

# Count Process

Each count is processed in two stages. Stage 1 is verification and Stage 2 is the counting and sorting of ballots into candidates/choices.

## Verification (Stage 1)

This is the process where we verify that all the ballot boxes have arrived from all the polling stations, and that in each ballot box contains the same number of ballot papers that were issued at each polling station.

Verification in Bristol always takes place immediately after the polling stations close at 10pm so the verification jobs typically begin at 9pm at the counting venue. Some jobs related to venue set up and preparation may begin at 6pm. Whatever your job you will be briefed by your team supervisor regarding the task and responsibilities.

## The Count (Stage 2)

The Count is where we sort the verified ballot papers into candidates or referendum questions to give us the result of the election or referendum.

At a single election the count takes place immediately after Stage 1 – Verification and the result declared. At a combined election where more than one election has taken place, the Count – Stage 2 may take place the following day or day(s), depending on the number of elections combined.

## What to consider before applying for verification or count jobs?

When employed to work at a count you are required to stay for the full duration of the event. A single election count usually takes between 6 and 7 hours, but if re-counts are requested then everyone is required to stay until the declaration of results has been made – this would be in the early hours of the next day.

Count halls can be cold because the doors must be open at the beginning of the process to allow ballot boxes to enter the counting hall from the polling stations. Please bring layers of clothing.

Please only bring a small bag to work with you. The count hall has limited space and your bag will be security checked on arrival.

You are not allowed to use a mobile phone inside the counting hall. This is to meet the secrecy requirements of the count and to do so would be an offence. You can use your phone outside of the count hall during break periods.

You must be politically neutral and not provide any form of assistance whatsoever to any candidates, agents, campaign groups or political parties in elections or referenda.

To learn more about working at a Bristol count, watch the [count assistant video](#).

## In the verification and counting process, what are the requirements for roles?

- Experience of working at a count venue is desirable
- Ability to work independently and under pressure
- Literate and numerate
- Good timekeeping
- Ability to handle and count large volumes of confidential papers
- Ability to remain politically neutral
- Ability to treat people fairly and respectfully at all times
- Ability to work well as part of a team
- Ability to remain politically neutral and not support a political party/candidate at the elections
- Not connected to, nor will assist, any candidate or party in the election
- Ability to comply with the requirement for secrecy and instructions regarding the use of social media.

## How much will you earn at the day?

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## What is the job specification for roles in Verification and the Count?

### Venue Clear Down Supervisor

Your role is to work as the link between the Logistics Supervisor, the staff working in the Ballot Validation area and the count sections. Manual handling of equipment is required for this role.

### Table Supervisor

You will work in a team of two or three and be responsible for opening the ballot boxes and distributing the ballot papers across your team of counters. You are required to instruct your team to count, ensuring you accurately record the total figure. Then you will move the next stage of the process – the count supervision. You will be responsible for distributing ballot papers from the verified box and instruct your team to count to achieve the result or candidate elected.

### Runner – PV

You will be responsible for the collection of specific envelopes from the Ballot Validation Officer's (BVO) table and delivering them to the BVO control table in the correct container. You are required to update the tick sheet on delivery of each packet. This role requires fast walking and should appeal to people who are fit and active.

### Runner – BPA

You will be responsible for the collection of a specific envelope from the Ballot Validation Officer's (BVO) table and delivering it promptly to the Section Control team. This role requires fast walking and should appeal to people who are fit and active.

### Ballot Validation Officer (BVO)

Your role is to greet Presiding Officers on arrival and carry out preliminary checks on items returned before allowing any paperwork to move forward to the verification and count process. The focus of this role is accuracy and diligence. When the equipment returning process is completed you will be allocated to another role. It is likely you will be helping out with packing down of the BVO equipment or working as count assistant. Manual handling of equipment is required for this role.

### BVO Directional Assistant

Your role is to work within a team to check in Presiding Officers upon arrival and direct them to a Ballot Validation Officer to carry out checks on the items they are returning. Once all Presiding Officers have been checked off your list you will be required to assist with the clear-down of the BVO area.

### BVO Transit Case Controller

Your role is to collect the transit case from the BVO table, take to the transit case storage area, carefully check each pocket on the transit case to ensure it's empty, collapse the case and stack ready for removal. Once all Presiding Officers have been through the ballot validation area you will be required to assist with the clear-down of the BVO area. Manual handling of equipment is required for this role.

### Ballot Validation Officer (BVO) – Supervisor

Your role will be to supervise a team of BVOs who receive the items from the Presiding Officers after close of poll. Your role supports and troubleshoots any issues to avoid there being any delay in checking Presiding Officers in.

### Section Control Manager

Your role will involve managing a Section Control team to oversee the processes, be responsible for the whole section's wellbeing and forward moving, as well as dealing with complex queries and liaison with central control and senior count staff.

### Section Control Officer

Your role will involve using Excel spreadsheets to record totals. You will be required to consolidate figures and produce documents that allow the flow of information to progress the verification and produce section-based totals and printed documents.

### Section Control Assistant

Your role will act as liaison with Table Supervisors and work closely with the Section Control Officer.

### Counting Assistant

Your role will be checking that the number of ballot papers contained in a ballot box is as expected and matches the number previously provided by the polling station's Presiding Officer. After the verification is complete you will then proceed to counting the ballot papers. Your table supervisor will instruct you on the process to follow.

### Porter

Your role will be to work within a team to assist the Logistics Supervisor to set up the venue and help the Presiding Officers when they arrive at the venue to drop off their ballot box and equipment from their polling stations. You will also be responsible for assisting in packing away equipment at the end of the evening. Manual handling of equipment is required for this role.

### Parking Attendant

Your role is to be responsible for the smooth movement of traffic in and around the venue. You will be required to direct staff and visitors to their designated parking area. You will direct Presiding Officers dropping off ballot boxes to a queuing system for the ballot box drop off point.

For more information please contact the Electoral Services team: [electoral.staffing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.staffing@bristol.gov.uk)

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