

NNECL Webinar; Thinking about our Care Experienced Students during Covid-19. An Overview of Emerging Practice

ARRON PILE

RACHEL WRIGHT

WENDY PRICE

EDWARD CONNIFF

CO-CHAIR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES, NNECL

OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND

UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND

Programme

- ▶ 3.30pm Arron Pile, Co-Chair, Board of Trustees, NNECL
- ▶ 3.40pm Rachel Wright, Office for Students
- ▶ 3.50pm, Wendy Price & Edward Conniff, University of Sunderland
- ▶ 4pm Q&A
- ▶ 4.15pm Close

Who's here?

- ▶ 47 Staff from 30 Universities from a mixture of roles including Dean, Widening Participation/Outreach and Student Support
- ▶ Scottish Universities
- ▶ 4 Colleges
- ▶ Current students
- ▶ 5 staff from 4 Virtual Schools
- ▶ Three Leaving Care Teams
- ▶ 20 colleagues from other relatable organisations

Arron Pile- Co chair and Board of Trustees- NNECL

- ▶ Timeline of action
- ▶ What students have told us
- ▶ Our ask
- ▶ NNECL Good Practice Guide

Timeline of action

- ▶ March 2020: A joint response from NNECL, Stand Alone, The Unite Foundation, Spectra & Become as they became aware that care experienced students and estranged students were very vulnerable
- ▶ March 2020: Focused on surveying students to understand need
- ▶ April 2020: At the same time gathering information from universities
- ▶ April 2020: Joint letter and survey results sent to Ministers
- ▶ April 2020: Conversations begin with DfE, survey results released
- ▶ May 2020: OfS briefing released
- ▶ June 2020: NNECL Good Practice Guide released
- ▶ June 2020: 2nd Survey of students on financial need

What students have told us

Initial Survey

- ▶ Are absolutely reliant on temporary and part-time work that is no longer available in order to support their living costs
- ▶ Often have no alternative home to return to, or practical and emotional support in times of crisis or hardship, due to the lack of family networks
- ▶ Are at extremely high risk of homelessness
- ▶ May become reliant on local authority services that are already under extreme pressure if unable to continue in their studies
- ▶ Worried about being able to complete/ progress on their course
- ▶ Worried about access to essential supplies

Finance (Survey 2)

- ▶ Most English CEES students are not confident that they can meet their basic bills over the summer
- ▶ There is no consistent source of support and a majority have had no financial help from either their local authority or university
- ▶ Government employment support schemes have not reached most CEES students
- ▶ A majority of those on furlough are still experiencing financial hardship
- ▶ 2020 graduates are in urgent need of support

Our ask:

- ▶ Boosting Wellbeing Support
- ▶ Reducing Financial Hardship by way of a universal emergency grant
- ▶ Changes and simplification of accessing Universal Credit
- ▶ Preventing homelessness
- ▶ Ensuring academic continuity

NNECL Good Practice Covid-19 Guide

- ▶ [NNECL Good Practice Guide](#)
- ▶ Over 30 institutions have provided information to NNECL on what they are doing during Covid-19 for CEES students, and this is growing!
- ▶ We would like to have information for all universities collated here. If your institution is not here, please contact info@nnecl.org!
- ▶ Arranged by PreEntry/Outreach, Transitional support, Accommodation, Financial support, Emotional support, Assessment & Progression, Graduation & Beyond, Partnerships/ Local Authorities
- ▶ The information is there to support sector wide good practice, so please feel free to pinch ideas!

Rachel Wright, Office for Students

- ▶ • Care experienced and estranged students are key groups which the OfS is working with the sector to support into and successfully through higher education.
- ▶ • In relation to the pandemic the OfS has published the following:
 - ▶ Guidance for providers on vulnerable students which includes care experienced and estranged students. This sets out our expectations and highlights how providers can divert student premium funding to hardship funding to support vulnerable groups: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/>
 - ▶ Guidance for providers about how the OfS will approach the regulation of quality and standards matters during the period of disruption resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/f351a739-6cd6-4310-8f98-a6aa603f17f4/quality-and-standards-guidance-during-coronavirus.pdf>
 - ▶ We have also published this briefing note on students without family support, which is not regulatory guidance but offers examples of emerging practice etc: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-students-without-family-support/#students>

Rachel Wright- Office for Students

- ▶ • The briefing note was developed with the support of the partnership of NNECL, Become, Stand Alone, the Unite Foundation and Spectra. Universities, colleges and partnerships provided the case studies and interventions described in the briefing note.
- ▶ • The case studies and interventions described in the note were developed at pace and have not yet been evaluated for effectiveness. They are offered in the spirit of sharing practice that others may find useful and applicable to their own contexts. We will update the case study page with more examples of effective practice as we identify them. If you have, or are aware of, examples of effective practice in this area please contact: rachel.wright@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Wendy Price and Edward Conniff- University of Sunderland



We Care Team support during COVID-19

Wendy Price

Widening Access and Participation Manager

Edward Conniff

Undergraduate BSc (Hons) Psychology



**University of
Sunderland**

Wendy Price and Edwards Conniff- University of Sunderland

- ▶ Team purpose and number of students we support
- ▶ Overview of our 'usual' support
- ▶ How this has been developed in response to Covid, particularly in the following areas:
 - ▶ Financial support - £500 additional scholarship instalment in July, hardship fund
 - ▶ Wellbeing support – weekly check in calls, virtual cuppas, Facebook group
 - ▶ Accommodation support – extending contracts, acting as guarantor, reassurances for September accommodation
 - ▶ IT support – provision of laptops on loan where needed
- ▶ Contacted all new applicants as well as existing students

Thank you

- ▶ Thank you for attending our webinar, we hope that you have found this session useful and informative.
- ▶ We are currently creating our ongoing webinar programme and would value input from our members and colleagues. Please take a little of your time (3 minutes) to complete our survey: [NNECL Webinar Survey](#)
- ▶ NNECL very much values any feedback and input from our network, so please do contact us with anything: info@nnecl.org