



Argyll & Bute Council Election Staff

Job Description: Polling Station Presiding Officer

The Polling Station Team

The role of the polling station team 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 7.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. On polling day, staff are required to arrive at the polling station sufficiently early, usually from 6am onwards, 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 must not leave the premises during polling hours.

The Presiding Officer

The role of a Presiding Officer (PO) is to ensure that voters are able to cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere. The PO at a polling station is appointed by the Returning Officer and is responsible for the conduct of the election in their polling station, and the other member(s) of the polling station team. The PO ensures the efficient running of the polling station including correctly following set voting procedures. The main contacts of the jobholder are members of the public; candidates and agents; officers of the Council, Electoral Commission and other election observers, and other external contacts

In order to maintain the secrecy of the vote and safeguard the integrity of the process, staff must not leave the premises during polling hours.

Main duties and responsibilities

The PO's main duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- organise the layout of the polling station, and set up the polling station where necessary;
- ensure that all polling station signs and statutory notices are clear, visible and remain in place throughout polling day;
- open and close the polling station on time;
- instruct and supervise the work of the Poll Clerk(s), including sharing your expertise and knowledge;
- issue ballot papers to voters, ensuring that they bear both the official mark and the unique identifying mark;
- make sure that the proper procedures for voting are followed, including ensuring the checking and marking of electors' electoral numbers in the register of electors and that the details are recorded on the corresponding number list;
- deal with special voting procedures;



- ensure that voters cast their vote in secret;
- maintain the secrecy of the ballot at all times;
- comply with any instructions issued by the Returning Officer or Election Office;
- manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, i.e. candidates and agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers;
- monitor the activities of tellers and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process;
- keep the polling station neat and tidy throughout polling day;
- account for and be responsible for all the ballot papers, paperwork and ballot boxes and;
- receive postal votes delivered by voters.

Conduct

The PO must act impartially at all times and be polite and professional in dealing with voters, candidates and agents, and others entitled to be present in the polling station

Skills/Experience/Knowledge

Presiding Officers must be able to display the following:

- good communication skills both oral and written;
- a commitment to and understanding of the principles of customer care and equal opportunities in service delivery;
- ability to complete complex paperwork;
- knowledge of the election process;
- the ability to understand and work to written guidance notes and
- have experience of customer focused frontline service.

Training

Training will be provided and attendance is compulsory.

Payment and Tax

The fee for each election is set by the Returning Officer and will be subject to income tax at basic rate.

Other Information

POs must be available to work from 6.00 am to 11pm or later on polling day. They are required to pick up the ballot box from a distribution point before polling day, set up the polling station, and be responsible for the ballot box until it is in the charge of the Returning Officer's staff at the close of poll.

Own car or use of a car is advantageous.



You will be working a minimum 16 hour day, so you must provide your own refreshments as Polling station staff are not permitted to leave the premises during hours of poll.

Important Note

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 who are appointed will be required to aid in maintaining the secrecy of the poll.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

Under the terms of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, only individuals who have a right to work in the United Kingdom are eligible for public appointments, including appointments made by the Returning Officer for elections. Staff who are offered an appointment will be asked to provide proof of eligibility.

Data Protection

The information which you provide will be processed by the Returning Officer, which is the 'data controller' for the purposes of Data Protection legislation and will only be used in relation to the proper management of the election process and in the administration of election staff. Information will be shared with our payroll service and, if you are required to work at any election, with HM Revenues & Customs for the purposes of payment and collection of taxes. We may also share your data in order to comply with our legal obligations to protect public funds.

You can find our full [Privacy Statement](#) on the Council Website.