



Office of the Vice-Chancellor

StandAlone
34b York Way
London, N1 9AB

24th August 2016

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing this letter to pledge the commitment of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) to the Stand Alone pledge.

Liverpool John Moores University has a long history of widening participation and supporting students from a diverse range of backgrounds to access and succeed in higher education. Since 2009, through our John Lennon Imagine Awards (JLIA) scheme, LJMU has offered a wide range of support to students who are estranged from their families. These students often struggle with retention and success in HE due to financial, material and emotional barriers. Many are at risk of homelessness during the summer period and lack the fundamental parental and family approval that students so often take for granted.

The University recognises that each student studying without the support of a family network is an individual, with different and often complex needs, expectations and aspirations.

Through the John Lennon Imagine Awards, the University is committed to working with students who are estranged from their families to develop an appropriate and effective package of support, tailored to their individual needs to support their continued success and wellbeing while studying at LJMU.

Support for estranged students through the JLIA is embedded across all parts of the student life-cycle and at all levels of the institution, ensuring staff in Schools, Faculties and Professional Services areas are aware of the unique needs of this group of students and are able to respond appropriately.

Young people who are estranged from their family, who are considering study in higher education, can seek specialist information, advice and guidance on all aspects of student life from a dedicated member of staff within Student Advice and Wellbeing Services, who is trained in supporting students without a family network. Furthermore, our Outreach team provide specific advice and guidance to estranged young people in schools and colleges to support them in considering higher education, including preparing a UCAS statement and accessing scholarships, and will make appropriate referrals to Student Advice and Wellbeing Services.

As part of our ongoing commitment, Liverpool John Moores University pledges to provide a range of support measures to assist estranged students. This includes, but is not limited to:

Dedicated financial assistance

- Students without the support of a family network, who meet the definition of an Independent Student as per the Student Support Regulations (2011), are eligible to access an annual bursary of £1000 through the John Lennon Imagine Awards scheme. Where students have faced difficulty in proving their status as an Independent Student for the purposes of Student Finance, we will work with the individual to resolve the situation and access the maximum funding available to them;
- Estranged students are identified as a priority group for the University's Student Support Fund (previously the Access to Learning Fund). The SSF provides discretionary support to students facing financial hardship and can cover a range of additional costs;
- Through the dedicated member of staff for estranged students and the Money Advice team, specialist financial advice (including budgeting advice) is provided including debt advice, maximising financial eligibility and targeted budgeting advice.

Support with accommodation

- Prior to joining the University, LJMU supports estranged students in accessing appropriate accommodation and can provide 365-day accommodation in an LJMU partner hall as standard;
- Applications to the Unite Foundation Scholarship scheme, offered in partnership with the Unite Foundation, is prioritised to estranged students and those who are currently homeless. LJMU currently offers 5 scholarships each year to new students. The Scholarship provides additional support through meeting the costs of accommodation in a Unite Students property and providing an annual bursary of £3000;
- When a student is unable to provide a guarantor to secure accommodation in an LJMU partner hall, the University will ask the accommodation provider to waive the need for a guarantor. LJMU offers a Deposit Loan scheme to students who are unable to provide a deposit. Estranged students are identified as a priority for this support;
- When a student chooses to live in non-LJMU partner accommodation, the University will support the student in securing suitable accommodation and, where possible, liaise with relevant landlords / accommodation providers to ensure that any barriers to accessing such accommodation are negotiated appropriately.

Recognising the mental health and wellbeing needs of estranged students

- LJMU recognises the unique mental health and wellbeing needs of students without a family network. Our Student Advice and Wellbeing Service offers support through the provision of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Worker and Counselling Service;
- Students seeking to access counselling and mental health support can access one-off drop-in sessions and ongoing support through self-referral or via the dedicated member of staff for estranged students or other staff member;
- When appropriate, the University will refer students to other agencies providing specific support for counselling and mental health issues. This includes, but is not limited to: Rape and Sexual Assault, LGBT support services and Arranged Marriage advice;
- Specific activities such as Mindfulness sessions, cultural and sporting activities and activities as part of Wellbeing Week are proactively promoted to estranged students throughout the academic year.

In addition to this support outlined above, LJMU ensures that all students who are eligible for support through the John Lennon Imagine Awards scheme receive a priority interview for roles as Student Advocates and Mentors. Through the World of Work Careers Centre, estranged students can access dedicated careers advice and assistance in developing their employability skills.

I am proud of the achievements of our students who are estranged from their families and are committed to their continued success. I am happy to pledge my commitment to working with our students and Stand Alone and to continue to develop this vital work for students who are estranged from their families.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely



Professor Nigel Weatherill DL, DSc, FEng, FRSA
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive