in understanding the needs of these learners, further developing the support within our own institution and sharing knowledge and good practice across the sector.

Yours Sincerely



Professor Lesley-Jane Eales-Reynolds
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)