



**SIR DAVID BELL KCB DL**  
**Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive**

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Susan Mueller  
Director  
Stand Alone  
Via email: [s.mueller@standalone.org.uk](mailto:s.mueller@standalone.org.uk)

Dear Susan

### **CLOSURE OF STAND ALONE CHARITY**

I am very sad to learn that Stand Alone will soon be closing. Here at the University of Sunderland, we have worked closely with the charity since you launched your higher education work in 2016.

We signed the Stand Alone Pledge in early 2017, as a public commitment to recognising and supporting our estranged students. Back then, we had identified 11 estranged students who worked closely with us to identify our priorities for Stand Alone Pledge. With support, guidance and encouragement from Stand Alone, we have further developed this work and are extremely proud that last year we supported 90 estranged students to achieve their full potential at our university.

Over a number of years, staff at the University have contributed to several Stand Alone national events. In addition, we have received a number of Stand Alone Pledge Awards. More importantly, Stand Alone has provided a national platform for the voices of our estranged students to be heard. Through your conferences, webinars and other events, our estranged students have found a safe and secure forum to share their experiences and influence change across the higher education sector.

Through this network our students have not only been visible and heard, but they have also been celebrated and welcomed. They have described speaking at these events as “empowering”, “amazing” and “being part of the national change”. We are so grateful to you for providing these opportunities to our students.

The work you have done to support estranged students is exemplary and I am sure you will look back on this time with a great sense of pride. You have left a legacy and a solid foundation for universities to develop this important work further. Estranged students are now included in the Office for Students Equality of Risk Register and will be considered within Access and Participation Plans for institutions across the country. So much of this is thanks to the important work carried out by Stand Alone.

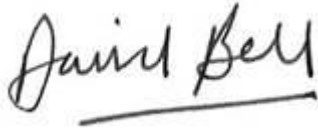
Now it is time to ‘hand over the baton’ and I would like to share with you our continuing commitment to advocating for, and driving forward, the development of support for estranged students. At the University of Sunderland, estranged students are – and will continue to be – an integral part of our strategic commitment to ensuring that university is accessible to all.



We will be participating in the 'Stand Alone Legacy Pledge' campaign when we will make this Legacy Pledge public.

Once again, my sincere thanks for the important work you have done at Stand Alone to support estranged students nationally.

My kindest regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**SIR DAVID BELL KCB DL**  
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