

21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

Becca Bland  
Chief Executive  
Stand Alone  
34B York Way  
London N1 9AB



Dear Becca,

I am writing to pledge the commitment of the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) to the Stand Alone Pledge,

All activities delivered by UWS are inclusive and our aim is to raise awareness of the opportunities available and the benefits of higher education. We realise that pupils from families that have no history of further or higher education face many additional barriers to learning and this includes Estranged Students who have no family contacts. At UWS we offer information, advice and guidance before, during and after their time at UWS to support them on their learning journey and into employment.

The Widening Participation (WP) Team will take the lead in expanding its provision and support to include Estranged Students. At UWS, the WP Team work closely with the Admissions team developing and embedding appropriate provision for all vulnerable groups. We engage with all applicants who have applied to UWS from vulnerable groups and who have received either a conditional or unconditional offer and provide them with information on the support available to them at UWS. They are invited to join the Buddy Programme, our student mentoring initiative which provides support from a Student Mentor during their first year at University. Estranged Students will also have the opportunity to receive this support.

We understand that Estranged Students have similar problems to our Students who are Care Leavers. As a result of ongoing support for this group over the past eight years we achieved the Buttle Quality Mark. We have raised the profile of our provision externally and internally and there is a greater awareness of the support available for both staff and students within UWS and the issues that affect them. We commit to creating and disseminating information on Estranged Students on a similar basis.

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#### Executive Group

Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Craig Mahoney

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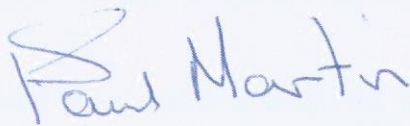
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The dedicated contact for Estranged Students is Jane O'Rorke, Senior Widening Participation Development Officer and she will develop an action plan to be implemented over the two year lifetime of the pledge.

Appendix (i) outlines the support offered in the four key areas of finance; accommodation; mental wellbeing and outreach and transition and this will be developed to include Estranged Students.

We are proud to be associated with Stand Alone and look forward to working with you to ensure a positive experience for Estranged Students at UWS.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Paul Martin, CBE  
Depute Principal and Vice Chancellor



## **Stand Alone Pledge - UWS July 2017**

### **Appendix (i)**

**Information on support available at UWS for the following key areas:**

#### **Finance**

The Funding and Advice Team are one of the professional teams that make up Student Services. They support all students with budgeting and other financial advice.

They provide:

- useful information, resources and links on webpages so that students can prepare ahead for their university journey, both in terms of student funding and in budgeting and managing your money
- a team of specialist advisers available to help with any more complex student funding eligibility enquiries, such as repeating years or getting back on track if things go wrong
- support with money management skills and financial capability. By avoiding money mishaps or stresses, students are more likely to focus on their studies. These skills are also useful for life after graduation.
- a number of funds to help students through their studies, such as discretionary funds, childcare funds and trust funds
- pre-entry support on funding enquiries

#### **Accommodation**

At UWS:

- we provide 52 week accommodation for Care Leavers and this arrangement will be extended to Estranged Students
- the Senior WP Development Officer work in partnership with Accommodation Staff and Throughcare Workers from Local Authorities to ensure accommodation where needed and that funding is in place
- the Student Residence Team ensures that your stay in our residences is safe and a positive experience
- Student Warden's provide an out of hours service and also organise events

#### **Mental Well Being**

There is a range of support available through Student Services to UWS students to encourage mental wellbeing. Our Counselling staff offer:

- Wellbeing drop-in sessions
- information and support on learning mindfulness
- a wide range of self-help resources
- an online self-help programme called SilverCloud, for help with issues such as stress, anxiety and depression
- Counselling sessions
- support and help in becoming physically active
- referral to other university services

- information about specialist help available outside the University

## **Outreach and Transition**

The UWS Widening Participation Team:

- has a wide range of activities which are delivered on campus and on an outreach basis in schools, colleges and in the community
- works in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland; Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, the West of Scotland Care Leavers Forum and Community Planning Partners to address the needs of those thinking about coming to university
- offers information, advice and guidance to those working with vulnerable groups so ensure that prospective students make an informed choice for their progression to further and higher education.

Many of our students progress to degree level study through the college route and UWS has a specific remit to develop a sustainable infrastructure that supports articulation for college students across the region. In doing so the University has:

- established strong partnerships and collaborative initiatives between colleges, universities and employers
- College Engagement Advisors who are committed to support students who will articulate to our degree programmes via Further Education Colleges
- Support for students who progress to UWS from Scottish Wider Access Programmes from local colleges