

# The RCSLT chain of office – craft and legacy

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Take a closer look at the RCSLT’s very own chain of office, passed down and worn by each Chair of Trustees when they start their tenure. We’ll explore the design, the story behind its creation, and what it represents.

The chain of office is more than a ceremonial accessory; each RCSLT Chair who wears it adds their own chapter to its history. After the Annual General Meeting (AGM) today, Wednesday 9 October, the chain will be passed from Dr Sean Pert to Irma Donaldson, continuing the legacy of excellence and shared commitment of advancing the speech and language therapy profession.



The RCSLT Chair chain of office carries a rich history of leadership and progression. This tradition didn't start with RCSLT. Wearing a symbolic chain, originally known as a livery collar, dates back to the Middle Ages. It was then that a person or organisation would gift clothes, badges or chains to servants or followers to signify loyalty, service, and authority. Today, it continues to symbolise the responsibility and traditions of the office it represents.

Our current chain of office was created for the RCSLT’s Golden Jubilee in 1995. Former Chair Sandra Robertson sought to create a timeless symbol for the organisation. She turned to her lifelong friend, silversmith Helen Marriott, to design and craft the chain.

Sandra’s vision was to celebrate her passion for speech and language therapy and to create something that would inspire future leaders of the profession. Helen, former head of silversmithing and jewellery at Glasgow School of Art, incorporated elements of personal and artistic symbolism into the design.

Helen recalled: “Sandra went to Glasgow High School which was situated in an old area of Glasgow called Garnethill, and she would have walked past Glasgow School of Art every day which was in the next street.”

“The squares featured in the design of the art school were a prominent detail found throughout the art school building, where I had studied and worked. I used them in the design as a nod to her history.”

– Helen Marriott

It took three days to make and polish the full chain. The badge was handmade, and the chain purchased. The disc was cut out of sheet and the squares pierced with a fine saw. The right side has a shallow dome which was soldered to the disc, then the chain was attached.



Sandra’s influence extends beyond her donation to RCSLT. For Sean, the chain carries a deep personal connection representing a significant moment in his journey as a SLT. During her time as Chair of RCSLT, Sandra was also Sean’s programme course lead at Manchester Metropolitan university.

Sean reflects: “I am a coal miner’s son, gay and the first person in my family to go to university, so wearing the chain of office felt like the completion of a circle, started almost thirty years ago by Sandra inspiring me to become a SLT and get involved with college.”

Pictured: Former chair Sandra Robertson with Dr Sean Pert and friend during their graduation

“Leaders in speech and language therapy are so important as role models and in helping the next generation of SLTs and this is what the chain of office symbolises for me.”

– Dr Sean Pert

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