

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: PRESIDING OFFICER

Accountable to: RETURNING OFFICER

Accountable for: POLL CLERK(S)

Purpose of Job: To be responsible for the conduct of the ballot, the smooth running of the polling station and allowing eligible registered electors to cast their votes.

Principal Accountabilities:

Presiding Officers have an overall responsibility for the polling station and carry out an additional supervisory role. Also, in law, there are a number of duties that only Presiding Officers can carry out. These are:

1. requesting that a police officer remove someone from a polling station
2. limiting the number of accredited observers present at any one time
3. deciding to refuse to issue ballot papers to an elector if their photographic ID raises reasonable doubt as to whether the voter is the elector they claim to be or if it is reasonably suspected to be a forgery
4. deciding to refuse to issue ballot papers to an elector who has not answered the prescribed questions satisfactorily

Before Election Day

1. Accept your appointment and read and agree to the terms of the Requirement of Secrecy.
2. Complete/attend any compulsory training and briefing sessions provided by Electoral Services and read the polling station staff manual provided.
3. Contact your Poll Clerk(s) using the details provided on your appointment letter and liaise with the caretaker/key holder of your polling station.
4. Collect your ballot box(es), ballot papers and sundries on the collection day notified by Electoral Services.
5. You must not be employed by or on behalf of any political party or candidate involved in this election, including in a voluntary/unpaid capacity. You must not sign a candidate's nomination papers.
6. Provide documentary evidence to Electoral Services of your eligibility to work in the UK, if not provided in the past.

Election Day

Presiding Officers are responsible for the conduct of the poll in the polling station and they should have a sound knowledge of the voting procedures. The Presiding Officer's main duties

are to:

1. You will be on duty from 6.30am (Polls open at 7.00am) until the close of poll at 10.00pm and be responsible for the opening and setting up of the polling station by 7.00am when the polls open.
2. You will not be permitted to leave the polling station while the poll is taking place.

You will be expected to:

1. comply with any instructions issued by the Returning Officer;
2. liaise with the key-holder of the polling place prior to polling day;
3. organise the layout of the polling station;
4. open and close the polling station on time;
5. instruct and supervise the work of Poll Clerks (sharing across multi stations if applicable);
6. ensure the secrecy and security of the ballot;
7. contact Electoral Services with any queries/issues that arise throughout the day;
8. be polite and professional in dealing with electors, candidates and agents, and others entitled to be present in the polling station act impartially at all times;
9. maintain order in the polling station;
10. ensure voters are able to cast their vote safely including by making sure that any public health advice from the Returning Officer is observed throughout the day;
11. account and be responsible for all the ballot papers, paperwork and the ballot box(es);
12. ensure that when either they or their Poll Clerk issues ballot papers, they bear the official mark and are issued correctly to eligible electors;
13. ensure that the proper procedure for voting is followed, ensuring that the corresponding number list(s) is marked correctly;
14. (if required by the Returning Officer) maintain accurate records of electors who attend the polling station without an accepted form of photographic ID;
15. provide appropriate support to assist disabled voters and voters with additional requirements;
16. ensure all equipment for disabled voters is displayed and ready to use;
17. ensure only children, or companions of voters with disabilities who have completed the necessary declaration, are able to accompany a voter into the polling booth;
18. ask the prescribed questions of voters when necessary, including when asked to do so by candidates or agents or before the issue of tendered ballot papers;
19. deal with special voting procedures as required;
20. accept or reject any postal votes handed in at the polling station and complete the postal vote return form accurately;
21. manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, e.g. candidates and agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers, and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process include in the polling station log a record of all those who are present in polling stations for the purpose of observing proceedings;
22. monitor the activities of tellers outside polling places and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process;
23. ensure that all signs and notices are clear, visible and remain in place throughout the day;
24. keep the polling station neat and tidy;
25. deliver the ballot box and all official paperwork back to the Count Centre after the close of poll;
26. be available to answer any queries regarding your official paperwork once you have delivered it to the Count Centre.

Where there is more than one polling station in a building, the Returning Officer or election staff may designate one of the Presiding Officers to take an overall responsibility for the polling place.

Payment

Payment will be made through the Council's outsourced third party payroll provider into your bank account on the date as advised on your appointment letter, or as soon as is practicable after the election.

Health and Safety

Every employee while at work has a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Risks involved are moving and setting up heavy equipment, driving in the early hours of the morning and again late at night after a long day.

Polling day can be more than 16 hours and may be busy at times depending on the type and number of polls being held. Whilst you can take breaks, they can be ad hoc in nature due to the flow of voters.

Consenting to working during the hours of poll and in excess of the maximum working hours provided by the Working Time Directive.

Equality

The Returning Officer bases its employment practices on the concept of equal opportunity. As an equal opportunity employer the Returning Officer opposes all forms of discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, nationality, national origin, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability or age.

No employee or job applicant will be disadvantaged by any condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.