

Estranged Students Solidarity Week 2023: 27 November to 1 December

Estranged students deserve to be heard and understood. [Stand Alone's Estranged Students Solidarity Week](#) is for universities, colleges, student unions / associations and higher education sector organisations to reach out to those who are studying without family support.

Now in its 7th year ESS Week retains its original three aims:

1. To raise awareness about family estrangement, and the many barriers to success that estranged students face in higher education.
2. To reach out to those students at university or college who are studying without support from parents/family and encourage and facilitate a wider discussion on family and changing family dynamics.
3. To promote the support for estranged students at every stage of their higher education journey.

The first ESS Week took place in 2017 staging the 'Estranged Students Solidarity Campaign', a collaboration between Stand Alone and the NUS to campaign for better recognition and understanding of the barriers to higher education for estranged students. The campaign coined the hashtag **#WithEstrangedStudents** and called for Student Unions and Associations to lobby their universities and colleges to develop better support for estranged students and to sign the Stand Alone Pledge.

Over the years, ESS Week has continued to grow and develop as universities, colleges, student unions and associations, students and student networks, as well as sector organisations such as UCAS and SAAS collectively raise awareness of estrangement and reach out to estranged students promoting the support available to them.

For the past 3 years Stand Alone's own campaign during ESS Week has focused on one aspect of estrangement in higher education: 'Be an ally to estranged students' (2020), the 'Manifestos for Change' (2021) and 'Ticking the UCAS Box' (2022). **This year the week will highlight the importance of 'Identifying Estranged Students' at multiple points across the student journey.**

Stand Alone will also be announcing the **Stand Alone Pledge Awards 2023** for Higher Education Providers during ESS Week. This year universities and colleges are invited to demonstrate how the Stand Alone Pledge has driven institutional change.

Which institutions have won previous years' Pledge awards? Have a look here: [2018 - 2021](#) and [2022](#)

How can SUs / SAs and students, universities, colleges, HE sector bodies and organisations get involved in ESS Week?

By standing #WithEstrangedStudents through

- promoting the support available to estranged students on social media or in-person events during the week.
- running activities throughout the week for students and staff to participate in, focusing on family estrangement, its causes and how it can affect student life, as well as facilitating a wider discussion on family and family dynamics.
- campaigning for better recognition and support for estranged students throughout every stage of their higher education journey.

Remember: Christmas is a difficult period for those not in touch with their families and many estranged students will not have a home to go back to for Christmas. It is a good 'hook' to raise awareness of estrangement and what it means, which is why ESS Week takes place just before the end of the autumn term.

What will you do this ESS Week to promote the support for estranged students at your university or college?

Please share your messages, activities, events, campaigns, blogs, graphics, pictures, etc, on social media using the hashtags **#WithEstrangedStudents** along with **#ESSW2023**. Let's all collectively raise the visibility of estranged students and the support available to them in higher education throughout the week.

You might find these resources useful to help with your events and activities during ESS Week:

[Background information on estrangement](#)

[Information for Student Officers](#)

[Information for Students](#)

[Information for Staff](#)

[Estranged Students Solidarity Week](#) (ESS Week) is run every year by the charity Stand Alone as part of its higher education work.