

08 April 2019

Dear Professor Richardson,

**The Stand Alone Pledge to support estranged students – a public commitment**

I am writing to you today to request a meeting to discuss with you how the University of East Anglia can take the Stand Alone Pledge to support estranged young people in higher education.

I am doing so following the coverage of your university in The Times on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019, which used a case study from UEA outlining her poor experience in finding support at your institution. This journalistic work was led by a student from UEA, Chris Matthews, who has noted the frustration that estranged students in the institutional community are feeling.

The Stand Alone Pledge aims to change outcomes for estranged students, facilitating the development of better services to support them with their unique struggles.

This might be a bursary to prevent students falling into homelessness over summer – a time when many students are expected to 'go home'. Or it might be 365 day access to university accommodation, or better access to mental health services.

It also raises awareness of estrangement amongst staff and helps to promote support available to those students who may need it.

Forced marriage, LGBTQI+ rejection, and divorce and remarriage are key reasons why young people become estranged or are rejected by their family. Whatever their background, it is undoubted these students are some of the most vulnerable young people in our university communities.

Unlike care leavers, [our research in partnership with Student Finance England](#) in 2015 showed that there is a lack of any kind of social service intervention in roughly 60% of estranged student cases.

[SLC data](#) from 2017/18 identified over 30 officially recognised estranged students studying at the University of East Anglia that academic year. We know these numbers are likely to be higher as many estranged students remain hidden because they fall outside of the SLC processes to evidence estrangement.

34B York Way, London, N1 9AB.

Registered Charity Number: 1154710

[www.standalone.org.uk](http://www.standalone.org.uk)

[Our research](#) also found that over 30% of students had registered homeless or had considered registering homeless before their course began and also struggle with homelessness once on course, especially during the summer vacation months. As Beth Bacon, the student at the University of East Anglia featured in today's [Times Article](#) *'Universities 'failing to support' students cut off from families'* says, she "often has to sofa surf between different relatives and friends' houses".

I would be delighted to meet with you to discuss how the University of East Anglia can further develop support for estranged young people at key points across the student lifecycle and enhance the success and experience of its estranged students as part of its Stand Alone Pledge commitment.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your availability.

Yours sincerely,



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