



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTORAL SERVICES, ELECTION STAFF

JOB DESCRIPTION

PRESIDING OFFICER

The polling station team

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.

Polling Stations are open from 7.00am until 10.00pm. On Election Day staff are required to arrive at the Polling Station at 6.15am 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.

They should manage the flow of electors entering and exiting the polling station. They will need to ensure that the polling station is operated in compliance with any government guidelines surrounding Covid-19 that may be in force on polling day. All staff must comply with instructions set out by the Returning Officer or their staff.

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 take charge of 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) at the polling station

Duties:

Before Election Day:

- Where applicable, attend training sessions and briefings 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 a multiple polling station, 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 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 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)
- Manage the flow of electors in and out of the polling station
- If required encourage social distancing both inside and outside the polling station
- If required ensure face coverings are worn inside the polling station unless an exemption is in place
- Maintain regular schedule for cleaning polling equipment throughout the day
- If required encourage use of hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the polling station
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and un-issued
- 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 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 polling places
- You will be working a 16 hour day, so you must provide your own refreshments and take appropriate breaks throughout the day to avoid tiredness. Polling station staff are not permitted to leave the premises during hours of poll

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 Returning Officer
- Deliver the Ballot Box and associated paperwork to the Count location as designated by the Returning Officer

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 maintain the secrecy of the poll.

Payment

The fee for this role is set for each election according to the election type. Payments are made via the Returning Officer's payroll and not through the Ashford Council payroll. Payment will be made to a designated bank account as soon as is practicable after the election.

Person Specification - Presiding Officer

Experience	
Essential	Desirable
A basic understanding of the election process	Experience in a range of elections eg local, Parliamentary or European
	To have worked previously as a Poll Clerk on at least two occasions

Skills/Personal Attributes	
Essential	Desirable
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	
Calm under pressure	
Punctual and reliable	
Able to lift polling booths/ballot boxes etc.	
Use of a car with appropriate insurance	

Other	
Essential	Desirable
Must not have worked in support of a political party/candidate at the election, whether paid or unpaid	Use of car able to accommodate two ballot boxes
Be willing to attend training/briefing sessions as required	
Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation	
Acceptance of Waiving of Working Time Directive for period of employment	
Physically able to lift and carry heavy equipment in accordance with manual handling advice	

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

