

Presiding Officer (PO) / Standby Presiding Officer (SPO) - Job Description

Purpose of the Polling Station Team

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 7.00am until 10.00pm. On polling day, staff will be working a 16.5 hour day which includes setting up and closing down the polling station. In order to maintain the secrecy of the vote and safeguard the integrity of the process, staff should not leave the premises during polling hours.

Presiding Officers are responsible for the conduct of the ballot in the polling stations and must have a good knowledge of voting procedures. You will be expected to:

Before Polling Day:

- Read through your appointment letter thoroughly to ensure you understand the instructions provided by the Returning Officer and agree to the statement of secrecy
- Attend any compulsory training sessions and briefings provided by the Electoral Services Office and read the polling station handbook provided
- Liaise with the booking contact for your polling station to confirm arrangements for key collection/opening and closing the building
- Visit the polling station in advance to ensure polling day arrangements are in place and as expected
- Contact your Poll Clerks at least a week before and ensure they are aware of what you expect from them. If working in a dual station, make contact with the Presiding Officer of the other team to agree arrangements
- Collect your ballot box(es) and all equipment on the day in which you are notified by Electoral Services, check the contents and keep secure.
- Set up the polling station the evening before the poll or on polling day before the poll opens, organising the layout of the polling station to take all voter needs into account

On Polling Day

- Ensure the polling station is fully set up and ready to open for 7:00am and that all signs and instructions are clear, visible and remain in place
- Dress in neutral colours & act impartially, respectful, helpful and with politeness and professionalism at all times. Conduct must be exemplary due to the high profile nature of elections
- Instruct and supervise your poll clerk/s ensuring the proper procedure for voting is being followed and that any queue is being monitored and managed.

- Make decisions as to determining acceptable Voter ID, Voter Authority Certificates and Anonymous Elector Documents and record information appropriately on the relevant paperwork
- Organise privacy checks where required and record appropriately on the relevant paperwork
- Ensure paperwork is completed for every postal vote delivered to the polling station by hand in accordance with postal vote handling legislation
- Maintain the secrecy of the ballot and keep the polling station neat, tidy and secure at all times. Provide clear signposting for voters to put their ballot papers into the (correct) ballot box
- Be responsible for health and safety and accessibility at the polling station for all staff and visitors. Provide assistance to voters where appropriate and ensure they are treated according to their needs
- Take charge of the polling station and manage the attendance of others entitled to be present inside or outside of the venue, e.g. candidates, agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission, tellers and observers, and ensure they do not interfere with the voting process
- Close the polling station at 10:00pm and follow the close of poll instructions, supervise the dismantling of the polling station and ensure the building is left in good order
- Account and be responsible for ballot papers (issued and un-issued), ballot boxes and paperwork.
- At close the of poll, complete and return all official paperwork and deliver the ballot box to the Count Centre or drop off point assigned to you.

In return, you can expect:

- Detailed face to face training in your role and responsibilities
- Additional online training at national scale elections with access to the training module throughout the election period
- Full written instructions
- All stationery and equipment to carry out your duties
- Regular visits on polling day from a Polling Station Inspector
- Direct-line contact to the Elections Office who will assist with queries and advise on any contentious issues
- Payment to be made within four weeks of polling day into your nominated bank account

Personal Specification

Essential

- Experience of having worked at a Polling Station
- Access to own car which is insured for business use
- Ability to lead and manage a team
- Fully literate and numerate
- Good timekeeping, punctual and reliable
- Good communication skills
- Ability to carry out work as instructed
- Ability to work independently and remain calm under pressure

- Attend all relevant training as necessary
- Ensure the requirements of relevant guidance and regulations are met as expected which is provided in training
- High level of accuracy and attention to detail

Desirable

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

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This information is provided for guidance only and may be subject to change without notice.