

Professor Janet Beer
Vice-Chancellor

Vice-Chancellor's Office
The Foundation Building
765 Brownlow Hill
Liverpool
L69 7ZX

T 0151 794 2003

j.p.beer@liverpool.ac.uk

www.liverpool.ac.uk

15th August 2017

Stand Alone
34B York Way
London N1 9AB

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to pledge the commitment of the University Of Liverpool to the Stand Alone Pledge.

As a University we are committed to supporting all students who study with us. We have a history of successfully supporting underrepresented groups, specifically care leavers and more recently carers and estranged students. We are aware of the additional pressures that students experience when they are estranged from their families and therefore don't have the support networks that most of us take for granted.

Our Student Welfare Advice and Guidance Team provides support for all students at the University and we are already working on tailored support to enhance the University experience for estranged students, support will include:

- A single point of contact within Student Welfare Advice and Guidance;
- Assistance for students who may be struggling to establish independent status based on estrangement by liaising with funding bodies;
- Provision of accommodation for 365 days per year;
- Provision of advice and support in relation to funding and finance.
- Introduction of a £1,000 bursary for each year of study;
- Provision of a named contact within Careers and Employability;
- Signposting and liaising with external agencies.

Financial Support

Undergraduate estranged students are entitled to a bursary of £1,000 for each year of study. In addition both undergraduate and postgraduate estranged students are eligible to apply to the University Hardship Fund (UHF). In cases where students are unable to provide sufficient evidence to prove their estrangement to Student Finance, applications to the UHF will be treated sympathetically and we will work with the student to try to ensure they can provide the evidence needed by Student Finance.

We will ensure that students are receiving all of the funding they are entitled to and will offer budgeting sessions in cases where the student feels unable to manage their income and expenditure effectively.

Accommodation

The University of Liverpool has a large amount of our own accommodation for students. Estranged students who require longer contracts due to being unable to return home during vacations will be offered accommodation for 365 days. In cases where a student will struggle to pay their deposit to secure their room payment may be deferred until after the receipt of student funding.

All of our University Halls have a team of Residential Advisers who are there to support our students during their stay. When arriving at halls, the Residential Advisers will make themselves known to all students to establish a point of contact within halls.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University Mental Health Advisors and Counsellors are actively involved in promoting positive mental health and provide a confidential support service for students experiencing a range of issues such as home and family relationships, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, bereavement and loss, sex, sexuality, relationship difficulties and loneliness as well as more complex or significant mental health difficulties.

Support is available through drop-in sessions, one-to-one counselling or support sessions, online CBT therapy or through a programme of themed workshops and groups. We are also introducing a free online 24/7 support service through Big White Wall which students can access directly on www.bigwhitewall.com using their University email account when they log in and we also have a free and confidential self-help cbt therapy programme, Silvercloud, which students can access by following the links from our website: www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentsupport/counselling/

Liverpool Guild of Students

The Guild is based at the heart of campus and is a place for all students to make friends and gain support. We will support estranged students to meet up and form a group which can become a source of peer support as well as have options to arrange relevant events and social gatherings. We will advertise details of how to join the group at the start of term and facilitate it to be led by students.

Widening Participation

At the University of Liverpool we are proud of our position as one of the most successful Russell Group universities for widening participation. Colleagues all across the University work hard to deliver outreach projects that attract and support young people from all backgrounds on to our degree programmes.

Central to the University's outreach work is the Widening Participation team who work with over 11,000 learners each year, nurturing talent and potential through projects and activities that raise aspirations, provide information and advice, and widen access to the University. Initiatives are targeted at those students who are under-represented in higher education, specifically learners from low participation neighborhoods and low income backgrounds, as well as learners from targeted cohorts, such as care leavers, disabled students, estranged

students, young adult carers, disadvantaged males and students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

University of Liverpool two year plan for estranged students

Over the coming two years we are committed to considering further measures of support.

Student Welfare Advice and Guidance will develop further support for estranged students by:

- Working closely with private sector accommodation providers to develop stronger links which will hopefully encourage flexibility regarding the need for guarantors.
- Improving promotional material available to estranged students by keeping our webpages up-to-date on latest news.
- Offering bespoke workshops for groups of estranged students on a range of topics including money management and applying for funding.

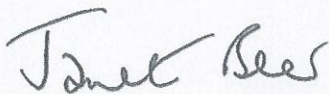
Our Widening Participation Team are producing a project plan which will engage with this cohort. The plan will include:

- Targeting young people who are predominantly aged 16 – 25, by contacting all schools and colleges within Merseyside and encouraging staff to refer young people to our service who have social issues that have led to estrangement;
- Engaging with Housing Associations within Merseyside; Hostels, Foyers/Shelters and Regional Charities that provide accommodation for young people;
- Utilising established links with Local Authorities to identify young people who do not have care status but have considerable social issues that may lead to Estrangement.

Once the individuals have been identified they will be offered a tailored package of support which will include information advice and guidance regarding Higher Education provision, and campus visits.

I am pleased to support the Stand Alone Pledge and look forward to seeing the benefits of these measures for our students.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet Beer'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.