

Electoral Services
Casual Election Staff
Presiding Officer Job Description and Person Specification

Polling Stations operate from 7.00am until 10.00pm. On Election Day staff are required to arrive at the Polling Station at 6.30am to set up the equipment. 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 are able to 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 manage proceeding within 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).
- To account for all ballot papers.

Duties:

Before Election Day

- Compulsory training sessions and briefings will be provided by the Electoral Services Office.
- Liaise with contact person for designated polling station before Election Day to confirm arrangements for key collection/opening and closing the building.
- In multiple polling stations, 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 will involve 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).
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and un-issued.
- Ensure that only eligible voters are issued ballot papers.
- 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 vote 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, eg. 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 remain impartial at all times.
- Monitor the activities of tellers outside the 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 the Returning Officer.
- Deliver the Ballot Box and associated paperwork to the Count location as designated by the Returning Officer

Presiding Officers will work a 16 hour day, so they must provide their 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.

The Returning Officer is not permitted to employ anyone who is/or has carried out duties on behalf of any political party or candidate at the election.

All staff will be required to sign an agreement to maintain the secrecy of the poll.

Person Specification – Presiding Officer

Skills/Personal Attributes	
Essential	Desirable
<p>Experience at working at a Polling Station either as a Presiding Officer or as a poll clerk on at least two other occasions.</p> <p>Ability to work independently under pressure.</p> <p>Literate and Numerate.</p> <p>Good timekeeping.</p> <p>Ability to remain politically neutral.</p> <p>Diplomacy and tact when working with members of the public.</p> <p>Physically able to undertake the duties of the task (lifting and moving ballot boxes and polling booths)</p>	<p>Basic understanding of the election process.</p> <p>Previous experience in a customer service environment.</p> <p>Experience in a range of elections – Local, Parliamentary or European.</p>
Other	
Essential	Desirable
<p>Must not have worked in support of a political party / candidate at the election, whether paid or unpaid.</p> <p>Must be able to travel to and from polling station / count venue and transport ballot boxes.</p>	