

Independent and Estranged Students

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The Midlands Region

Session Contents

This session will provide delegates with a detailed briefing on the application, assessment and evidence requirements specific to independent and estranged students:

Content will cover **six key areas** that are fundamental to the application journey of independent students:



1. Independent Reasons



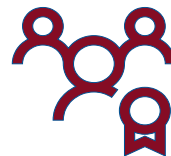
2. Evidence Requirements



3. Overview of Estrangement



4. The Role of Estrangement Assessors



5. Contacting the Independent Team



6. IAG Resources

Independent and Estranged Students

Independent Student Reasons
and Status Evidence Requirements

Reasons for Independent Status

Typically, a student under 25 will be sponsored by their parents, in order for their application to be fully means tested:

However, if they qualify for independent status, students **do not need to** provide these financial details to be assessed for the higher level of support and these situations include:

- Estranged from both parents
- Care Leaver
- Self supported for three years prior to start of course
- Parents can't be found/unable to be contacted
- Both parents deceased
- Sponsoring parent is deceased
- Parents are outside of the EU, and it is not practical to contact them



Independent Status Evidence 1

Independent Reason	Evidence
Parents can't be found Not practical to contact	Letter from a professional person confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical conditions which prevent sponsor(s) from providing financial information and; • Confirmation that there is no Power of Attorney or Deputyship Order in place
Estrangement	Letter from a professional person or estrangement form confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their relationship to the student and length of time they have known the student (usually 12 months, but we can look at this on a case by case basis). • Confirmation of the student's estrangement from both parents and when this occurred • Current contact levels with the student's parents and if reconciliation is likely
Care Leaver	Letter from a local authority, social worker, or leaving care team confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student is a care leaver • That they were looked after by a local authority • The dates they were in care • That they have not returned to the care of their parent(s) prior to first day of the AY

Independent Status Evidence 2

Reason	Evidence
Both Parents Deceased	Both parents death certificates and student birth certificate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If unable to provide this, we can accept a letter from a professional person
Contributing Sponsor Deceased	The death certificate of the contributing (linked) sponsor
Parents Abroad (Jeopardy/Not practical)	Letter from a professional person confirming parents live outside of the EU, and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of their financial circumstances could place them in jeopardy or it is not reasonably practical to contact their parents or send them money
Self Support	Three years worth of financial evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (E.g. P60s, final payslips, HMRC statements, DWP statements) We also need a breakdown of their employment history to ensure a full 36 months is covered, if this has not already been provided when the student applied

Acceptable Third Parties: A Professional Person

Students applying for independent status are provided a list of acceptable third parties who can support their application:

- The third party **must be** a person of good standing, be fully aware of the student's situation, not be related to the student, and not live with the student

Examples of **commonly nominated third parties** include:

- Social Worker/Support Worker
- Counsellor
- Medical Doctor
- Student Welfare Officer
- College or University Support Team

The person who provides evidence must:

- be a person of good standing in the community
- be fully aware of your situation
- not be related to you (by birth or marriage/civil partnership) or in a relationship with you
- not live at the same address as you

These are common examples of people you might know who can provide evidence:

- Accountant
- Architect
- Bank or Building Society Official
- Barrister
- Chairman/Director of a company
- Chemist
- Chiropodist
- Civil servant
- College/University Support team
- Minister of a recognised religion
- Nurse
- Officer of the Armed Services
- Optician
- Paralegal
- Paramedic
- Personal License holder
- Pharmacist
- Police Officer

Independent Student sfe

Examples of acceptable third parties

The person who provides evidence must:

- be a person of good standing in the community
- be fully aware of your situation
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- Chiropodist
- Civil servant
- College/University Support team
- Minister of a recognised religion
- Nurse
- Officer of the Armed Services
- Optician
- Paralegal
- Paramedic
- Personal License holder
- Pharmacist
- Police Officer
- Post Office official
- President/Secretary of a recognised organisation
- Prison/Probation Officer
- Salvation Army Officer
- Social/Support worker
- Solicitor
- Student Welfare officer
- Surveyor
- Teacher
- Trade union officer
- Tutor/Lecturer
- Vet

Just in case list: there are other professional people who could provide evidence. If you know of one from a professional not listed here, send this for us to review.

Independent Status Evidence: Self Support

A student can apply as independent on the basis of self support if they can provide evidence showing they have supported themselves for **any period of 36 months before the first year of their course**:

- A student must be able to prove that they have earned enough to **support themselves** during the period in question using income or savings acquired from employment, self employment or benefits

Evidence we can accept (this is not exhaustive):

- P60s, Week 52/53 payslips or Month 12 payslips
- Statement of Earnings from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) or Statement of Earnings from employer
- A letter from their local Jobcentre Plus or Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) confirming the specific periods of any/all benefit entitlement they have received
- Acceptable benefits include: PIP, DLA, UC, ESA, JSA

Independent and Estranged Students

Care Leaver and Estranged Student Status

Care Leavers

By SFE definition, a care leaver is someone who from any point from the age of 16 to the first day of the first academic year (AY) of their course **has not been under the legal care of their parents**, and;

- For three months or more, they have been in the custody or legal care or have been given accommodation **by a Local Authority**, including being placed in foster care

A letter from a Local Authority, social worker, or leaving care team can be **accepted as evidence** of care leaver status and should confirm the following:

- That the students were looked after by a Local Authority
- Dates they were in care and that they have not returned to care of their parent(s) prior to the first day of the AY

We are **unable to grant care leaver status** for students who are under the care of another family member, or who have been in supported housing (such as YMCA):

- However, these students may still be deemed as **independent for another reason**


Care Leavers: Local Authority Letters

A common issue with Local Authority letters received is that they **do not** cover the three essential consideration factors for assessment as a care leaver:

Local Authority Letters: A good practice example

This example Local Authority letter confirms that the student is a care leaver and addresses **all three** essential assessment points:

- That they were looked after by a Local Authority
- The dates they were in care, and;
- They have not returned to the care of their parent(s) prior to the first day of the first AY

 Private & Confidential	Personal Adviser Integrated Youth Support Service Parkfield House Torquay Town Hall, Castle Circus Torquay, TQ1 3DR My Ref: Your ref: Telephone: Fax: Website: www.torbay.gov.uk Date: 19/11/2020
	To whom this may concern Re: Joe Low D.O.B 13/05/2001 SFE CRN :- 12345678964

To whom this may concern Re: Joe Low D.O.B 13/05/2001 SFE CRN:- 12345678964	Leaver, under Section 24 of the Children Act 2000, has been looked after by the Local Authority (Torbay Council) since he was 13 years old and as of his 18 th birthday will be supported by the Care Leavers service provided by the Local Authority. His has not returned to the care of his parents. He will receive general support and guidance from the Care Leaver Teams until his 25 th birthday. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information
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Estranged Status

What is Estrangement?

- The relationship between a student and both their biological/adoptive parents has **irreconcilably broken down** and reconciliation is highly unlikely

What is not Estrangement?

- The student's parents are refusing to provide financial information or if the student has simply moved out of their family home

Evidence requirements: A completed **Estrangement Declaration Form** or a **signed and dated letter** from a professional person can be accepted as evidence to support an application for estrangement and this evidence must confirm:

- The third party's **relationship to the student** and the length of time they have known them
- Confirmation of the student's estrangement **from both parents** and when this occurred
- Current contact levels with the students' parents (if any) and **if any reconciliation is likely**

Estranged Status: Confirmation of Estrangement Form

Where applicable, students will be able to access and download a Confirmation of Estrangement Form **via their online accounts** or alternatively, the form can be accessed through www.sfenland.slc.co.uk/estrangement:

2023/24

Confirmation of
Estrangement form

About this form

You need to complete this form to confirm that you're estranged from your parent(s). To be considered estranged from your parent(s), you need to show that you have no contact, or very limited contact, with your biological or adoptive parent(s) and this is not likely to change. We understand estrangement can be for many different reasons.

Some common examples of estrangement are:

- You are living with friends, or with other family members such as aunts/uncles/grandparents, and they have recently passed away.
- You have only ever known one of your parents and they have recently passed away.
- You still have very limited contact with your parent(s) for specific reasons, for example keeping in contact with siblings.

This isn't an exhaustive list. We review all applications on a case-by-case basis.

! For more help and information go to: www.standalone.org.uk/guides/student-guide
You can still be assessed for a Tuition Fee Loan and some Maintenance Loan until we can confirm your circumstances.

How to complete this form

This form is split into three sections:
Section 1 - Complete your details and confirm how your third party will be using this form then pass the form to your third party.
Section 2 - Your third party needs to complete this section.
Section 3 - If you want your third party to provide details of your estrangement on this form, they also need to complete this section.
Third party declaration - Your third party needs to sign and date this declaration before passing the form back to you.
Student declaration - Check the information provided by your third party is correct. Sign, date and return this form.
 Read the information below to find out who can act as your third party.

Who can be a third party

This form needs to be completed by 'an independent person of good standing in the community' who knows the details of your estrangement from your parent(s). This could be:

- your university/college lecturer
- a teacher
- your support worker
- your social worker
- a doctor

- a solicitor
- your Welfare Advisor
- your university/college's named contact for estranged students

This person can't:

- live at the same address as you
- be related to you by birth or marriage/civil partnership
- be your partner

Section 2 To be completed by the third party

Information for the third party

Read **'Who can be a third party'** on page 1 and make sure you fit the criteria. Complete **section 2** of this form. If the student has answered **'Yes'** to **question 1.3**, also complete **section 3**. Sign and date the **declaration**, then pass the form back to the student. To find out how we'll use the information you provide go to www.gov.uk/studentfinance to read our Privacy Notice before completing this form. The Third Party will not be held liable for any inaccuracies provided on this form regarding the estrangement details.

2.1 Your details

Full name

Current employer and occupation

Work address

Postcode

Contact phone number (including area code)

Work/business phone number

Email address

Years Months

2.2 How long have you known the student?

If you have known the student for less than 12 months, you may wish to see evidence of their circumstances.

Section 2 To be completed by the third party

2.3 What is your relationship to the student?

2.4 When did you first become aware of the student's estrangement? Month Year

2.5 Does the student have any contact with either parent? No Yes

2.6 Has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months? No Yes

Section 3 To be completed by the third party

3.1 If the student has given you permission to do so, tell us your understanding of their estrangement and when this happened.

- What is their current situation?
- What led to them being in this situation? (This information isn't mandatory, but it may help us to process the application more quickly.)
- Confirmation that the student isn't in contact with either parent.

Continue on a separate sheet of paper if you need to.

Third party declaration

This declaration should be read, signed and dated by the third party who completed sections 2 and (if applicable) 3. By completing this declaration I confirm that:

- I do not live at the same address as the student;
- I am not related to the student by birth, marriage or civil partnership;
- I am not in a personal relationship with the student (for example, they are not my partner); and
- to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information I have provided is true and complete. If it is not, I understand the student may have their financial support withdrawn.

Your full name (in BLOCK CAPITALS):

Your signature Today's date (DDMMYYYY)

Now pass this form back to the student

Confirmation of Estrangement Form: Points of Note 1

Confirmation of Estrangement Form: **Points of Note for HEP Support Advisers**

Section 2.1: We need the full name, employer, occupation and contact details for the supporting third party

- These details enable us to contact a third party directly should we **need to query** any of the information provided

Section 2.2: Asks how long you have known the student

- We would usually expect this to be 12 months, but for HEP staff we would accept **any period of time**

Section 2.3: Relationship to student

- For most HEPs we can accept a job title such as **HEP Student Welfare Adviser or similar**

Section 2.6: Asks has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months

- **If the answer is No**, then we will be in a position to award estrangement
- **If they have been** it is important to give details around this, if this has been limited and for a specific purpose we may still be in a position to award estrangement

Confirmation of Estrangement Form: Points of Note 2

Confirmation of Estrangement Form: **Points of Note for HEP Support Advisers**

Section 3: Gives the third party the opportunity to provide additional detail around the student's situation

- A supporting third party **does not need to** provide an abundance of detail here
- We don't want too much personal information being shared when we may already have enough information to make a decision, we just need clarification that the student **is not in contact with both parents**
- This is **particularly important** for more recent estrangements, or if there is some sporadic contact with parents
- It is also important that reference is made **to both** biological or adoptive parents
- Some students may not have known one of their parents, but it is important to again **mention both parents** on the completed form

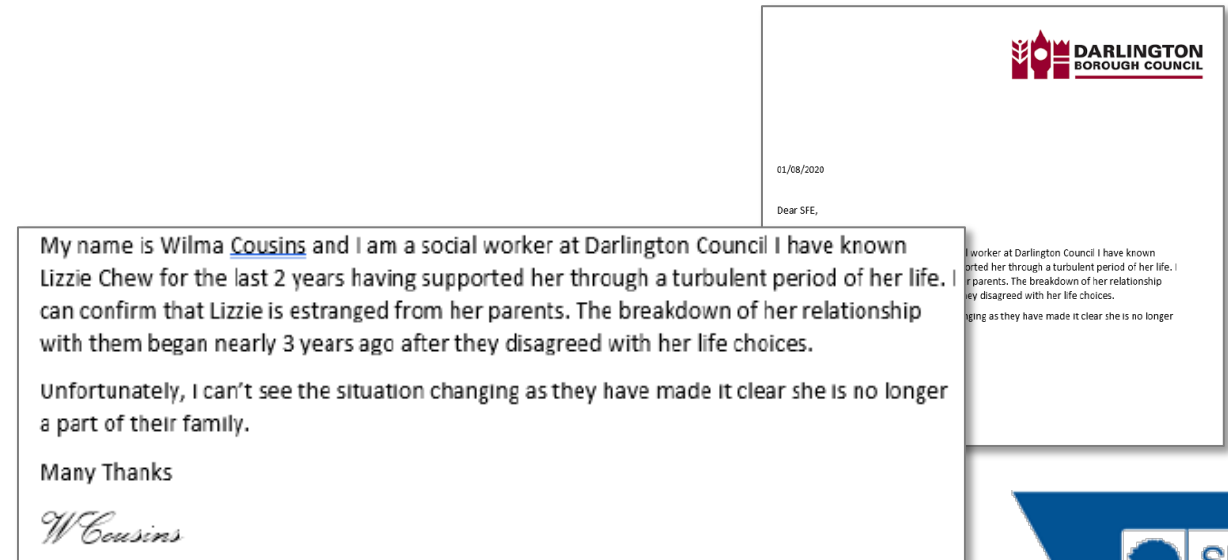
Estranged Status: Third Party Letters

Applications for estranged status are assessed on a case-by-case, and all supporting evidence (police incident reports etc) can all help form **the complete picture** of the student's circumstances:

- Estrangement Assessors can also review cases for students who **can't provide** 'standard' evidence of estrangement

Example of an **acceptable third party letter** to support a student's application for estranged status, which confirms key details including:

- **The role** of the supporting third party
- Details of **their relationship** with the student
- The student's **estrangement from both parents**
- That **reconciliation is unlikely**



Independent and Estranged Students

Awarding Independent Student Status

Duration of Independent Status Award

When a student is initially awarded independent status they will receive confirmation in a email stating the independent reason and if this award is **for one academic year** or **for the duration of their studies**:

Summary table of independent status reasons and evidence frequency requirements:

Independent Reason	Evidence Needed Every Year?
Parents Can't Be Found	Yes
Estrangement	Sometimes
Both Parents Deceased	No
Sponsoring Parent Deceased	Status awarded for one year then will move to another independent reason or become dependent
Parents Outside EU	Yes
Self Support	No
Care Leaver	No

Confirmation of Independent Status

The email sent to students will detail **when** the independent status was first confirmed, **for how long** the student has had independent status granted, **for what reason**, and will signpost to their University or College to seek additional support:

- Options, such as Change of Circumstances can be added/removed to the email text **where appropriate**
- Students may need this advice if they have selected 'parental rate' but have been awarded independent status and therefore may be entitled to additional Maintenance Loan support

Estrangement may only be awarded **for one academic year** if:

- The estrangement **is recent**
- Reconciliation **may be likely**
- Standard evidence **could not be provided** and independent status has been awarded following a telephone review with an Estrangement Assessor

Independent student status granted for academic year 2021/22

We've assessed you as an independent student because you're irreconcilably estranged from your parents.

You may want to take this letter to your university or college as confirmation of your status. They may be able to offer you further financial support and advice.

We may ask you for new evidence in future academic years.

You have been awarded "parental rate" maintenance loan as initially requested. As you have been awarded independent status you may be entitled to additional funding. Please complete the attached CO1 form to indicate your living locations for each term.

Yours sincerely

Student Finance England

Independent and Estranged Students

Example Scenarios

Would Estranged Status be Awarded?

Would Estranged Status Be Awarded? Scenario 1

From the third party information and evidence provided on these example Confirmation of Estrangement Forms, would the student in question be awarded estranged status and if so, for what duration?

Section 2 To be completed by the third party	
2.3	<p>What is your relationship to the student?</p> <p>University Welfare Adviser</p>
2.4	<p>When did you first become aware of the student's estrangement?</p> <p>Month Year</p> <p>0 3 2 0 2 2</p>
2.5	<p>Does the student have any contact with either parent?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p> <p>A few times a month at the family home.</p>
2.6	<p>Has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p> <p>As above. A few times a month at the family home.</p>

Section 3 To be completed by the third party	
3.1	<p>If the student has given you permission to do so, tell us your understanding of their estrangement and when this happened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their current situation? • What led to them being in this situation? (This information isn't mandatory, but it may help us to process the application more quickly.) • Confirmation that the student isn't in contact with either parent. <p>Continue on a separate sheet of paper if you need to.</p> <p>Left the family home 7 months ago after frequent arguments and XXXXXX feels like they just can't deal with living with their parents at present.</p>

Would Estranged Status Be Awarded? Scenario 1 Answer

On face value, in this situation **we would not award** estrangement because:

- There is **still regular contact** indicated between the student and their parents
- The student has only recently moved out the family home and despite some highlighted issues, they **maintain contact**

Section 2 To be completed by the third party	
2.3	<p>What is your relationship to the student?</p> <p>University Welfare Adviser</p>
2.4	<p>When did you first become aware of the student's estrangement?</p> <p>Month Year</p> <p>0 3 2 0 2 2</p>
2.5	<p>Does the student have any contact with either parent?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p> <p>A few times a month at the family home.</p>
2.6	<p>Has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p> <p>As above. A few times a month at the family home.</p>

If there were any compelling circumstances or missing information then **additional evidence or third party testimony** could always be provided and the assessment can be reviewed accordingly

Would Estranged Status Be Awarded? Scenario 2

From the third party information and evidence provided on these example Confirmation of Estrangement Forms, would the student in question be awarded estranged status and if so, for what duration?:

Section 2 To be completed by the third party	
2.3	<p>What is your relationship to the student?</p> <p>Sixth Form College Progression and Support Adviser</p>
2.4	<p>When did you first become aware of the student's estrangement?</p> <p>Month Year</p> <p>0 1 2 0 1 9</p>
2.5	<p>Does the student have any contact with either parent?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p>
2.6	<p>Has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p>

Section 3 To be completed by the third party	
3.1	<p>If the student has given you permission to do so, tell us your understanding of their estrangement and when this happened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their current situation? • What led to them being in this situation? (This information isn't mandatory, but it may help us to process the application more quickly.) • Confirmation that the student isn't in contact with either parent. <p>Continue on a separate sheet of paper if you need to.</p> <p>XXXX has moved out of her family home. She had a series of prolonged and severe arguments with her father regarding her life choices and they are no longer speaking.</p> <p>Attempts have been made to repair the relationship but these have been unsuccessful and there is absolutely no indication that this situation will change in the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Since 2019, XXXX has been estranged from both her mother and father and living with a friend's family.</p> <p>She still sees her siblings on occasion but has zero contact of any kind with her parents.</p>

Would Estranged Status Be Awarded? Scenario 2 Answer

In this situation, **we would award** the student estranged status:

- There has been **no contact with either parent for 12 months**
- There is **no chance of reconciliation**

Section 2		To be completed by the third party
2.3	What is your relationship to the student?	Sixth Form College Progression and Support Adviser
2.4	When did you first become aware of the student's estrangement?	Month Year 0 1 2 0 1 9
2.5	Does the student have any contact with either parent?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below
2.6	Has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below

Based on the evidence provided and third party statement of support, we would award the student estranged status **for the duration of the student's studies**

Would Estranged Status Be Awarded? Scenario 3

From the third party information and evidence provided on these example Confirmation of Estrangement Forms, would the student in question be awarded estranged status and if so, for what duration?:

Section 2 To be completed by the third party	
2.3	<p>What is your relationship to the student?</p> <p>HEP Student Union Support Adviser</p>
2.4	<p>When did you first become aware of the student's estrangement?</p> <p>Month Year</p> <p>1 1 2 0 2 2</p>
2.5	<p>Does the student have any contact with either parent?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p>
2.6	<p>Has the student been in contact with either parent in the last 12 months?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please give details below</p>

Section 3 To be completed by the third party	
3.1	<p>If the student has given you permission to do so, tell us your understanding of their estrangement and when this happened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their current situation? • What led to them being in this situation? (This information isn't mandatory, but it may help us to process the application more quickly.) • Confirmation that the student isn't in contact with either parent. <p>Continue on a separate sheet of paper if you need to.</p> <p>XXXXX has had no contact with his mother for an extended period of time (14 months) by his account and the relationship has broken down completely.</p> <p>Following this collapse of the relationship with his mother, XXXXX has been 'sofa-surfing' with friends as no other family members were able to take him in.</p> <p>XXXXX does not believe that the relationship with his mother can be repaired and from our discussions I have no reason to doubt this.</p>

Would Estranged Status Be Awarded? Scenario 3 Answer

In this situation **we would not initially award** estrangement because:

- Evidence provided only mentions the student's mother and **not both parents**
- The Independent Team/Estranged Assessor will **review the wider application** and contact the student regarding the relationship with their other parent

Section 3 To be completed by the third party	
<p>3.1 If the student has given you permission to do so, tell us your understanding of their estrangement and when this happened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their current situation? • What led to them being in this situation? (This information isn't mandatory, but it may help us to process the application more quickly.) • Confirmation that the student isn't in contact with either parent. <p>Continue on a separate sheet of paper if you need to.</p>	<p>XXXXX has had no contact with his mother for an extended period of time (14 months) by his account and the relationship has broken down completely.</p> <p>Following this collapse of the relationship with his mother, XXXXX has been 'sofa-surfing' with friends as no other family members were able to take him in.</p> <p>XXXXX does not believe that the relationship with his mother can be repaired and from our discussions I have no reason to doubt this.</p>

We would always advise a supporting third party to provide **as much detail and relevant evidence as possible** to convey a full and accurate account of the student's situation, allowing applications to progress as efficiently as possible

Independent and Estranged Students

The Role of Estrangement Assessors

The Role of Estrangement Assessors

Estrangement Assessors review cases for students who **can't provide standard evidence** as part of their application:

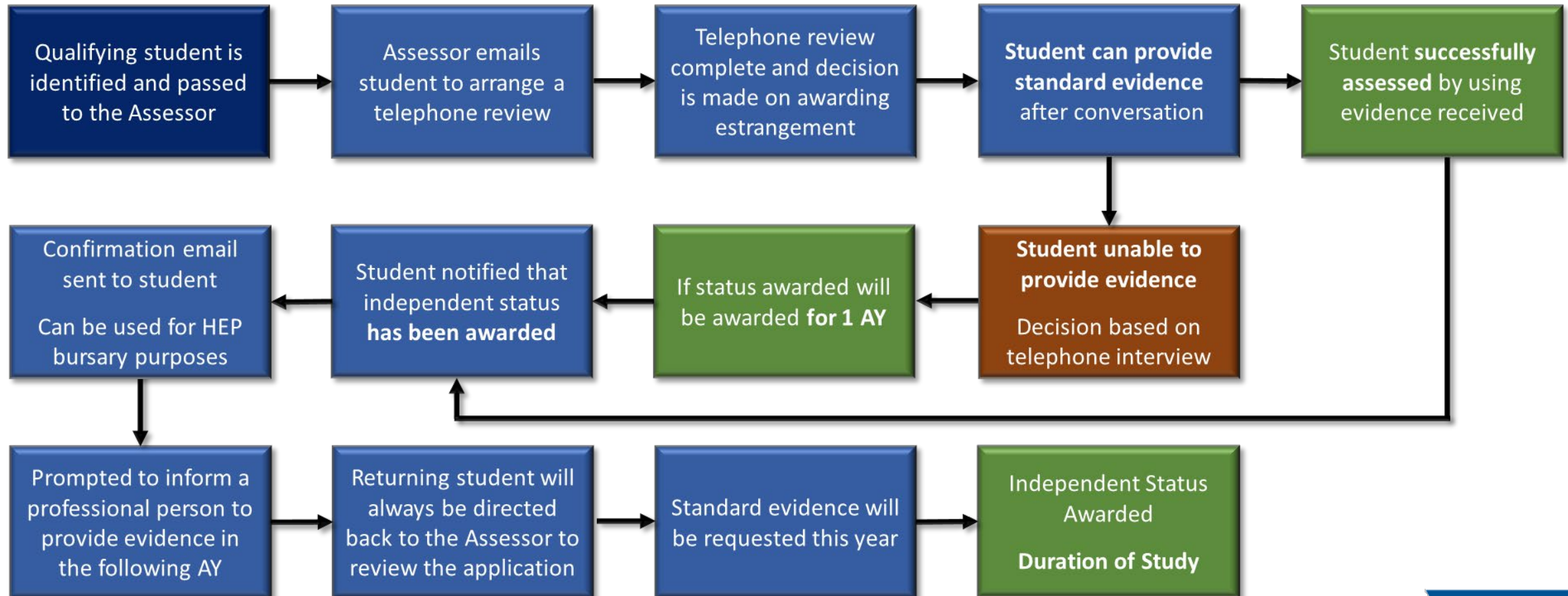
Estrangement Assessors will conduct telephone reviews and where possible award estrangement to students who:

- **Have not disclosed** their circumstances to anyone who SLC would consider to be a professional person
- **No longer have contact** with the professional person who provided the information on their behalf previously
- Have **recently become estranged** and have not confided in anyone who would be considered a professional person
- Are still living in the family home **but are in an abusive situation** and unable to leave

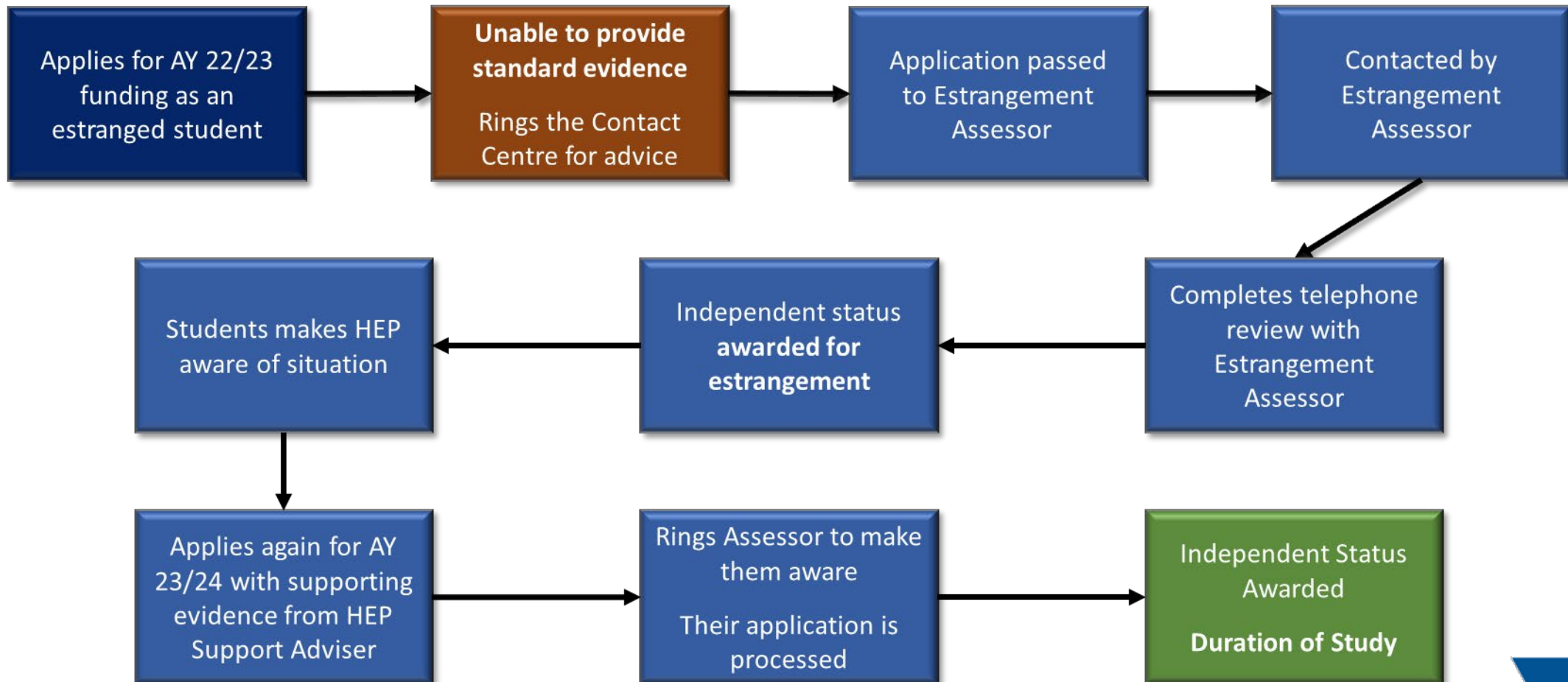
A student can be referred to an Estrangement Assessor by providing a cover letter describing their situation in **as much detail as they feel comfortable with** and the reasons why they are unable to provide standard evidence:

- This will then be processed by the Independent Team and passed to the Estrangement Assessors if needed
- The majority of cases received **will be reviewed by the Independent Team**

Estrangement Assessor Process



Estranged Student Journey



Independent and Estranged Students

Contacting the Independent Team
and IAG Resources for Practitioners and Students

Contacting the Independent Team

Inbox for complex queries, and urgent cases, particularly sensitive cases, or to send estrangement declaration forms which have been unable to be signed from HEPs:

- **Independent_Student_Enquiries@slc.co.uk**



Referrals for qualifying students to be assigned an Estrangement Assessor, or for general queries for students who have already been assigned an Estrangement Assessor:

- **Estranged@slc.co.uk or 0300 100 0034**



SLC are of course bound by GDPR, and in order to share details of a student's application we will need to have a Consent to Share (CTS) set up on their account, and supporting advisers need to pass the CTS security also:

- www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/about-us/consent-to-share

IAG Resources for Care Leaver and Estranged Students 1

Enhanced information and guidance for advisers supporting care leavers and estranged students, including downloadable factsheets can be found on the Student Finance England and Student Finance Wales **practitioner websites**:

SFE: www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/care-leavers

www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/estrangement

SFW: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/practitioners/news/new-information-and-resources-for-estranged-and-care-leaver-students

Key information on students who qualify as care leavers

What do we mean by care leaver?

In relation to student finance, a care leaver is defined as a young person who meets all of the below criteria:

- They have been in the care of, or have been given accommodation by, their local authority
- Their time in care is:
- Their time in care is:
- They have not return

Key information on estranged students

What is an 'estranged' student?

Generally, estrangement means you have little or no contact with your parents (either biological or adoptive) and this is unlikely to change.

Each application for estrangement will be assessed on the student's individual circumstances.

Common examples include students who are living with friends, in supported accommodation, or with other family members such as aunts, uncles or grandparents. Some may have only known one parent who is recently deceased. In other cases students may have no relationship with their biological parents and do not receive any emotional or financial support.

In certain circumstances, students may have very limited contact for specific reasons, for example, they're still in touch with siblings. These students can still be assessed as estranged from their parents. These are reviewed on an individual case basis.

What does estrangement mean for a student finance application?

When students estranged from their parents apply, they will not be asked to provide their parents' financial information. Instead, these students will be assessed as independent. This means that once we've received evidence confirming their estrangement, we will award them the maximum amount of Maintenance Loan available.

Important information for estranged students **sfe**

Generally, estrangement means you have little or no contact with your parents and this is unlikely to change.

Important information for students who qualify as care leavers **sfe**

What is a care leaver?
You can apply for student finance as a care leaver if you meet all of the criteria listed below:
• You have been in the care of, or given accommodation by, your local authority
• You were in care for at least 13 weeks
• Your time in care ended after you turned 19
• You have not returned to the care of your parent(s) before the first day of the first academic year of your course
What do I need to send to prove that I'm a care leaver?
You can provide evidence of being a care leaver by sending us:
• A letter from your local authority, or
• A letter from your case worker or social worker.
This letter must confirm:
• That you were looked after by a local authority (this includes being placed in foster care by your local authority)
• The dates that you were in care
• That you have not returned to the care of your parent(s) prior to the first day of the first academic year of your course
You only have to send evidence of your care leaver status when you first apply for student finance for your course. For any years of your course after that, you'll be awarded the maximum amount of Maintenance Loan you're entitled to (if you meet it).

What does this mean for my student finance application?
If you get student finance as a care leaver, you won't be asked to provide any of your parents' financial details. You'll be assessed as an independent student and will be awarded the maximum amount of Maintenance Loan you're entitled to.
Remember to always apply for student finance as soon as possible.
Universities and colleges also provide care leaver support. You can talk to advisers within Student Services / Walsingham or the Student Union.
You can also visit the following care leaver advice services:
• The Beacon Trust - www.beacontrust.co.uk
• Brightside - www.brightside.org.uk
• National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) - www.nnecl.org
• The Care Leavers' Association - www.careleavers.com
And remember, your Care Leaver Team at your local authority can help support you with your student finance information and any additional support available.

cyllid myfyrwyr cymru student finance wales

News | Guidance chapters | Information notices | Designated courses | Guidance for assessment centres | Regional support

Home / Practitioners / News / New information and resources for Estranged and Care Leaver students

Other news

New information and resources for Estranged and Care Leaver students
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

Clearing is coming!
11 AUGUST 2022

Helping students get their first student finance payment
11 AUGUST 2022

The deadline for full-time undergraduate student finance applications has passed
16 JUNE 2022

2022 to 2023: Part-time applications are now open!
05 MAY 2022

Published: 29 September 2022 | Last updated: 29 September 2022 | Tagged in: [2022 to 2023](#), [care leaver](#) and [sfe](#)

New information and resources for Estranged and Care Leaver students

We've now published important updates, new information and resources to better equip you when giving advice and talking to students who qualify for student finance as estranged from their parents, or who are care leavers.

Estranged students

cyllid myfyrwyr cymru student finance wales

What is a care leaver?

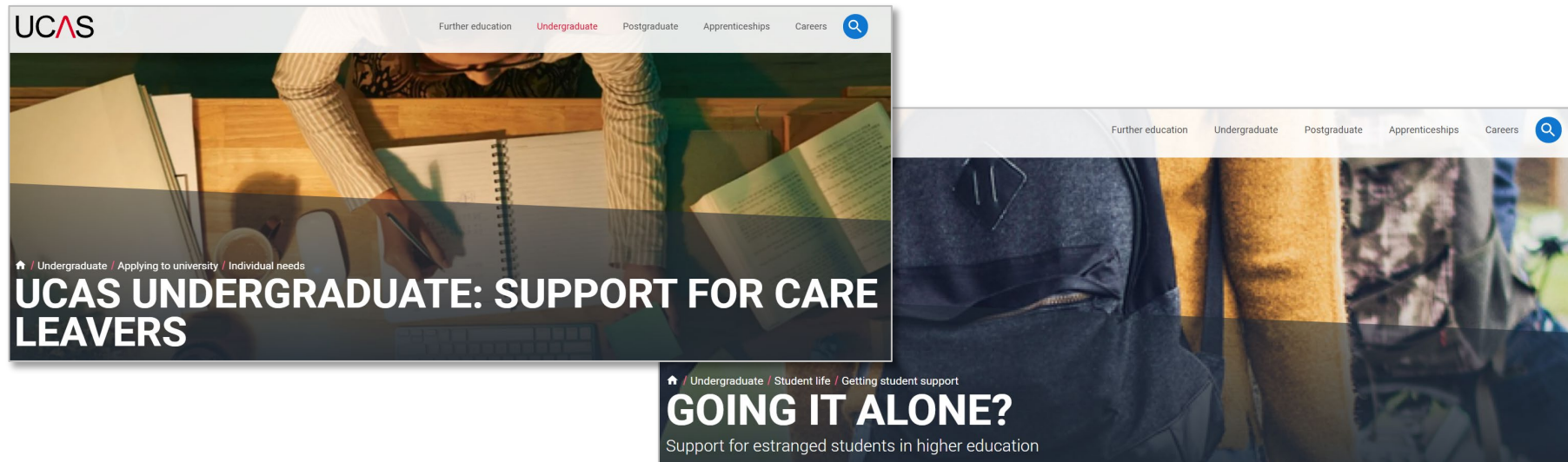
Important information for estranged students
Generally, estrangement means you have little or no contact with your parents and this is unlikely to change.
How do I know if I qualify as an estranged student?
You could apply for student finance as an estranged student if:
• You haven't had any contact with either of your parents for 12 months or more, or
• You've had contact with your parents but haven't seen either within the last 12 months and you don't expect this to change in the near future.
If you're intentionally estranged from your parents, you won't be asked to provide any of your parents' financial details. We know that may not be possible for you, so we'll assess you as being an independent student. This means that once we've received evidence confirming your estrangement, we will award you the maximum amount of Maintenance Loan you're entitled to.
Common examples of estrangement can include students that are living with friends, living in supported accommodation, or living with other family members such as aunts, uncles or grandparents.
Each application for estrangement is reviewed on your own unique circumstances.
And remember, you should always apply for student finance as soon as possible to ensure you have access to money for starting your course.
How do I apply as an estranged student?
If you already have evidence of your estrangement, sending us a copy is usually the fastest way to demonstrate your eligibility for a care leaver. Please support centre or local authority and which confirms that you aren't in contact with your parents.
However, if you don't have any evidence, you can complete and digitally submit a Confirmation of Estrangement Form which can be found in your online account. You can also use our form finder at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/apply to find the right form for you.
What else is it used for?
If you qualify as an estranged student, you will usually be assessed as independent for the full duration of your course. However, if the estrangement is recent (usually within the last 12 months) of reconciliation with your parents, you may be asked to provide evidence of your confirmed estrangement when you apply for student finance in later years of your course.
Universities and colleges also provide care leaver support and you can talk with advisers within Student Services / Walsingham or the Student Union. Student Services / Walsingham offers you support and advice on campus. There is also independent support available from www.brightside.org.uk and you can write to The Student Loans Company's enquiries team at enquiries@slc.co.uk
Report Error - [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](#)



IAG Resources for Care Leaver and Estranged Students 2

The **UCAS** website contains individual pages dedicated to information and resources for both care leavers and estranged students:

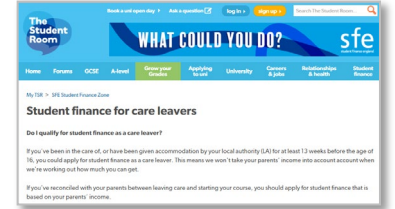
- www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-support-care-leavers
- www.ucas.com/estranged-students



IAG Resources for Care Leaver and Estranged Students 3

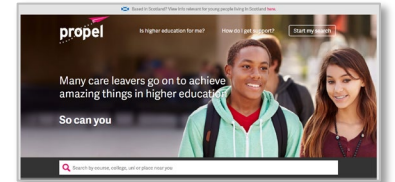
The SFE Zone on **The Student Room** and SFE Hub on **UCAS** feature student finance information and links for care leavers:

- www.thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance/student-finance-for-care-leavers
- www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/other-funding-full-time-students



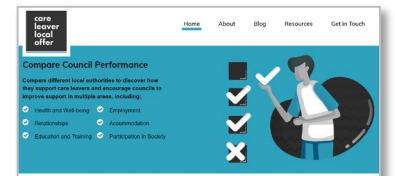
On **propel.org.uk** students can find information about moving into higher education from care, alongside details of support that individual universities and colleges across the UK offer:

- <https://propel.org.uk/UK>



The **Care Leaver Local Offer** site provides information and a function allowing users to search by local authority to check what provision they are offering to care leavers:

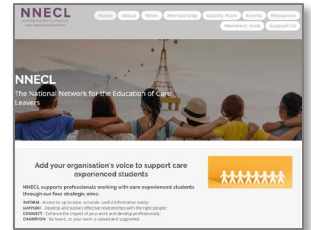
- This includes job opportunities and education funding/bursary support
- www.careleaveroffer.co.uk



IAG Resources for Care Leaver and Estranged Students 4

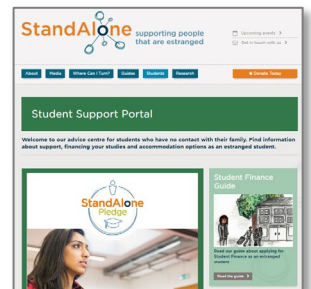
The **National Network for the Education of Care Leavers** (NNECL) are committed to transforming the opportunities, progression and support for Care Experienced students in further and higher education:

- The NNECL website contains best practice examples, partnerships, events and resources for supporting care leavers
- www.nnecl.org



Stand Alone provide support to those who are estranged from their parents, including helping them to prepare for life at university:

- The Stand Alone Guide contains information about support, evidence, application and the assessment processes for estranged students
- www.standalone.org.uk
- www.standalone.org.uk/guides/student-guide



Questions or Comments



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Independent and Estranged Students (A)