

Presiding Officer Job Description



RETURNING OFFICER APPOINTMENT OF STAFF		DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
JOB TITLE: PRESIDING OFFICER		
REPORTS TO :		Inspecting Officer, Deputy Returning Officer(s) and Returning Officer
HOURS OF WORK: 6.30am to 10.30pm on Election Day (Hours of poll are 7.00am to 10.00pm)		FEE: Set by Election Fees for the particular Election. Circ: £214 plus mileage fee
1.	MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presiding Officers are responsible for the conduct of the ballot in the polling stations and they must have a good knowledge of voting procedures. To maintain the secrecy and security of the ballot and to be the face of an efficient and democratic election process. 	
2.	CORE REQUIREMENTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:	
1	Not be related (<i>in a relationship or blood relative etc</i>) to any candidate standing for the election.	
2	Be aged 18 years of age or older.	
3	Not undertake any canvassing or work on behalf of any candidate or agent for the elections (whether paid or unpaid). Including subscribing to any nomination papers.	
4	Sign an appointment form to legally confirm eligibility to work for the Returning Officer. Acceptance of Waiving of Working Time Directive for period of employment.	
5	To have read and understood the statement of secrecy. Acceptance and adherence to the terms of Statement of Secrecy and social media policy. To enforce the requirements of regulation throughout the hours of poll.	
6	In the event of emergency illness during the previous evening or early morning that will result in you unable to attend the polling station, contact the Deputy Returning Officer immediately on the mobile number provided.	
7	Must comply with the Council's Officer Code of Conduct, health and safety, equalities and data protection obligations.	
8	Access to own car which is also insured for Business Use.	
9	Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation.	
10	Ability to remain politically neutral.	
Before Election Day		
11	Attend training session (<i>lasts 90 minutes, for which a training fee is paid</i>) by the Deputy Returning Officer and read the Polling Station manual provided.	

12	<p>Liaise with your Poll Clerk with regards to travel arrangements, arrival at the polling station and closing the polling station.</p> <p>Ensure both arrive for 6.30am to set up and prepare to open.</p> <p>In a multiple polling station, make contact with other Presiding Officer(s).</p>
13	<p>Liaise with the caretaker or keyholder with regards to the opening and closing of the building. Where the polling station is a double polling station, contact the other presiding officer to discuss arrangements.</p>
14	<p>Attend a briefing session and collect all ballot papers, paperwork and ballot box(es) on the date/time specified (usually on the Tuesday before polling day). <i>(The ballot box and ballot papers can weight up to 10kg).</i></p>
15	<p>Prior to polling day verify the contents thoroughly against a check list to ensure that you have all of the ballot papers, paperwork, contents, equipment required for polling day.</p>

Election Day

16	<p>Transport ballot box(es) and contents to assigned Polling Station.</p>
17	<p>If unable to access polling stations by 7am, use vehicle or other suitable area to begin to issue ballot papers to electors.</p> <p>Poll must begin at 7am and end at 10pm.</p>
18	<p>Remain at the polling station for the entire hours of poll and ensure that the polling station is opened and closed on time.</p>
19	<p>To set up and assemble polling booth(s) <i>(Polling booths have an average weight of 22kg)</i>, other equipment <i>(including ramps)</i> and set the polling station up for use on polling day.</p>
20	<p>Organise the layout of the polling station taking voter needs in to account. Be aware of any access issues at the polling station.</p>
21	<p>Instruct and supervise the work of poll clerk(s)</p>
22	<p>Be polite and professional in dealing with voters, candidates, agents and other visitors to the polling station.</p>
23	<p>Act Impartially at all times.</p>
24	<p>Manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station e.g. candidates, agents, Electoral Commission representatives and observers, and ensure they do not interfere with the voting process.</p>
25	<p>Monitor the activities of tellers outside polling places</p>
26	<p>Ensure that all signs and statutory notices are clearly displayed and remain in place. That no unsolicited material is left in the polling booths</p>
27	<p>Keep the polling station neat and tidy.</p> <p>Be responsible for Health and Safety at the station for yourself and others.</p>
28	<p>Account and be legally responsible for all ballot papers (issued and un-issued), paperwork and ballot boxes issued.</p>
29	<p>Not issue any tendered ballot papers without first calling the Elections Office.</p>
30	<p>Ensure that proper procedure for voting is followed and the secrecy of the vote is maintained in the polling station. (Voters can cast their votes in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere). Ensure voters place their ballot paper(s) into the (correct) ballot box.</p> <p>Keep order in the polling station and in event of assistance contact the Inspecting Officer and/or the police.</p>

	31	Deal with any special voting procedures and provide assistance to voters where appropriate.
	32	Ensure the proper procedure for voting is followed such as providing assistance to voters who cannot read the ballot paper, providing assistance to people unable to vote unaided and voters assisted by a companion.
	33	Issue ballot papers to eligible electors.
	34	Record the elector numbers on the corresponding number list. Mark elector's record on the Register of Electors as instructed by the Returning Officer.
	35	Receive and record postal votes delivered by hand. <i>(Placed in the provided bag for collection by the Inspecting Officer or to take at the close of poll to the count venue).</i>
	36	Mobile phone to be switched on throughout polling day for communication with the Election Team.
Close of Poll		
	37	Ensure the polling station is closed on time at 10pm precisely, observing the queue procedure at the close of poll.
	38	Complete the ballot paper account(s) and associated paperwork, pack in accordance with instructions given by Returning Officer
	39	Supervise the dismantling of the polling station and ensure the room is returned to good order.
	40	As soon as possible after 10pm return the ballot box(es) and associated paperwork and deliver to the count location as designated by the Returning Officer.
	41	Failure to undertake part of the duty or requirement of the position is a breach of official duty and liable to prosecution under the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983 or other relevant act for the election employed held.
<p>You may be required to perform additional duties not listed above which are appropriate to your role and experience to ensure the smooth running of the election process. Job descriptions can be amended at the Returning Officer's discretion to ensure service needs are met.</p>		
3	Payment of Fee Payment will be made by BACS following the election.	
4.	<p>Supervision/Management of People Number of staff reporting to jobholder and nature of supervision.</p> <p>Direct: Poll Clerk(s)</p> <p>One or two Poll Clerks who assist during the hours of poll. Supervise that the Poll Clerks check of the eligibility of electors to vote in the polling station and mark on the Register of Electors that they have received a ballot paper.</p> <p>Provide training on the process for issuing ballot papers, recording the elector number on the corresponding number list and marking the register to allow Presiding Officer to take breaks away from the table used for issuing of ballot papers.</p>	

5. Work Environment – work demands, physical demands, working conditions & work context

Work demands: Movement of moderate weight equipment, the paperwork required for running of the election process.

Physical demands: Carrying of ballot box and ballot papers (up to 10kg). Setting up polling equipment (up to 22kg) with assistance from the Poll Clerk.

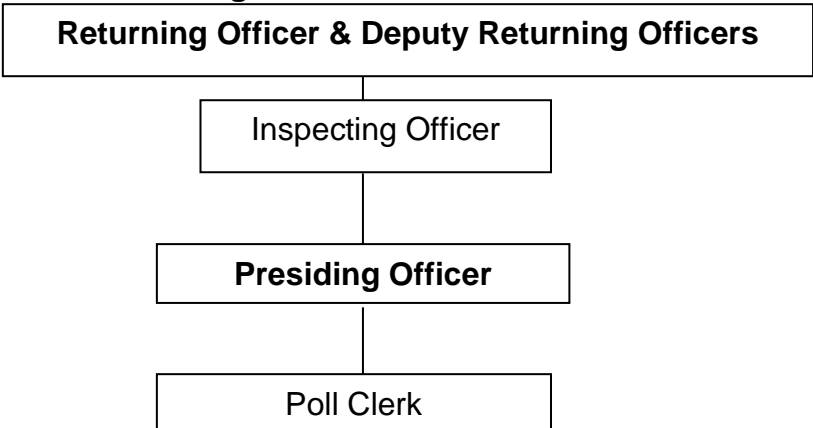
Working conditions: Election duties in a polling station involve working a 15 hour day. Venues used may require staff to dress appropriate to the weather conditions for the time of year.

All venues provide kitchen and toilet facilities, unless informed otherwise, on site.

Staff must take regular breaks, but are not permitted to leave the polling station except for the legal reasons detailed in the relevant act (fire or adjournment due to riots) at staggered times. There is no official closure for lunch or evening meals, the polling station must remain open for the full 15 hours to allow electors to vote.

Work context: Staff must be present in the polling station at all times, all refreshments must be taken along at the start of the day and regular breaks to avoid tiredness.

6. Position of Job in Organisation Structure



PERSONAL SPECIFICATION PRESIDING OFFICER		
	Essential	Desirable
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have a good working knowledge of the voting process. • To have worked previously as a Poll Clerk on at least two occasions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in a range of elections e.g. local, Parliamentary or European. • Working knowledge of the electoral process. • Previous customer-service experience.
Skills/Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication skills and the ability to explain procedures to a variety of people. • High level of personal presentation and professional manner. • A commitment to customer care • Good administration skills and attention to detail. • A team player and flexible attitude. • Ability to work flexible hours (including night time) and locations. • Ability to work independently under pressure. • Calm under pressure. • Good timekeeping. • Punctual and reliable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to lift polling booths/ballot boxes/ramps etc • Previous line-management or supervisory experience • Diplomacy and tact when working with members of the public.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully literate and numerate. 	

January 2017

Returning Officer, Richmondshire District Council, Mercury House, Station Road, Richmond DL10 4JX

To be reviewed: January 2019