



## Oldham College Case Study

# Empowering Communities through Education and Collaboration

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# Overview

Oldham College has been a cornerstone of education and opportunity in its community since its establishment in 1893. Renowned for offering a diverse range of qualifications across various fields, the College has consistently focused on enabling local minority and disadvantaged groups to develop skills and access meaningful employment opportunities. Recognising the alignment of these objectives with its mission, LanguageLine Solutions (LLS) forged a strategic partnership with Oldham College to enhance its educational offerings and support community development.

## Challenge

Oldham College's commitment to inclusivity and opportunity includes the provision of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses. These courses empower limited-English-speaking members of the community to achieve a level of proficiency in English, enabling them to transition into long-term employment. However, a gap was identified: for students completing the ESOL Level 2 examinations, there were limited opportunities for further progression into specialised fields that leveraged their linguistic skills.

## Solution

LLS identified this challenge as an opportunity to introduce the Community Interpreting Level 3 (CLI) course, a tailored programme designed to equip ESOL graduates with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience needed to enter the field of community interpreting.

## Key Contributions by LLS:

### 1. Course Design and Implementation

LLS supported the college to develop comprehensive course content for the CLI Level 3 programme and facilitate its implementation at Oldham College. By collaborating with an Awarding Body recommended by LLS, the college ensured the course met high standards and provided students with recognised qualifications.

### 2. Volunteer Support

To keep course costs affordable for students, LLS donated 250 hours of qualified interpreter time in 2024 alone. These interpreters assessed students' work, including glossaries, role plays, and basic translations, ensuring rigorous evaluation and practical feedback towards their final certification.

### 3. Accessibility Enhancements

LLS designed a bespoke assessment process to identify high-performing ESOL students for the CLI Level 3 course. Additionally, as the course is Level 3 and delivered by a college, students had the option to fund their studies via student loans, making it more accessible to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

# Results

Since its inception in 2018, the CLI Level 3 course has been a resounding success:

- **High Completion Rates:** In the 2023/24 academic year alone, 29 students achieved the CLI Level 3 qualification. A total of 135 students have successfully passed this course to date.
- **Increased Demand:** Interest in the course consistently surpasses target numbers, highlighting its relevance and popularity.
- **Career Progression:** Graduates have gone on to pursue further qualifications and excel in the interpreting field.

## Continued Support and Innovation

Building on the programme's success, LLS has continued to support Oldham College in multiple ways:

- **Advanced Opportunities:** LLS has collaborated with its training delivery partners to promote career progression for graduates, including high-level Police assignments. Students are vetted and upskilled to meet the stringent requirements of such roles.
- **Streamlined Selection Process:** LLS developed a simple yet effective assessment to identify the most suitable candidates for the CLI course, ensuring resources are allocated to those with the greatest potential.

## Impact

The CLI interpreting course has not only enhanced the career prospects of its graduates but also addressed a critical need for community interpreters, fostering greater inclusivity and communication within the local area. By bridging the gap between education and employment, LLS and Oldham College have jointly created a sustainable model of community empowerment.

## Conclusion

The partnership between Oldham College and LanguageLine Solutions exemplifies the power of collaboration in addressing community challenges. Through innovative course design, dedicated volunteer efforts, and a shared commitment to accessibility, this initiative has transformed the lives of countless individuals, paving the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.





# Client Feedback

“ We are delighted with the positive and collaborative relationship we have developed with Language Line Solutions. Their support has been essential to the success of our Community Interpreting course, particularly in providing access to their highly qualified interpreters for student assessments. This partnership ensures our learners experience a professional and practical assessment process that mirrors real-world interpreting standards.

Language Line Solutions also plays a vital role in supporting our students as they reach the end of the course. Through informative presentations and personalised guidance, they assist our students in navigating the onboarding process to join their team of freelance interpreters. This invaluable support helps our learners transition from theoretical study to practical application, equipping them with the confidence and skills needed to succeed in a live interpreting environment. We highly value this partnership and the opportunities it provides for our students to embark on meaningful careers in the interpreting profession.”

**- Saima Ali, Community Interpreting Level 3  
Programme Tutor at Oldham College**

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