

# Presiding Officer (PO)

## What does a Presiding Officer have to do?

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.

As a Presiding Officer, you will assign work to the Poll Clerk(s), ensuring the accuracy of the poll and account for all of the ballot papers.

You will be responsible for collecting and delivering your ballot box and you may have responsibility for ensuring your polling building is open and closed on the day.

A Presiding Officer will work for approximately 19 hours (full-time position; time includes collection of the equipment). Part-time roles are available:

**AM** 6.00am to 2.45pm

**PM** 2.00pm to 11.00pm (approximately 11:00pm depending on distance from your polling station to count venue)

You will be required to 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 the hours of poll.

A Presiding Officer is not permitted to have carried out duties on behalf of any political party or candidate at the election. All staff will be required to sign their agreement to this and to maintain the secrecy of the poll.

## Do I need to do anything before polling day?

- Attend a training session (this may be on-line or in person)
- Up to two weeks prior to polling day liaise with the contact person for your polling station before polling day and arrange an in-person visit to confirm arrangements for opening and closing the building and the facilities available to you on polling day
- After your visit to the polling station, make contact with your Poll Clerk(s) to check arrangements and to brief them on facilities at the venue and their time of arrival on polling day
- Two to three days before polling day – collect and check the ballot box and all equipment from BBond.

## How much will a Presiding Officer earn for the day?

Please scan the QR code for more details.

## What does a Presiding Officer have to do on election day?

### On election day Presiding Officers are required to (including the AM shift):

- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm. On polling day, the Presiding Officer is required to arrive at their polling station by 6:00am to set it up in time for opening. (Poll Clerks will arrive at 6.00am)
- Transport the ballot box and contents to the polling station
- Set up polling booths with the Poll Clerk(s) (this will require some lifting)
- Organise the layout of the polling station taking all voter needs into account
- Be aware of any 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) throughout the day
- Account for, and be responsible for, all ballot papers, issued and unissued
- Help electors understand that voter ID is required and advise on acceptable forms of ID
- Ensure that voter ID is checked before ballot papers are issued
- Refuse a voter ballot paper where you do not consider the ID to be a good likeness, or consider it to be a forgery
- Cover Poll Clerk duties during break times
- Ensure that voters cast their votes in secret and put them into the correct ballot box

- Provide assistance to voters where appropriate, including helping those that have difficulty to access 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 the polling place
- Be polite and professional when dealing with all visitors to the polling station and remain impartial at all times

### At the close of poll, Presiding Officers are required to (including the PM shift):

- Ensure the polling station is closed on time or follow the process for queuing electors
- 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 pack up documents in accordance with the instructions given by the Returning Officer
- Deliver the ballot box and associated paperwork to the designated location

### What are the requirements for becoming a Presiding Officer?

- Experience of having worked at a polling station is desirable
- Ability to work independently under pressure
- Access to a car for the whole day
- Literate and numerate
- Good timekeeping
- Ability to treat people fairly and with respect at all times
- Ability to remain politically neutral
- Previous line-management or supervisory experience is desirable
- Fit and capable of handling potentially heavy items of equipment

For more information please contact the Electoral Services team:

[electoral.staffing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.staffing@bristol.gov.uk)

Link to website:

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