



# Supporting APP development – addressing risk to equality of opportunity for care experienced and estranged students

## Background

The [Equality of Opportunity Risk Register \(the EORR\)](#) identifies 12 sector-wide risks that may affect a student's opportunity to access and succeed in higher education.

The EORR asks providers to consider: "Which, if any, of their prospective or current students are likely to be affected by the risks, and how these might be mitigated."

To address these risk areas a group of stakeholders supporting the improvement of practice within higher education for care experienced and estranged students have pulled together an overview document to share how providers can address the key risks to equality of opportunity.

## Care experienced and estranged students

Just 13% of young adults who have been looked after for more than a year are in higher education by age 19, compared to 43% of non-care experienced 19 year olds.

Estranged young people often go unrecognised by statutory services, and Stand Alone's [research](#) from 2015 with 584 students shows that there is a lack of any kind of social service intervention at all in roughly 60% of estranged student cases, so it's very possible that some of these young people have no support at all on their educational journey.

The TASO [rapid review](#) commissioned to support the development of the EORR, found that care leavers consistently are at risk of lacking equality of opportunity, and where the data exists for estranged students this risk to equality is also replicated.

## Addressing risks to equality of opportunity

Care experienced and estranged students make up less than 2% of the higher education student population at undergraduate level and therefore have been frequently overlooked for targeted interventions, which also makes the development of robustly evaluated strategies limited.

With the new Access and Participation Plan framework there is an opportunity to identify meaningful activity that will help and support universities to do more to support care experienced and estranged students into university and on course. Appendix 1 gives examples of how, one of the risk areas – capacity issues – can be represented within the updated APP template.

Office for Students noted within their guidance that "it is important that a provider researches the available evidence bases when designing measures or activities within an intervention strategy to gain a better understanding of how impactful it is likely to be, for whom and in what contexts." The summary below provides two examples of where there is evidence of a statistically significant change in admissions or participation, as identified by independent evaluators, and the risk within the EORR that they relate to:

- **Risk 2: Information & Guidance** – Go Higher West Yorkshire's innovative training programme, co-developed with virtual schools and designed to equip key influencers to support young people's



informed decision-making. Report [here](#). The report contained four recommendations for higher education institutions:

- Work together to collaborate with local authorities and provide engaging and immersive progression-focused CPD to foster carers, children's home support workers, personal advisors, and social workers.
- Utilise evidence to tailor higher education outreach and training materials to the care experience, addressing bespoke needs, experiences, and concerns.
- Use the language of your audience – HE providers as 'caring' institutions is a powerful concept in this context.
- Highlight and celebrate the strengths of your local area – communities may not know about the diverse HE environments or labour market opportunities on their doorstep. This is best delivered collaboratively with a range of HE providers to support informed choice at a local level.
- **Risk 11: Capacity issues** – Provision of accommodation support through accommodation scholarship shown through comparative analysis to have statistically significant impact on care leaver progression & completion. Evidence [here](#). The key findings from the report were that:
  - Unite Foundation Scholarship students progressed from their 1st to 2nd year of programme within 2 academic years at the same percentage as non-care leaver students (87%) and at a statistically significantly higher percentage than all other care leaver student groups (76%).
  - Unite Foundation Scholarship students progressed from their 2nd to 3rd year of programme within 2 academic years within 5 percentage points of non-care leaver students (86% vs 91%) and at a statistically significantly higher percentage than other care leaver students inside the Foundation HE provider network (81%).
  - Unite Foundation Scholarship students completed a first degree within three academic years within six percentage points of non-care leaver students (71% vs 77%) and at a statistically significantly higher percentage than all other care leaver student groups (60–63%).
  - Unite Foundation Scholarship students achieved a 'good honours' degree within 3 percentage points of non-care leaver students (78% vs 81%) and at a statistically significantly higher percentage than all other care leaver student groups (70–72%).

These are the only two robust research pieces about what works from a practical intervention perspective. There are lots of wider examples of what is considered good practice within institutions and these are shared below in the appendix 2 & 3, split out by care experienced and estranged status, to help you identify further interventions that might be helpful.

## Get in touch

If you'd like to know more about the ideas within here, or explore support for the identification and development of your activities you can get in touch via:

- Unite Foundation – Fiona Ellison, Director, [fiona.ellison@unitefoundation.org.uk](mailto:fiona.ellison@unitefoundation.org.uk)
- NNECL
- Stand Alone – Susan Mueller, Director Higher Education and Projects, [standalonehe@gmail.com](mailto:standalonehe@gmail.com)

## Further reading

[Pathways to university from care: findings report one](#), Ellis and Johnston (2019)



[Getting it Right for Care Leavers in Higher Education.](#) Houari et al. (2019)

[Positive impact? What factors affect access, retention and graduate outcomes for university students with a background of care or family estrangement?](#) Stevenson et al. (2020)

[Supporting learners with experience of care](#) Styrnol, Matic and Hume (2021)

[Student characteristics data: student outcomes](#) OfS (2022)

[It's All About The Money: The Influence Of Family Estrangement, Accommodation Struggles and Homelessness On Student Success in UK Higher Education](#) Bland and Blake (2018)

[What Happens Next?](#) Rouncefield-Swales and Bland (2019):

[Estranged students in Further \(FE\) and Higher Education \(HE\) - experiences research](#) Scottish Government (2022)



## Appendix 1 – Intervention strategy 1: Objectives and targets

This section identifies the principal objective that the intervention strategy will contribute towards. If the intervention strategy is likely to contribute to other objectives, these can also be noted here. Please note target reference numbers that relate to those set out in the Fees, Investments and Targets document (FIT).

### Risks to equality of opportunity

This section identifies the risks to equality of opportunity that the intervention strategy will address.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p><i>Provide a high-level description of each activity that will contribute towards reaching the objective of the intervention strategy, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Target student groups</i></li> <li>- <i>Numbers of participants/schools (if applicable)</i></li> <li>- <i>If this is a new or already existing activity</i></li> <li>- <i>If this is collaborative</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Provide an estimation of the resources (human and financial) that will be needed to deliver the activity over the 4 years of the APP. Where resources are shared across departments or intervention strategies, an estimate of the proportion that will go into this activity should be made.</i></p>	<p><i>Provide a high-level overview of the expected outcomes of the activity. These outcomes can be used to track progress and understand the impact of each activity on the overall intervention strategy objective.</i></p>	<p><i>Indicate if the activity will contribute other intervention strategies</i></p>
<p>Supporting accommodation costs for care leavers &amp; estranged students within our institution accommodation provision</p>	<p>Writing off the cost of x number of rooms per year within our accommodation stock.</p> <p>Building administration of the scheme into our Widening Access team named contact for care leavers &amp; estranged students.</p>	<p>Progression from year 1-2 at the same level as non-care experienced students in our institution.</p> <p>Completion within a 5% point gap (compared to national average of 14% gap and x% at our institution)</p>	<p>Intersectionality of care leaver &amp; estranged population – we would expect outcomes to also address work we're doing to support</p>

## Appendix 2 – EORR and Care Experience: an initial mapping of practice from the NNECL Quality Mark

The following table provides examples of effective practice drawn from NNECL Quality Mark submissions and other relevant initiatives, mapped against the risk areas identified in the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register.

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
<p>Risk 1: Knowledge and skills Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.</p>	<p>Differences over access to a high quality education, and the resources needed to fully engage with it (including time and support), may limit opportunity.</p> <p>Students may have less chance to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful higher education, or to achieve grades that reflect their knowledge and skills.</p> <p>It may also limit the range of subject and course options available, for example, at Key Stage 5.</p> <p>Factors that influence this can include (but are not limited to) a student's home circumstances, the school that they attend or the area where they live.</p>	<p>Low attainment at Key Stage 4 and 5, and/or limited subject choice at Key Stage 5 for students from certain areas, schools or with certain characteristics.</p> <p>This is likely to subsequently impact progression rates to higher education.</p> <p>Where students are accepted into higher education courses, it may also have a detrimental impact on their on-course success.</p>	<p>Examples of some more intensive and sustained outreach activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">First Star Scholars</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Choices Together, NERAP</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MyLACES, Ulster University</a></li> <li>• Greater Manchester collaboration via <a href="#">GM Higher</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Kent and Medway Progression Federation</a></li> </ul> <p>Offering Foundation level options for progression</p> <p>Provision of study skills and academic support when on course</p>
<p>Risk 2: Information and guidance Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition</p>	<p>A student's home circumstances, their school and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and the quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression.</p>	<p>Low quality, or a lack of, information and guidance may result in differential application patterns for different groups of students, and lower application success rates even where prior attainment has been controlled for.</p>	<p>Named contact or team supporting care experienced students (CES) from early outreach</p> <p>A range of outreach activities in place, some specific to CES and others part of broader</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.	This can occur early on in a student's education and affect aspects such as their Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 course choice, or it may apply at the point of application, and limit both the choice and quality of a student's application.	<p>This may subsequently result in lower progression rates to higher education overall, and to highly selective providers and/or certain course types for some groups of students.</p> <p>It may result in lower on course attainment, continuation and completion rates.</p> <p>It may also result in differences in labour market outcomes, where poor guidance on Key Stage 5 subjects and/or university course choice subsequently results in a narrowing of options for certain student groups.</p>	<p>widening participation (WP) work (as not all CES wish to be identified as such). Making sure information for CES is included in general information sessions for prospective students.</p> <p>Training and information for foster carers and local authority/virtual school staff.</p> <p>Dedicated transition support working with feeder schools, local authorities (LAs) etc.</p>
<p>Risk 3: Perception of higher education</p> <p>Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.</p>	<p>Even where a student has the grades and information or guidance required to choose a particular course or provider, they may not apply.</p> <p>This can be due to a number of factors, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial or familial circumstances</li> <li>• perception of the provider</li> <li>• limited course provision (such as having no part-time courses).</li> </ul>	<p>When attainment is controlled for, a reluctance to apply for certain providers and/or courses by some students can lead to lower application rates to certain providers and/or courses by students with certain characteristics, and subsequently lower progression rates.</p>	<p>Specific admissions policy/section relating to CES</p> <p>Contextual offers, typically one or two grades lower</p> <p>Accreditation of Prior Learning/Work for mature entrants</p> <p>Financial bursary/support provided</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
<p>Risk 4: Application success rates</p> <p>Students may not be accepted to a higher education course, or may not be accepted to certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.</p>	<p>For courses or providers that are competitive, students may not have equal application outcomes despite having the same attainment at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 as another student.</p> <p>This can be due to admissions practices (such as the way a personal statement or interview is assessed, or the use of entrance exams), or the way in which a student makes an application.</p> <p>It may also be due to students applying in greater numbers to certain subjects, or differences in the perceived quality of qualification types.</p>	<p>Differences in the way that an application is assessed, even where two students have the same prior attainment, may result in lower acceptance rates (measured in the proportion of offers made to applicants) and subsequently lower progression rates to certain courses and/or higher education providers for students with particular characteristics.</p> <p>This impact may also be felt where students with certain characteristics apply in greater proportions to certain subjects, causing a 'funnel affect'.</p>	<p>Contextual offers, typically one or two grades lower</p> <p>Guaranteed offer if meet minimum requirements (as per the Scottish HE sector guarantee)</p> <p>Support for drafting personal statements and interview preparation</p>
<p>Risk 6: Insufficient academic support</p> <p>Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.</p>	<p>Whatever the grades that a student has when they enter higher education, different students may require different levels of academic support.</p> <p>This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their individual circumstances, such as personal health issues, special educational needs (SEN) diagnosis or home difficulties that impact on a student's ability to engage to the fullest extent with their academic studies</li> </ul>	<p>If a student does not receive the necessary personalised academic support, they may achieve a lower degree attainment than they could have achieved, or they may withdraw from a course.</p> <p>Students may also experience poor mental health.</p> <p>Students may have less time to devote to non-academic activities than other students.</p>	<p>Supportive systems in place for CES, including sharing information with tutors etc. if permission given by student</p> <p>Building in consideration of care experience as part of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) course review</p> <p>Effective CPD programmes for staff in range of different roles including academics/personal tutors</p> <p>Study skills/catch up modules</p> <p>Priority for mental health support</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>differences in educational experiences before university that did not equip them with the same level of relevant skills or knowledge as other students.</li> </ul>	These may subsequently further impact on progression rates through to graduate study or to employment.	Funding to support work placements/Turing etc.
<p>Risk 7: Insufficient personal support</p> <p>Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.</p>	<p>Although many students are able to receive personal support from external sources, experiences of this will be different for some students. This may have a negative impact on their wellbeing and academic success.</p> <p>Non-academic support comes in many different forms, from personal tutors or mentors to access to sports facilities or accommodation support.</p> <p>For many students, extracurricular activities are a core part of the higher education experience but these are not equally accessible.</p>	<p>Students who do not receive sufficient personal support on course, including (but not limited to) mentoring, advice, counselling and access to extracurricular activities may be more likely to report lower wellbeing and/or sense of belonging, experience poor mental health, achieve lower-than-expected on-course attainment and lower continuation rates. These may be experienced for all students, but may be experienced more acutely by students with certain characteristics.</p> <p>Differential access to personal support relating to careers progression and/or less time to participate in enrichment activities may lead to differential outcomes in terms of progression into further study and employment.</p>	<p>Named contact or team</p> <p>Contact or team offer informal catch-ups over coffee, social events, sending birthday/Christmas cards and gifts</p> <p>Signposting to, and liaison with, pastoral support services</p> <p>Free or subsidised gym membership</p> <p>Support with accommodation depending on type of institution (ranging from all-year accommodation to support with travel/subsistence costs for students at non-residential institutions)</p> <p>Developing peer mentoring/support</p> <p>SU support for CES Society etc.</p> <p>Funding to support work placements/Turing etc.</p>
<p>Risk 8: Mental health</p> <p>Students may not experience an environment</p>	<p>Students may experience mental ill health that makes it hard to cope with daily life, including studying. These difficulties may</p>	<p>Where students experience poor mental health, this may result in:</p>	<p>Regular check-ins and proactive communications particularly at difficult times of year</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.	<p>be pre-existing, or may develop during higher education study.</p> <p>Some students may have difficulties that are not formally diagnosed or treated, and may experience delays in receiving a diagnosis, treatment or support. Some students may not report mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Where students do have an existing diagnosis, the transition point between adolescent and adult services may lead to delays in treatment.</p>	<p>Lower continuation rates and lower course attainment it may also lead to lower progression rates into further study or the labour market.</p>	<p>Bespoke support plans and/or fast-tracking to support</p> <p>Support for physical health alongside mental well-being</p>
<p>Risk 10: Cost pressures</p> <p>Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.</p>	<p>This is likely to be due to multiple factors, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some students undertaking more paid work than is feasible alongside full-time study</li> <li>• students experiencing poorer mental health as a result of financial concerns</li> <li>• students having to support families.</li> </ul>	<p>Increasing costs of living, if not adequately addressed, may result in an increasing number of students undertaking part-time or full-time employment alongside their studies, poorer mental and physical health for students, reduced attendance on-course, and less time to study.</p> <p>Together, these may increase the risk of lower on-course attainment rates and lower continuation rates. The cost of living crisis may also impact on access to university, as students may be less likely to apply to higher education and/or limit their higher education choices</p>	<p>Financial bursary/other financial support provided</p> <p>Opportunities for appropriate levels of part-time work as a student ambassador, for example</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
		according to financial need (e.g. a student may only apply to a provider near their home, or may limit their choice to part-time courses).	
<p>Risk 11: Capacity issues Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education, such as suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>Increasing student numbers may limit a student's access to key elements of their expected higher education experience. This could disproportionately affect those without the financial resources or wider support to react appropriately.</p> <p>For example, where appropriate student accommodation is limited, students with less money or who are accepted at a late stage in the application cycle, may not be able to secure suitable housing.</p>	<p>An increase in capacity issues may lead to issues such as lower quality teaching, less academic and personal support and low availability and/or quality of accommodation for students.</p> <p>These in turn may lead to poorer mental health for students, worse on-course degree attainment and lower continuation rates.</p> <p>Concerns over accommodation issues may also lead to changing application patterns for some students (i.e. increasing propensity to apply to home/close providers). It may also lead to worse labour market outcomes for students, if there are reductions in relevant services.</p>	<p>Bursaries/access to other financial support such as hardship funds.</p> <p>Support with accommodation depending on type of institution (ranging from all-year accommodation to support with travel/subsistence costs for students at non-residential institutions).</p> <p>Providing guarantor support for private accommodation.</p> <p>If providing free or subsidised university accommodation, consider extending this to CES living in private accommodation.</p>
<p>Risk 12: Progression from higher education Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a</p>	<p>Some students do not have equal opportunity to access certain outcomes from higher education, such as further study or progressing into employment that is reflective of their qualification levels.</p>	<p>Differences in equality of opportunity relating to progression may lead to lower progression to further study for students with particular characteristics.</p>	<p>Preferential access to work experience/employability initiatives</p> <p>Postgraduate bursaries</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
positive reflection of their higher education experience.	This can be due to factors such as financial position, access and time to undertake extracurricular or supra-curricular activities, and lack of information and guidance.	It may also lead to low diversity in specific areas of the labour-market, lower earning for students with certain characteristics, and lower levels of job satisfaction.	Named careers contact and regular engagement throughout programme of study  Provide accommodation over summer for transition period out of HE into employment

NB: Risks where care experience is not currently highlighted as a characteristic:

- Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode: Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.
- Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus: Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

## Appendix 3 – EORR and Estranged Students (ES): an initial mapping of practice from the Stand Alone Pledge

The following table provides examples of effective practice by higher education institutions, mapped against the risk areas identified in the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register. Further work is being taken forward via the Care Leaver/Experienced and Estranged Students in Higher Education Group (CLEESHE).

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
<p>Risk 1: Knowledge and skills Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions. Currently not included in the EORR as a risk for ES</p>	<p>Differences over access to a high quality education, and the resources needed to fully engage with it (including time and support), may limit opportunity.</p> <p>Students may have less chance to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for successful higher education, or to achieve grades that reflect their knowledge and skills.</p> <p>It may also limit the range of subject and course options available, for example, at Key Stage 5.</p> <p>Factors that influence this can include (but are not limited to) a student's home circumstances, the school that they attend or the area where they live.</p>	<p>Low attainment at Key Stage 4 and 5, and/or limited subject choice at Key Stage 5 for students from certain areas, schools or with certain characteristics.</p> <p>This is likely to subsequently impact progression rates to higher education.</p> <p>Where students are accepted into higher education courses, it may also have a detrimental impact on their on-course success.</p>	<p>Example of institutional good practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach programmes to support the development of skills for specialist courses (e.g. arts)</li> <li>• Provision of study skills and academic support when on course</li> </ul> <p>Examples of intensive and sustained collaborative outreach activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Manchester collaboration via <a href="#">GM Higher</a></li> <li>• West Yorkshire collaboration via <a href="#">Go Higher West Yorkshire</a></li> </ul>
<p>Risk 2: Information and guidance Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable</p>	<p>A student's home circumstances, their school and access to resources in their local area may affect the amount and the quality of information that they receive about higher education options and future career progression.</p>	<p>Low quality, or a lack of, information and guidance may result in differential application patterns for different groups of students, and lower application</p>	<p>Named contact or team supporting ES pre-entry.</p> <p>A range of outreach activities in place, some specifically identifying ES and others part of broader widening participation (WP) work (as</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
<p>them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options. Currently not included in the EORR as a risk for ES</p>	<p>This can occur early on in a student's education and affect aspects such as their Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 course choice, or it may apply at the point of application, and limit both the choice and quality of a student's application.</p>	<p>success rates even where prior attainment has been controlled for.</p> <p>This may subsequently result in lower progression rates to higher education overall, and to highly selective providers and/or certain course types for some groups of students.</p> <p>It may result in lower on course attainment, continuation and completion rates.</p> <p>It may also result in differences in labour market outcomes, where poor guidance on Key Stage 5 subjects and/or university course choice subsequently results in a narrowing of options for certain student groups.</p>	<p>not all ES will be able to be identified as such in secondary education / application / pre-entry stage).</p> <p>Making sure information for ES is included in general information sessions for prospective students including through tailored marketing and institutional literature e.g. <a href="#"><u>Care-experienced and Estranged Students Guide</u></a>, University Centre Leeds / <a href="#"><u>Studying Without Family Support</u></a>, University of Salford and ES specific information on institutional websites.</p> <p>Dedicated transition support working with feeder schools, colleges, homeless charities, etc.</p>
<p>Risk 3: Perception of higher education Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified. Currently not included in the EORR as a risk for ES</p>	<p>Even where a student has the grades and information or guidance required to choose a particular course or provider, they may not apply.</p> <p>This can be due to a number of factors, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial or familial circumstances</li> <li>• perception of the provider</li> </ul>	<p>When attainment is controlled for, a reluctance to apply for certain providers and/or courses by some students can lead to lower application rates to certain providers and/or courses by students with certain characteristics, and subsequently lower progression rates.</p>	<p>Specific admissions policy/section relating to ES.</p> <p>Contextual offers</p> <p>Prioritised access for ES onto WP programmes, prioritised or guaranteed acceptance onto preparatory programmes and courses.</p> <p>Financial bursary and other financial support provided</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited course provision (such as having no part-time courses).</li> </ul>		
<p>Risk 4: Application success rates</p> <p>Students may not be accepted to a higher education course, or may not be accepted to certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.</p> <p>Currently not included in the EORR as a risk for ES</p>	<p>For courses or providers that are competitive, students may not have equal application outcomes despite having the same attainment at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 as another student.</p> <p>This can be due to admissions practices (such as the way a personal statement or interview is assessed, or the use of entrance exams), or the way in which a student makes an application.</p> <p>It may also be due to students applying in greater numbers to certain subjects, or differences in the perceived quality of qualification types.</p>	<p>Differences in the way that an application is assessed, even where two students have the same prior attainment, may result in lower acceptance rates (measured in the proportion of offers made to applicants) and subsequently lower progression rates to certain courses and/or higher education providers for students with particular characteristics.</p> <p>This impact may also be felt where students with certain characteristics apply in greater proportions to certain subjects, causing a 'funnel affect'.</p>	<p>Support for drafting personal statements and interview preparation with specific reference to ES experiences and skills (see <a href="#">UCAS</a>)</p> <p>Clearing 'scripts' to give ES opportunity to share any personal circumstances or support needs.</p> <p>ES eligible to apply to institutional access schemes</p> <p>Contextual offers</p> <p>Research Scottish Government Nov 2022: <a href="#">Estranged student in Further (FE) and Higher Education (HE) – experiences</a></p>
<p>Risk 6: Insufficient academic support</p> <p>Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.</p>	<p>Whatever the grades that a student has when they enter higher education, different students may require different levels of academic support.</p> <p>This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>their individual circumstances, such as personal health issues, special educational needs (SEN) diagnosis or home difficulties that impact on a student's ability to</li> </ul>	<p>If a student does not receive the necessary personalised academic support, they may achieve a lower degree attainment than they could have achieved, or they may withdraw from a course.</p> <p>Students may also experience poor mental health.</p> <p>Students may have less time to devote to non-academic activities than other students.</p>	<p>Supportive systems in place for ES, including sharing information with tutors etc. if permission given by student.</p> <p>Building in consideration of estrangement as part of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) course review.</p> <p>Effective CPD programmes for staff in range of different roles including academics/personal tutors.</p> <p>Study skills/catch up modules.</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
	<p>engage to the fullest extent with their academic studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• differences in educational experiences before university that did not equip them with the same level of relevant skills or knowledge as other students.</li> </ul>	<p>These may subsequently further impact on progression rates through to graduate study or to employment.</p>	<p>Priority for mental health support.</p> <p>Funding to support work placements, other course-related opportunities, etc.</p> <p>See: OfS Report Nov 2022: <a href="#">Student characteristics data: student outcomes</a></p>
<p>Risk 7: Insufficient personal support</p> <p>Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.</p>	<p>Although many students are able to receive personal support from external sources, experiences of this will be different for some students. This may have a negative impact on their wellbeing and academic success.</p> <p>Non-academic support comes in many different forms, from personal tutors or mentors to access to sports facilities or accommodation support.</p> <p>For many students, extracurricular activities are a core part of the higher education experience but these are not equally accessible.</p>	<p>Students who do not receive sufficient personal support on course, including (but not limited to) mentoring, advice, counselling and access to extracurricular activities may be more likely to report lower wellbeing and/or sense of belonging, experience poor mental health, achieve lower-than-expected on-course attainment and lower continuation rates. These may be experienced for all students but may be experienced more acutely by students with certain characteristics.</p> <p>Differential access to personal support relating to careers progression and/or less time to participate in enrichment activities may lead to differential outcomes in terms of progression into further study and employment.</p>	<p>Named contact or team with specific responsibility for ES</p> <p>ES key contact or team offer informal catch-ups over coffee, social events, sending birthday/Christmas cards and gifts</p> <p>Signposting to, and liaison with, pastoral support services</p> <p>Peer support through informal student-led or institution-led groups or societies, peer mentoring</p> <p>Free or subsidised gym membership / financial support including from the student union for participation in social activities</p> <p>Support with accommodation depending on type of institution (ranging from all-year accommodation to support with travel/subsistence costs for students at non-residential institutions)</p> <p>Funding to support employment (e.g. priority for ES to apply to institutional ambassador</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
			schemes), work placements, employability opportunities, etc.
<p>Risk 8: Mental health Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Students may experience mental ill health that makes it hard to cope with daily life, including studying. These difficulties may be pre-existing, or may develop during higher education study.</p> <p>Some students may have difficulties that are not formally diagnosed or treated, and may experience delays in receiving a diagnosis, treatment or support. Some students may not report mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Where students do have an existing diagnosis, the transition point between adolescent and adult services may lead to delays in treatment.</p>	<p>Where students experience poor mental health, this may result in:</p> <p>Lower continuation rates and lower course attainment it may also lead to lower progression rates into further study or the labour market.</p>	<p>Regular check-ins and proactive communications particularly at difficult / triggering times of year</p> <p>Bespoke support plans and/or fast-tracking to support</p> <p>Priority access for ES to institutional wellbeing services, named contact within wellbeing service. Removal of cap on number of counselling sessions for ES.</p> <p>Peer support networks (face-to-face socials, social media groups)</p> <p>Understanding of the impact of estrangement on higher education study, trauma-informed institutional culture</p>
<p>Risk 10: Cost pressures Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.</p>	<p>This is likely to be due to multiple factors, including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some students undertaking more paid work than is feasible alongside full-time study</li> <li>• students experiencing poorer mental health as a result of financial concerns</li> <li>• students having to support families.</li> </ul>	<p>Increasing costs of living, if not adequately addressed, may result in an increasing number of students undertaking part-time or full-time employment alongside their studies, poorer mental and physical health for students, reduced attendance on-course, and less time to study.</p>	<p>Financial bursary for ES and priority access for ES to other financial support e.g. hardship/discretionary funds and summer vacation support</p> <p>Priority access for ES to digital support fund and disability support</p> <p>Fully funded welcome packs / starter kits for new ES</p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
		<p>Together, these may increase the risk of lower on-course attainment rates and lower continuation rates. The cost of living crisis may also impact on access to university, as students may be less likely to apply to higher education and/or limit their higher education choices according to financial need (e.g. a student may only apply to a provider near their home, or may limit their choice to part-time courses).</p>	<p>Access to specialist financial guidance and money management support</p> <p>Funding to support seeking employment e.g. priority for ES to apply to institutional ambassador schemes, work placements, employability opportunities, job interviews, etc.</p>
<p>Risk 11: Capacity issues Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education, such as suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>Increasing student numbers may limit a student's access to key elements of their expected higher education experience. This could disproportionately affect those without the financial resources or wider support to react appropriately.</p> <p>For example, where appropriate student accommodation is limited, students with less money or who are accepted at a late stage in the application cycle, may not be able to secure suitable housing.</p>	<p>An increase in capacity issues may lead to issues such as lower quality teaching, less academic and personal support and low availability and/or quality of accommodation for students.</p> <p>These in turn may lead to poorer mental health for students, worse on-course degree attainment and lower continuation rates.</p> <p>Concerns over accommodation issues may also lead to changing application patterns for some students (i.e. increasing propensity to apply to home/close providers). It may also lead to worse labour market outcomes for students, if</p>	<p>ES Bursaries/access to other financial support such as hardship funds – see above.</p> <p>Support with accommodation depending on type of institution (ranging from all-year accommodation to support with travel/subsistence costs for students at non-residential institutions), providing deposit support and guarantor support for private and university accommodation.</p> <p>If providing free or subsidised university accommodation, consider extending this to ES living in private accommodation.</p> <p>Research paper: <a href="#"><u>It's All About The Money: The Influence Of Family Estrangement, Accommodation Struggles and Homelessness On Student Success in UK</u></a></p>

Risk Area	Explanation	Impact	Effective practice, data and research examples
		there are reductions in relevant services.	<u>Higher Education</u> Rebecca Bland, Stand Alone Charity & Dr Lucy Blake, Edge Hill University
<p>Risk 12: Progression from higher education Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience. Currently not included in the EORR as a risk for ES</p>	<p>Some students do not have equal opportunity to access certain outcomes from higher education, such as further study or progressing into employment that is reflective of their qualification levels.</p> <p>This can be due to factors such as financial position, access and time to undertake extracurricular or supra-curricular activities, and lack of information and guidance.</p>	<p>Differences in equality of opportunity relating to progression may lead to lower progression to further study for students with particular characteristics.</p> <p>It may also lead to low diversity in specific areas of the labour-market, lower earning for students with certain characteristics, and lower levels of job satisfaction.</p>	<p>Preferential access to work experience/employability initiatives accompanied by ES specific financial and mental health support.</p> <p>Targeted bursaries, grants and scholarships to access study abroad programmes.</p> <p>Named careers contact for ES and regular engagement throughout programme of study.</p> <p>Financial help for graduation, graduation bursary and accommodation support over summer transition period out of HE into employment.</p> <p>Financial support for ES for Postgraduate study</p>

NB: Risks where 'estranged' is not currently highlighted as a characteristic in the EORR but which are included in this table: Risk 1: Knowledge and skills, Risk 2: Information and guidance, Risk 3: Perception of higher education, Risk 4: Application success rates, Risk 8 Mental Health support Risk 12: Progression from higher education.

Risks where 'estranged' is not currently highlighted as a characteristic in the EORR and which are not included in this table:

- Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode: Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.
- Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus: Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.