



The University of Manchester

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Susan Mueller

Director

Stand Alone

s.mueller@standalone.org.uk

Dear Susan,

Re: Closure of Stand Alone Charity and Stand Alone Legacy Pledge for Estranged Students at the University of Manchester

We were saddened to hear about the upcoming closure of the Stand Alone charity, which has done so much to advocate for adults who are Estranged from their Families. In particular, the work of the StandAlone HE Pledge to encourage Universities to consider how they are supporting their Estranged Students has been pivotal for the sector.

The University of Manchester have been holders of the StandAlone Pledge since 2019, and we remain committed to offer specific support to students who are estranged from their families and recognise the important work StandAlone have led to advocate for this community.

We want any students who wish to study at the University of Manchester to be able to succeed on the courses they are studying on, regardless of the barrier they have had to overcome to access University. It will be a legacy of the work of StandAlone that we continue to offer specific support to Estranged Students in the form of: a named contact to support with any queries, a monthly Independent Student Newsletter, social events and access to our Undergraduate Access Scholarship.

As outlined in our original StandAlone Pledge, The University recognises estranged students as a target group within our Access and Participation Plan across the student lifecycle, from access through to progression into graduate employment or further study.

Finance

Estranged students who meet the income eligibility threshold will receive our Manchester Bursary which provides students with up to £2,000 p.a. for the duration of their studies. Estranged students are also able to access additional financial support from the University's Living Cost Support fund and have been identified as a priority group to receive this support, particularly during the summer vacation.

In addition to this, since 2020/21, Estranged Students have been eligible for an additional £1000 a year through our [The Undergraduate Access Scholarship](#): recognising the need for additional financial support for those studying without family networks

Accommodation

We have extended the 365-day accommodation offer which is available for care-experienced students to estranged students. We are also committed to reducing the financial burden for students through removing the need for a deposit for university accommodation.

Mental Health and Well-being

The University's well-being strategy aims to create an environment where every member of the University community is supported to feel good and function well. We have implemented the Six Ways to Well-being based on the New Economics' Five Ways to Wellbeing, a set of evidence-based actions that promote well-being in everyday life. Where students are in crisis, they can access support from the University's Counselling Service which offers confidential help with any personal issues affecting study, self-esteem, relationships, sexuality, mental health and general well-being.

The University is one of the partners in the new Greater Manchester Student Mental Health Hub (which I co-chair), the UK's first regional student mental health referral centre. We will provide guidance to staff in our Counselling Service and Student Mental Health Hub to ensure there is full awareness of the issues faced by estranged students. The University of Manchester's Students' Union also offers a confidential Advice Service and we will work with the Students' Union to establish a peer support group for estranged students.

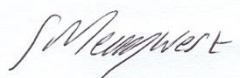
Outreach and transition

The University has a well-established programme of outreach activities to support access to higher education and into The University of Manchester specifically. Estranged students are one of the priority groups for our Manchester Access Programme, a targeted access initiative for students in Greater Manchester which has welcome over 2,000 students from under-represented backgrounds into the University. The University uses contextual data to make lower offers to students from areas of low participation and schools/colleges where attainment is below the national average. We have worked with UCAS to raise awareness of contextual data amongst teachers and advisors which will be increasingly important for estranged students when they are now able to indicate this on their UCAS form.

The University of Manchester is fully committed to supporting estranged students and we pledge to maintain the support we currently offer for estranged students and continue to search for ways we can develop this support in the future.

Finally, my colleagues join me in wishing you and your team all the best for the future and thank you again for the valuable role that Stand Alone has performed.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Simon Merrywest
Director for the Student Experience