



University of  
Chester

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Dear Stand Alone,

Over the last 12 months the University of Chester has developed a support package that demonstrates our commitment to supporting and empowering estranged students so they can access higher education and have the opportunity to reach their full potential during their time at university. From the research you have conducted we know that estranged students are three times more likely to withdraw from University and approximately 30% are at risk of homelessness. We recognise the unique difficulties that those without family networks may face and are therefore keen to sign up to the Stand Alone Pledge.

The support package that we currently offer to our estranged students is as follows:

#### Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

Estranged students have a link member of staff based within our Wellbeing and Mental Health Team to support them with any pre-arrival queries they may have as well as continued support throughout their student journey. The Student Wellbeing Project Officer offers pastoral support as well as acting as a liaison between the student and their academic department, explaining university processes where necessary.

#### Access to support services

We encourage all of our estranged students to access the variety of support that is available to them throughout their time at Chester. To help facilitate this we have named contacts, within different teams across the institution, including our Careers & Employability and Study Skills teams. These contacts have an awareness of the difficulties that estranged students may be facing and meet regularly with the Student Wellbeing Project Officer.

#### Financial Support

The University of Chester has financial support in place for estranged students. This consists of a £1000 cash bursary, paid in three instalments over each academic year. Additionally, if an estranged student finds themselves in financial hardship during their studies, they will be encouraged to apply to our Financial Assistance Fund and will be prioritised throughout this process.

#### Accommodation Support

We recognise that a barrier to estranged students accessing higher education is the lack of accommodation options over the summer period. Therefore, we offer 365 days university accommodation for both care experienced and estranged students. Additionally, we offer a 50% discount on residential accommodation for estranged students.

## Peer Support

The University currently runs a successful peer mentoring scheme whereby current students in level 5 or level 6 are matched with new students beginning their studies. This scheme helps to reduce isolation for new students and ensures they have a friendly face during those first few weeks. Estranged students are prioritised throughout this process.

This support package has been communicated to our students, staff and stakeholders through information sharing on our intranet and external webpages. Contact details for the link member of staff, Becca Hughes ([r.hughes@chester.ac.uk](mailto:r.hughes@chester.ac.uk)), are also widely shared so students can get in touch.

The University of Chester looks forward to working with Stand Alone and our estranged students to help develop our support package further and improve the pastoral and practical support that we offer. We aspire to be a university where estranged students feel welcomed, valued, and understood throughout their student journey.

Yours faithfully,



Professor Eunice Simmons  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal