

CIOL

Chair of Council Report

2017-2023





A Profession in Transition: 2017 - 2023 and beyond

We are the Chartered Institute of Linguists, the only Royal Charter body for language professionals, linguists and language lovers in the world. We are passionate about shaping and sustaining a world which values every language, every culture, every linguist. Our crest embodies our motto of **Universal Understanding**. Without professional interpreters and translators, multilingual educators, standard-setters, cultural navigators and practitioners in business, journalism, humanitarian aid and politics, who else could connect the world and bring different languages, cultures and perspectives into our workplaces and homes so we can stay informed and interconnected as global citizens?

Global social, economic and political upheaval

Over the past 18 months several waves of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the Russian invasion of Ukraine have paralysed economies with lockdowns, food shortages, disrupted supply chains, rocketing inflation and a painful 'cost of living crisis'. It has been challenging for many sectors and jobs. Our [CIOL Insights: The Language Professions II](#) set out some of the impacts on the language profession. Add to this, low rates of pay, the decline of support for language education in Further and Higher Education, the increasing sophistication of machine translation and the risk of substandard work from unqualified sources at unprofessional fees, then the context for professional linguists has not been spared its share of financial and economic distress.

Far from 'business as usual'

Our extensive networks of UK and international members and partners tell us that they are having to adapt their ways of working and that they need to reconsider every financial

outlay. Our own operations have also been disrupted. Although we have strong loyalty with membership retention at over 90%, the economic crisis has meant it has been a challenging task to sustain viable numbers of qualification candidates in the UK and internationally. To ride out the upheaval we have had to adapt, reprioritise and deliver quicker and better with fewer resources – without compromising on quality and standards. This has not been easy. We have put the transformation to online at the forefront of everything we are doing, opening up new opportunities to better support current and future generations of linguists to gain qualifications, develop and diversify their services, upskill and re-skill, to embrace technology as an enabler without losing their pivotal role in the work and workflows of professional language services and language learning.

Nevertheless ... opportunities to celebrate

At the end of 2022 we entered into an exciting new digital learning partnership with **Duolingo**, the world's most downloaded education app with 40+ languages and many millions of learners worldwide. Our **RVC** Accreditation scheme embeds linguistic standards through a robust Recognition, Validation or Certification of university language programmes and has been positively adopted in the UK, China and South-East Asia. Our flagship Level 7 [Diploma in Translation](#) (DipTrans) has been supplemented by the new, Ofqual regulated Level 6 [Certificate in Translation](#) (CertTrans) which is already drawing in early career linguists as well as those returning to languages after a career break or later on in life.

Should you have any doubt about the positive value or future of languages

or linguists, take a few moments to browse through the [CIOL Voices](#) blogs on our website, or simply read CIOL Honorary Fellow and Vice President Baroness Jean Coussins' keynote at the 2022 CIOL Awards Ceremony in London [Positive about Languages - why there has never been a better time to be a linguist](#).

Accrediting Linguists

With the turbulent economic headwinds that the world is facing, our qualifications suffered the biggest impact financially. Despite this, we are still committed to delivering high quality exams that test and prove the skills and proficiency of Public Service Interpreters in the UK and Translators around the world. While these professionals are at the heart of our purpose, we are also keen to encourage more early-career linguists to progress their careers with the confidence that their credentials will unlock jobs in the growing number of language roles in business, education and the wider economy. To do this we have:

- aligned our membership grades, language level frameworks and qualifications in order to give more clarity to the public and prospective employers;
- extended our Affiliate memberships for those studying languages, for a CIOL qualification or who use languages as a part of their work;
- refocused our qualifications portfolio, rolling our L6 Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI) onto the L6 Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) Law, which is now accepted by the UK Police for the Police Approved Interpreter and Translator (PAIT) scheme; and

- together with the Association of Translation Companies (ATC), agreed a statement of equivalencies which recognises that CIOL's qualifications meet ISO 17100 requirements.

Developing and Supporting Linguists

We have invested in our relationships with government, public services, universities and industry to expand opportunities for aspiring and practising linguists. We are proud that over 25% of our growing candidate and member community is international. We have done this by:

- evolving our Divisions and Societies in the UK, Europe and internationally;
- engaging our volunteer members who have developed more than 40 CPD opportunities during the past 12 months with 8,000+ linguists registering to attend; the majority of CPD is provided free of charge and is available through a dedicated CIOL members library;
- driving knowledge-learning and knowledge-transfer with the CIOL Experts Week (sponsored by Trados in spring 2022);
- developing our extensive 24/7 digital archive of resources, workshops, insight surveys, our self-service mentoring platform, our flagship journal *The Linguist* as well as our global Find-A-Linguist search engine;
- introducing reports based on feedback, research and insight from our members, which gives the profession, new starters and stakeholders a wider understanding of the challenges

faced by linguists as well as the opportunities within; and

- working with other professional language stakeholders as well as with Charity Translators to support those affected and displaced by the conflict in Ukraine.

We have also transformed Members Day into the annual CIOL Conference giving more linguists from a wider range of backgrounds the opportunity to attend. A highlight of 2022 was undoubtedly our two-day in-person conference Bringing Language Professionals Back Together with our annual CIOL Awards, the latter celebrating outstanding contributions to the language profession with guest of honour our Royal Patron, HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO.

Representing Linguists

Each and every linguist is an ambassador for languages and to amplify this, we launched our online member-led [CIOL Voices](#) series in 2022. Over the years we have developed an extensive network of almost 40 [Higher Education](#) and [Business & Corporate Partners](#); together, we champion values and standards, drive student engagement, language learning and research. We engage regularly with the British Academy, the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML), the Association of University Language Communities (AULC) as well as with GCHQ on the development of language capacity and capability in UK Government and the Civil Service.

We also actively share our concerns. Notably about the future pipeline and demand for qualified, registered and fairly-paid public service interpreters. As a member of the PI4J coalition we are working closely with NRPSI and other Public Service Interpreting (PSI)

stakeholders and with the Ministry of Justice and Police.

Over and above this we also:

- achieved a notable milestone in 2022 by taking on the lead role as Secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APPG) in a partnership arrangement with the British Council, British Academy and UCML which puts us at the heart of parliamentary knowledge sharing, consultation and advocacy for languages and linguists;
- contributed to the 2022 public consultation for UK Languages, Cultures and Societies undergraduate degrees; and
- continued to co-host vibrant, high-profile panel presentations at the Language Show led by CIOL Honorary Fellow and Vice President Bernardette Holmes MBE.

Leadership and Management

During the past 18 months we made a number of significant governance and other reforms, uniting CIOL as a Royal Charter and membership body with our Charity and Awarding Organisation, CIOL Qualifications. We are now more than ever 'One CIOL'. These changes were well timed as they helped us to become more resilient while enabling more creative, joined-up ways of working which have undoubtedly helped us better navigate the economic and financial turbulence.

At the heart of everything we do is our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). Since my taking over as Chair of the ED&I committee in 2021 we have, among other things, made fundamental changes to our governance structures to embed

transparent and accessible succession planning thereby transforming the pipeline and diversity of volunteers joining our committees.

Needless to say, CIOL Council ensures that as 'One CIOL' we are fully compliant with all legislation relating to sound governance and business practices as well as taking care of our salaried human resources; this included my overseeing the seamless transition between the previous Chief Executive, Ann Carlisle, to John Worne in 2020. Without the unwavering commitment of John and his staff team, we simply would not have come through the pandemic or be where we are today, albeit there are still more financial and market challenges to overcome.

Highlights and milestones

After joining Council in 2017 I was later appointed Chair in 2018. At that time, I said that we were at a crossroads in our history and that my vision would be to create a strong legacy for the next generation. I believed we ought to prioritise four things which were:

- (1) strengthen our unique Chartered Linguist brand,
- (2) review opportunities for more (inter)national cooperation,
- (3) develop more thought leadership relating to language development, and
- (4) ensure that our governance model be fit for purpose and could withstand scrutiny.

I am delighted to say that all of these are now firmly embedded in our overall business strategies.

Additional milestones have been the launch of the CertTrans last year which attracted candidates from 20 different countries, as well as coming through the pandemic – one of the toughest periods in CIOL's history. CIOL Qualifications transition to wholly online delivery has also been a huge change that was rapidly embraced and skilfully implemented by the exceptionally dedicated and hard-working staff team.

The credibility and international pulling-power of the CIOL brand has gained in strength. In essence, we now deliver more opportunities for linguists to grow than ever before. At the end of the day though, the ultimate prize worth aiming for is to ensure our members are engaged in fulfilling jobs with appropriate pay and that the language profession overall gets the recognition that it deserves.

Outlook

While there are still clouds on the horizon, we are optimistic about what we can achieve in 2023 and beyond.

We have opened up greater dialogue and engagement than ever before between CIOL and UK Government and our language partners and stakeholders, determined to improve standards, pay and conditions for language professionals and to encourage greater recognition of high-quality qualifications and professionalism at the heart of standards and expectations for UK public services.

We are excited about new plans to leverage our unique strength as a Royal Charter body and work is underway to further strengthen and internationalise the Chartership brand. Work is also underway

to scope new qualifications and certifications to make us more accessible to the international community and more attractive for linguists in commercial roles. To support the growing diversification of the roles of linguists we have already made our CIOL Code of Professional Conduct more inclusive and we are working on pathways to membership for early-career linguists and affiliates.

I am very proud to be able to look back over the past six years. It has been a momentous experience and one which I am incredibly grateful for. I want to thank everyone who has been part of my own journey within CIOL. You are too many to name individually. Nevertheless, this report wouldn't be complete without repeating my very sincere thanks to John Worne and his team, thanking the current Chair of the CIOL Qualifications Educational Trust Board (ETB), Prof. Jocelyn Wyburd, thanking Richard Hardie HonFCIL, President of CIOL who has been a guiding light throughout, and in particular thanking all the members of Council, committees and volunteers I have had the pleasure of working with so far. We couldn't have achieved so much without each other.

I wish the very best of luck to my successor, Steve Doswell, and look forward to remaining an active member both of CIOL and of the global community of linguists we are proud to support.

Judith Gabler

Judith Gabler FCIL CL
Member and Chair of Council
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