

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Job Description for Presiding Officer

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 to 10.00pm. On polling day, staff are required to arrive at the polling station at least 45 minutes earlier to set up the equipment in time for opening. In order to maintain the secrecy of the vote and safeguard the integrity of the process, staff may not leave the premises during polling hours.

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 procedure.

The Role:

- Comply with any instructions from the Returning Officer;
- Manage the polling station;
- Ensure that all electors are treated impartially and with respect;
- Supervise the Poll Clerk(s) at the polling station;
- Account for all ballot papers;
- Comply with all secrecy requirements and maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

Duties:

Before Polling Day:

- Attend a training session provided by the Returning Officer. Full training in your role and responsibilities will be provided along with written instructions.
- Liaise with contact person for designated polling station in advance of polling day to confirm arrangements for key collection/opening and closing of the building.
- Visit the polling station to ensure polling day arrangements are in place.
- In a split polling station, make contact with the other Presiding Officer(s).
- Make contact with Poll Clerk(s) to brief them on the necessary procedures.
- Collect the ballot box and contents, together with the polling screens (if required) before the poll and keep secure.

Polling Day:

- Transport ballot box and contents to the polling station, together with the polling screens (if required).
- Erect the polling screens.
- Organise the layout of the polling station using the instructions provided and 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)
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and un-issued.
- Check and mark elector numbers in the register of electors and on the corresponding numbers list, ensuring they are accurately completed, and on the proxy list.
- Ensure that only eligible electors vote.
- Issue ballot papers to voters

- Ensure that voters cast their votes in secret and without influence and that they put the ballot paper(s) into the correct ballot box.
- Analyse Photo ID's for voters.
- Provide assistance to voters where appropriate.
- Receive postal votes delivered by hand and record/deal with as per the procedure.
- Manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station and ensure that they do not interfere in 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 stations.
- You will be visited by a Polling Station Inspector to ensure that the polling station is open and being operated efficiently.

Close of Poll:

- Ensure the polling station is closed on time, having allowed all those in a queue at 10.00pm to cast their vote.
- Supervise the dismantling of the polling station and ensure the building is returned to good order.
- Complete the ballot paper account(s) and associated paperwork, as well as pack up documents in accordance with the instructions given by the Returning Officer.
- Deliver the ballot box and associated paperwork as directed by the Returning Officer.

You will be working at least a 16 hour day, so you must provide your own refreshments and take appropriate breaks throughout the day, although polling station staff are not permitted to leave the premises during hours of poll.

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 sign an agreement to this effect. You must not wear any colours relating to any Political Party.

Personal Specification – Presiding Officer:

Desirable	Essential
Previous customer service experience	Experience of working at a Polling Station on, at least 2 other occasions.
Previous line management or supervisory experience	Ability to work independently under pressure
Working knowledge of the electoral process	Literate and numerate
	Good timekeeping
	Ability to remain politically neutral
	Diplomacy and tact when working with members of the public.
	Physically able to undertake the duties of the task.