

Ms Michelle Donelan
Minister of State for Universities
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

09 April 2020

Dear Ms Donelan

Covid 19: Urgent support required for estranged and care-experienced students in higher education

This is an urgent call for supporting estranged and care-experienced students in higher education. Both groups of higher education students are disproportionately affected by this Covid 19 crisis as they have no family support network.

The Scottish Government has established an emergency fund to financially support students facing hardship as a result of Covid 19.

We ask government to provide a special emergency fund to assist estranged and care-experienced students in England and enable them to continue and succeed in their studies this academic year.

We know from estranged and care-experienced students that they are struggling financially due to the loss of employment which they rely on to top up their student finance. In addition, many do not have access to the necessary equipment and software for remote study and are worried about progressing on to the next academic year or graduation.

These students are also telling us that they fear becoming homeless through losing their accommodation and are struggling with the effects of increased isolation, loneliness and anxiety about their immediate and long-term futures.

We have already written to University Vice Chancellors and College Principals and would ask government to reiterate with higher education providers that they recognise estranged and care-experienced students' needs in their Covid 19 support measures for mental health and wellbeing, accommodation and remote study equipment.

We look forward to you taking the needs of this group of students seriously, ensuring they are supported in progressing with their studies during this challenging time.

Would you be open to a digital meeting with key stakeholders representing students without family support?

Yours sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a series of loops and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

Rebecca Bland
Chief Executive
Stand Alone

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A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style that reads "Debra Clothier".

Debra Clothier
Director
NNECL

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