ELECTORAL SERVICES
CASUAL ELECTION STAFF

PRESIDING OFFICER
JOB DESCRIPTION

WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Polling Station Staff team

Polling stations are open from 7.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. On election day, staff are required to arrive at the polling station at 6.15 a.m. to set up the equipment. Staff are not permitted to leave the premises during polling hours to maintain the secrecy of the vote.

The role of the polling station staff is to ensure that voters can cast their vote, in secret, free from influence, and in a calm environment.

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.

Presiding Officers are responsible for complying with all instructions and maintaining the secrecy of the ballot. They will assign work to the Poll Clerk(s), ensuring the accuracy of the poll and account for all the ballot papers. They will be responsible for collecting and delivering the ballot box and ensure the polling building is open and closed on election day.

They must:

- Attend training if required.
- Comply with any instructions from the Returning Officer.
- Take charge of a polling station, ensuring the election is conducted fairly and in accordance with procedures.
- Supervise poll clerks and other staff at the polling station; assigning tasks and providing guidance to ensure all duties are performed accurately and efficiently.
- Ensure electors are treated impartially, with respect and in a professional manner.
- Provide assistance to electors as needed.
- Maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

Duties:

<u>Before election day</u>

- Undertake training and attend briefings provided by the Electoral Services Officer, where applicable.
- Liaise with contact person for designated polling station before election day to confirm arrangements for key collection/opening and closing the building.
- In a multiple polling station, contact the other Presiding Officer(s).
- Contact Poll Clerk(s) to check travel arrangements to and from polling station.
- Collect the ballot box and contents before election day and keep secure until they are handed back at the close of poll.

On election day

- Transport ballot box and contents to polling station.
- Setting up polling booths. This involves 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 open 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).
- Oversee breaks for polling station staff but ensure all staff remain in the polling station at all times throughout the hours of polling.
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and un-issued.
- Helping electors understand voter ID is required and advising on acceptable forms of ID.
- Ensuring voter ID is checked before ballot papers are issued.
- Enable electors to present their ID in private when requested.
- Refusing a voter ballot paper where you do not consider the ID to be a good likeness or consider it to be a forgery.
- 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 votes in secret and place their ballot papers into the correct ballot box.
- Provide assistance to voters where appropriate, including those that have disabilities to accessing the polling station and to cast their vote.
- Receive and record the receipt of postal votes delivered by hand.
- Manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, e.g., candidates, agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and observers, and ensure they do not interfere with the voting process.
- Monitor the activities of tellers outside polling places.
- Be polite and professional when dealing with all visitors to the polling station and always remain impartial.

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 correctly and to pack up documents in accordance with instructions given by Returning Officer.
- Deliver the ballot box and associated paperwork to the Count location as designated by the Returning Officer.

Supervising Presiding Officer

In a multiple polling station, the Returning Officer may appoint a single Supervising Presiding Officer to oversee all staff/proceedings.

Eligibility:

The Returning Officer is not permitted to employ anyone who is/or has performed duties on behalf of any political party or candidate at the election, or who has been convicted of an offence under electoral legislation.

Post holders must be 18 or over and entitled to work in the UK (in accordance with the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996). They must provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK (known as a 'right to work' check).

The right to work check must be completed prior to taking up the job role, so we ask successful applicants to provide this evidence as soon as possible.

Polling station staff must consent to working in excess of the normal working hours provided for by the Working Time Directive.

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

Rate of pay and working time:

On election day, polling station staff are not permitted to leave the polling station premises at any point during hours of poll. You will be required to plan for this and provide your own refreshments/ food for the duration of the poll.

- Set rate of pay: £412.56 (including holiday pay and 1.5-hour training pay) *
- Date of employment: Thursday 6th May 2027
- Start time: 6.15am
- Total working time: 17 hours (plus 1.5-hour training).
- Place of work: TBC (at a designated polling station).

* Elections staff do not pay Class 1 National Insurance contributions for fees received at parliamentary or local elections.

Polling station staff – Right to Vote:

Whilst working at a polling station you would not be able to leave to vote at your usual polling station. It is recommended that you apply for a postal or proxy vote in advance of polling day. To do so, please visit Vote in UK elections - GOV.UK to apply.

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PRESIDING OFFICER
PERSON SPECIFICATION

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXPERIENCE	
Essential	**Desirable**
To have previously worked as a Poll Clerk on at least two occasions. A basic understanding of the election process.	Previous experience in a range of elections e.g., parish, local, parliamentary, or European. Previous line management or supervisory experience. Previous customer service experience.

SKILLS/PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	
Essential	**Desirable**
Ability to work independently and calm under pressure. Strong communication skills, Ability to speak clearly and to relate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. Literate and numerate. Ability to always treat people fairly and with respect. Ability to remain politically neutral. High level of personal presentation and professional manner. Commitment to customer care Good administration skills and attention to detail. Team player and flexible attitude. Punctual and reliable.	Able to lift polling booths/ballot boxes etc.

OTHER	
Essential	**Desirable**
Must not have worked in support of a political party/candidate at the election, whether paid or unpaid. Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation. Be willing to attend training/briefing sessions as required. Acceptance of Waiving of Working Time Directive for period of employment. Acceptance and adherence to the terms of Statement of Secrecy.	Use of car to carry two ballot boxes to/from polling station, which is insured for business use.