

Presiding Officer job description

Polling stations are open from 7am until 10pm on election day. Staff are required to arrive at the polling station at 6.15am to set up. Staff are not permitted to leave the premises during polling hours in order to maintain the secrecy of the vote. The role of the polling station staff is to ensure that voters can cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere.

The Presiding Officer

Presiding Officers are responsible for the conduct of the ballot in the polling stations, and they must have a good knowledge of the voting procedures.

The role

- Comply with any instructions from the Returning Officer.
- To take charge of a polling station.
- To ensure that all electors are treated impartially and with respect.
- To maintain the secrecy of the ballot.
- To supervise the Poll Clerk(s) at the polling station.

Duties

Before election day

- Attend or complete a training session and briefing.
- Liaise with contact person for designated polling station before election day to confirm arrangements for key collection/opening and closing the building.
- In a multiple polling station, make contact with other Presiding Officer(s).
- Make contact with Poll Clerk(s) to check travel arrangements to and from polling station.
- Collect the ballot box and contents before the poll and keep secure.

Election day

- Transport ballot box and contents to polling station.
- Erect polling booths. This involves some lifting.
- Organise the layout of the polling station taking all voter needs into account.
- Be aware of access issues at the polling station.
- Be responsible for health and safety at the polling station for all staff and visitors.
- Ensure the polling station is opened on time.
- Ensure that all signs and instructions are clear, visible and remain in place.
- Keep the polling station neat and tidy.
- Instruct and supervise the work of the Poll Clerk(s).
- Checking photographic ID.
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and unissued.
- Check and mark electors' electoral numbers in the register of electors and on the corresponding numbers lists.
- Issue ballot papers to voters.
- Ensure that voters cast their votes in secret and put them into the (correct) ballot box.
- Provide assistance to voters where appropriate.

- Receive postal votes delivered by hand.
- Manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, for example, candidates, agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and Observers, and ensure they do not interfere with the voting process.
- Be polite and professional when dealing with all visitors to the polling station and always remain impartial.
- Monitor the activities of tellers outside polling places.

Close of Poll

- Ensure the polling station is closed on time.
- Supervise the dismantling of the polling station and ensure the building is returned to good order.
- Complete the ballot paper account and associated paperwork; pack in accordance with instructions given by Returning Officer.
- Deliver the ballot box and associated paperwork to the count location as designated by the Returning Officer.

Essential

- A basic understanding of the election process.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to explain procedures to a variety of people.
- High level of personal presentation, reliable, calm under pressure and have a professional manner as you are representing the council.
- Good administration skills and attention to detail.
- Be able have a use of a transport which is insured for business use.
- Be able to lift polling booths and ballot boxes etc.
- This role has been identified as public facing in accordance with Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016; the requirement to fulfil all spoken aspects of the role with confidence in English applies.

You will be working a long day, so you must provide your own refreshments and take appropriate breaks throughout the day to avoid tiredness. Polling station staff are not permitted to leave the premises during hours of poll.

*Please note: We do use a number of our own staff and supplement this with additional staff from outside who we hold on our database. When appointing staff, we consider the person's experience; availability; preferences; where they live or whether they have access to transport and are prepared to travel.

The Returning Officer's decision on individual appointments is final and we will not normally notify unsuccessful applicants or enter into correspondence regarding unsuccessful applications.