



The ESSC Campaign at Keele University and Keele Student Union

It's been 12 months since the very first Estranged Student Solidarity Campaign Week which was developed by the NUS and Stand Alone to raise awareness of the barriers and challenges of estranged students in Higher Education.

Keele University signed the Stand Alone Pledge in 2016 and we began to develop a package of support for students who are studying without the support of their family. Our Estranged Student Bursary was launched in September 2017 so we felt that the campaign week was the perfect opportunity to try and promote the support available and to try and engage with estranged students.

Here at Keele we have a very strong partnership with our Students' Union and work together on a range of campaigns throughout the year so we felt that our approach to this campaign should not be any different. We arranged a meeting which included the dedicated contact from Student Support and also the SU Welfare Officer at the time. We also invited our estranged students so they could feedback their experiences and issues to inform what we did as part of the campaign.

As a group we decided it was important to target both staff and students so we arranged a staff training session as well as an awareness raising stand in the Students' Union where we could talk directly to students. We also arranged a meeting with our students and the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Student Experience so that we could ensure that the students could get their message across to Senior Management.

The impact that the campaign had was unbelievable and that was mainly down to our students being willing to share their experiences. The social media campaign combined with the activities that we put in place reached over 12,000 people in one week!

We also managed to influence change at the University in response to the feedback from the students. As a result of the campaign new processes have been introduced to allow students to access on campus accommodation all year round and the Pro Vice Chancellor also supported a proposal from the Students' Union to develop a University Rent Guarantor Scheme, prioritising estranged students!

So that brings us to now! It's 12 months later and we are ready once again to stand **#WithEstrangedStudents** to support the Estranged Student Solidarity Campaign 2018.

So what have we got planned for this year? Well we are pleased to say we will be launching the Keele University Guarantor Scheme which was approved following the success of last years campaign, we will also be arranging a Coffee and Catch up for estranged student with the dedicated support contact and Welfare Officer from the Students Union as well as offering dedicated advice and support to help students plan for post-graduation with our careers team. We can't wait to see what the impact of this years campaign will be...watch this space!