

Role profile for a Presiding Officer

The Polling Station Team

The polling station team will be led by a Presiding Officer, who will be assisted by a minimum of one Poll Clerk (but generally more). The primary role of the team is to ensure that electors are able to cast their votes in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere.

Polling stations are open to electors from 7.00am until 10.00pm, although staff are required to arrive by 6.15am in order to set up the equipment and prepare for the poll.

Each individual will work a minimum sixteen-hour day and will be required to waive their rights under the European Working Time directive. Breaks are not guaranteed, and staff are not permitted to leave the premises during the hours of poll, unless to take a cigarette break or check on external notices.

The Returning Officer is not permitted to employ anyone who is or has carried out duties on behalf of any political party, group or candidate at the election or has been found guilty of an electoral offence.

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

- To comply with any instructions from the Acting/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; and
- To supervise the Poll Clerk(s) and report on their performance.
- To determine whether to issue a ballot paper based on photo ID presented.

Duties

Before polling day

- Read the polling station handbook, including Voter ID new requirements;
- Attend training sessions as directed by Electoral Services;
- Liaise with the contact person for the polling station to confirm arrangements for opening and closing of the building and/or key collection;
- Visit the polling station to ensure suitable facilities are in place;
- In multiple polling stations, to make contact with the other Presiding Officer(s);
- Contact the Poll Clerk(s) to confirm arrangements;
- Collect the ballot box and check the contents before polling day; and
- Keep the ballot box and contents secure until handed back to the Acting/Returning Officer.

Polling Day

- Transport the ballot box and contents to the polling station;
- Erect the polling booths;
- Organise the layout of the polling station, taking the needs of voters into account;
- Ensure the polling station is accessible to disabled voters;
- Be responsible for the health and safety of staff and visitors at the polling station;
- Ensure the polling station is opened on time (7:00am);
- Ensure that all signs and instructions are clear, visible and remain in place;
- Keep the polling station neat and tidy;
- Instruct, supervise and be responsible for the work of the Poll Clerk(s);
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and unissued;
- Ensure that electors' electoral numbers are checked, marked and entered onto the corresponding numbers list, register of electors and absent voting lists as required;
- Supervise the issuing of ballot papers;
- Ensure that electors cast their vote(s) in secret and put them in the (correct) ballot box(es);
- 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, e.g. polling station inspectors, candidates, agents and Electoral Commission observers, and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process;
- Be polite and professional when dealing with visitors to the polling station and remain impartial at all times; and
- Monitor the activities of tellers and candidate/party supporters outside the polling station;
- Complete at close of poll the ballot paper account and accompanied paperwork.

Additional new duties

- **Solely** responsible for determining whether to issue an elector with a ballot paper based on the photo ID presented.
- Providing advice and assistance to support the accessibility of the poll.
- In addition to the close of poll paperwork. During polling hours, the PO must complete the following documents:
 - Voter Identification Evaluation Form [VIDEF]
 - Ballot Paper Refusal List [BPRL]

Close of Poll

- Ensure that the polling station is closed on time (or after the last elector in the queue at 10:00pm has voted) and ensure that no ballot papers are issued after this time;
- Supervise the dismantling of the polling station and ensure the building is returned in good order;
- Complete the ballot paper account and associated paperwork and pack it in accordance with instructions given by the Returning Officer;
- Ensure the building is secured; and

- Deliver the ballot box and associated paperwork to the count location as designated by the Returning Officer.

Senior Presiding Officer

In a multiple polling station, the Acting/Returning Officer may appoint a single Senior Presiding Officer to oversee all staff/proceedings. This may include managing two polling stations.

Please note that no guarantees can be given as to working location or colleagues. Staffing appointments will be made according to the needs of the election.

Person specification for a Presiding Officer

Essential	Desirable
<p>A good understanding of the electoral process</p> <p>Experience in a range of elections – local government, UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary</p> <p>Must have use of a vehicle for collection and delivery of ballot box(s) and large stationery bag [Car Insurance is required for any car used by Presiding Officers in connection with election work and current proof of insurance and a valid MOT certificate must be provided on request]</p>	<p>To have worked as a Presiding Officer at another local authority</p> <p>To have worked as a Poll Clerk in the London Borough of Enfield on at least four occasions</p>
Skills/Personal Attributes	
<p>Excellent communication skills</p> <p>The ability to explain procedures to a variety of people</p> <p>High level of personal presentation and professional manner</p> <p>A commitment to customer care</p> <p>Good administration skills and attention to detail</p> <p>A team player with a flexible attitude</p> <p>Calm under pressure</p> <p>Punctual and reliable</p> <p>Able to lift ballot boxes</p> <p>Able to lift polling booths</p>	<p>Experience of supervising staff</p>
Other	
<p>Must not have worked in support of a political party, electoral group, candidate or agent at the election, whether paid or unpaid</p> <p>Be willing to attend training sessions as required</p> <p>Must not have been convicted of an offence under electoral law</p> <p>Acceptance and adherence to the Requirement of Secrecy</p>	

Acceptance of waiving rights under the European Working Time directive for the period of employment	
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