

Presiding Officer

(Running the polling station where people vote)

The role of Presiding Officer is only available to those who have worked successfully as Poll Clerk previously.

The role of polling station staff is to ensure that voters are able to cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere.

Polling Stations are open from 7am until 10pm. On polling day, staff are required to arrive at their polling station by 6.15am to set it up in time for opening and should not leave the premises during polling hours.

Presiding Officers are responsible for conduct in their polling station and must have a good knowledge of the voting procedures.

As a Presiding Officer you will be responsible for complying with all instructions and ensuring the integrity and secrecy of the ballot.

You will assign work to the Poll Clerk(s), ensuring the accuracy of the poll and account for all the ballot papers.

You will be responsible for collecting and delivering your ballot box and you may have responsibility for ensuring your polling building is open and closed on the day.

As a Presiding Officer you will:

- Comply with any instructions given to you
- Take charge of the polling station
- Ensure that all electors are treated impartially, with respect and in a helpful, polite and professional manner
- Maintain the secrecy of the ballot
- Supervise the Poll Clerk(s) at the polling station to ensure they are doing their job correctly
- Ensure accurate completion of statutory paperwork
- Responsibility for complying with legal obligations

Duties

Before election day Presiding Officers are required to

- Attend a training session and a briefing

- Liaise with the contact person for your polling station well before polling day to confirm arrangements for key collection and opening and closing the building
- Make contact with your Poll Clerk(s) to check arrangements and to brief them on any necessary procedures
- Collect and check the ballot box and contents at the end of your Presiding Officer briefing
- Keep the ballot box and contents secure until they are handed back at the close of poll

On election day Presiding Officers are required to

- Transport the ballot box and contents to the polling station
- Set up polling booths (this will require some lifting)
- Organise the layout of the polling station taking all voter needs into account
- Be aware of any 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)
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and un-issued
- Check and mark electors' electoral numbers in the register of electors and on the corresponding numbers lists
- Ensure Voter ID requirements are met and undertake the relevant checks/refusals
- 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, including helping those that have physical difficulties in accessing the Polling Station
- Receive and record the receipt of postal votes delivered by hand and complete the refusal procedure where necessary
- Manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, e.g. candidates, agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and observers, and ensure they do not interfere with the voting process
- Monitor the activities of tellers outside the polling place
- Be polite and professional when dealing with all visitors to the polling station and remain impartial at all times.

At the close of poll, Presiding Officers are required to:

- 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 correctly and to pack up documents in accordance with the instructions given by the Returning Officer
- Deliver the ballot box and associated paperwork to the designated location

Working hours and breaks

A Presiding Officer will work for approximately 17 hours on election day. You will be required to 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 the hours of poll.

A Presiding Officer is not permitted to have carried out duties on behalf of any political party or candidate at the election. All staff will be required to sign their agreement to this and to maintain the secrecy of the poll.

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience of having worked at a Polling Station
- Ability to work independently under pressure
- Access to a car which is also insured for Business Use
- Literate and numerate
- Good timekeeping
- Ability to treat people fairly and with respect at all times
- Ability to remain politically neutral- this includes online and on social media
- Not connected to, nor will assist, any candidate or party at the election
- Compliance with requirement for secrecy and instructions regarding the use of social media
- Acceptance of waiving the Working Time Directive for the period of employment
- Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation

Desirable

- Previous line-management or supervisory experience

- Previous customer-service experience
- Diplomacy and tact when working with members of the public
- Working knowledge of the electoral process

Poll Clerk

(working in a polling station where people vote)

The role of polling station staff is to ensure that voters are able to cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere.

Polling Stations are open from 7am until 10pm. On polling day, staff are required to arrive at their polling station by 6.15am to set it up in time for opening and should not leave the premises during polling hours.

As Poll Clerk you will assist the Presiding Officer to run a polling station. You will help to set up polling station equipment, assist in the issue of ballot papers to members of the public, mark the electoral register and assist in the accurate completion of paperwork.

As a Poll Clerk you will:

- Assist the Presiding Office and follow any instructions given
- Ensure that all people who come to vote are treated impartially, with respect and in a helpful, polite and professional manner
- Maintain the secrecy of the ballot
- Take responsibility for your work

Duties

- Before election day, Poll Clerks are required to attend a training session

On election day a Poll Clerk is required to help the Presiding Officer to:

- Set up polling booths (this will require some lifting)
- Prepare the polling station for the opening of poll
- Keep the polling station neat and tidy
- Check and mark voters' electoral numbers in the register of electors and on the corresponding numbers lists
- Undertake Voter ID checks
- Issue ballot papers to voters
- Ensure that voters cast their votes in secret and put them into the correct ballot box
- Receive and record the receipt of postal votes delivered by hand
- Provide assistance to voters where appropriate, including helping those that have physical difficulties in accessing the Polling Station
- Undertake any other polling station duties on the instruction of the Presiding Officer

- At the close of poll, the Poll Clerk is required to help the Presiding Officer to dismantle the polling station and ensure the building is returned to good order

Working hours and breaks

A Poll Clerk will work for approximately 16 hours on election day. You will be required to 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 the hours of poll.

A Poll Clerk is not permitted to have carried out duties on behalf of any political party or candidate at the election. All staff will be required to sign their agreement to this and that they will maintain the secrecy of the poll.

Person specification

Essential

- Literate and numerate
- Good timekeeping
- Ability to carry out work as instructed, even under pressure
- Ability to treat people fairly and with respect at all times
- Ability to remain politically neutral- this includes online and on social media
- Not connected to, nor will assist, any political party or candidate at the election
- Compliance with requirement for secrecy and instructions regarding the use of social media
- Acceptance of waiving the Working Time Directive for the period of employment
- Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation

Desirable

- Experience of working at a polling station
- Previous customer-service experience
- Diplomacy and tact when working with members of the public

Count Assistant

(counting the ballot papers after the election)

The purpose of the count staff is to open ballot boxes, verify that the number of votes in the ballot boxes matches the number of ballot papers issued and then count the votes for each candidate in the election.

Count Assistant's duties are straightforward but undertaken in an environment that can at times be pressurised as the count is undertaken in the presence of candidates, their counting agents or other observers. The greatest of care must be taken to help prevent mistakes from happening.

As a Count Assistant you will:

- Attend training if required
- Have read and agreed to the terms of the Secrecy provisions
- Act impartially at all times and respect confidentiality of material handled
- Refrain from engaging in conversations with candidates, agents, councillors or guests
- Act upon instructions from your supervisor
- Be able to count ballot papers quickly and accurately

Duties

Count Assistants will work in teams of varying sizes. A Count Assistant will be expected to:

- Count the number of ballot papers in a ballot box
- Check the counting of others as required
- Inform the supervisor of the number of ballot papers counted
- Divide ballot papers into votes for individual candidates/ options and count as instructed
- Identify doubtful papers and bring them to the attention of the supervisor
- Recount if required
- Comply with the requirements of health and safety legislation at all times, taking due care of themselves, colleagues and others in attendance
- Be prepared to work until the count concludes (adequate breaks and drinks will be provided)
- Be required to sign their agreement to maintain the secrecy of the poll.

A Count Assistant is not permitted to have carried out duties on behalf of any political party or candidate at the election.

Person specification

Essential

- Literate and numerate
- Ability to handle and count large volumes of confidential papers
- Good timekeeping
- Ability to treat people with fairness and respect at all times
- Ability to remain politically neutral - this includes online and on social media
- Not support a political party /candidate at the elections
- Not connected to, nor will assist, any candidate or party at the election
- Ability to comply with the requirement for secrecy and instructions regarding the use of social media
- Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation

Desirable

- Ability to work as a team member
- Previous experience as a Count Assistant