

10 September 2019

Ness Walk/Slighe Nis  
Inverness/Inbhir Nis  
Scotland/Alba  
IV3 5SQ

Susan Mueller  
Stand Alone  
34B York Way  
LONDON  
N1 9AB

T/Fn: +44 (0) 1463 279000  
E/Pd: eo@uhi.ac.uk  
www.uhi.ac.uk

Dear Susan

### University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) - Commitment to Stand Alone

The University of the Highlands and Islands is a unique, tertiary institution with a strong ethos of widening access and encouraging students from disadvantaged backgrounds to join us: this includes students who are estranged from their parents. The university is aware that entering further and higher education can be a daunting experience for any student, but if you are estranged and do not have support structures at home to help you, this can be an added pressure. The university is keen to ensure that all estranged students are fully supported during their time with us to have an enjoyable and enriching experience throughout their student journey.

Given the tertiary nature of our institution, many of our staff are already working with estranged students; however, an action plan will be developed to ensure there is consistency of support across our partnership of colleges.

Currently, the university has a number of key activity areas and services that benefit estranged students. These include:

- The contextualised admissions process, which is an inclusive approach whereby disclosed data relating to personal circumstances and background is used to identify applicants for additional consideration during the admissions process;
- Priority access to discretionary funds to assist those in financial hardship with daily costs;
- Access to wellbeing and counselling support for those students struggling emotionally and who would benefit from talking to someone or need strategies to cope with the challenges they face in their lives;
- A Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). All UHI students are assigned a PAT who is there to provide academic support and refer on to professional pastoral support;
- The university operates a student mentoring programme whereby new students can be paired with more experienced students and benefit from the valuable insights they have of studying at higher education level;



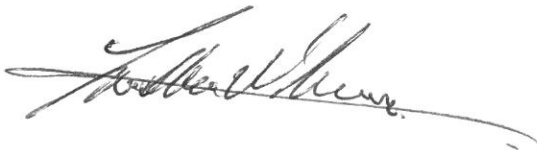
- The Priority Groups Forum, an internal partnership-wide practitioner group, will have a standing agenda item dedicated to estranged students whereby sectoral updates, best practice; and
- Access to a Careers and Employability Service whereby students can gain help with the development of their CV, interview preparation and guidance on their path after university.

Key areas of consideration within the action plan will include, but are not limited to:

- Development of a dedicated webpage for Estranged Students to find out more about the support on offer;
- Addition of a tick box on enrolment form to enable identification of estranged students which will then allow targeted support to be offered;
- Staff training/awareness raising via sessions during staff development days; and
- Investigation of the possibility of becoming a Unite Foundation member which would open scholarship opportunities for estranged students during their time at university.

The university is proud to commit to this pledge and we look forward to working with Stand Alone to ensure we meet the needs of our estranged students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Crichton Lang', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Professor Crichton Lang MRCVS | An t-Àrd-Ollamh Crichton Lang MRCVs**  
**Principal and Vice-Chancellor (Interim) | Prionnsapal agus Iar-Sheansalair(Eadar-amail)**