

# **NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **ELECTORAL SERVICES - ELECTION STAFF**

### **Job Description For 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 7.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. On polling day, staff are required to arrive at the polling station at least half an hour 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 should 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 procedures.

#### **The Role:**

- Comply with any instructions from the Returning Officer;
- To manage the polling station;
- To ensure that all electors are treated impartially and with respect;
- To supervise the Poll Clerk(s) at the polling station;
- To account for all ballot papers;
- To comply with all secrecy requirements and maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

#### **Duties**

##### **Before Polling Day:**

- Where applicable, attend training sessions and briefings provided by the electoral services office. Full training in your role and responsibilities will be provided along with comprehensive written instructions;
- Liaise with contact person for designated polling station well before polling day to confirm arrangements for key collection/opening and closing the building;
- Visit the polling station to ensure polling day arrangements are in place;
- 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 and to brief poll clerks on the necessary procedures;
- Collect the ballot box and contents, together with the cardboard polling screens before the poll and keep secure;
- The training session will take 2 hours. You will also need to spend approximately 2 hours doing preparatory work for the poll.

##### **Polling Day**

- Transport ballot box and contents to polling station;
- Erect polling booths;
- 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 electors' electoral numbers in the register of electors (and proxy list) and on the corresponding numbers lists, ensuring they are accurately completed;
- 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 papers 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 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;
- Supervise the dismantling of the polling station and ensure the building is returned to good order;
- Complete the ballot paper account and associated paperwork, as well as pack up documents in accordance with instructions given by the Returning Officer;
- Deliver the Ballot Box, cardboard screens and associated paperwork to the count location or to a location designated by the Returning Officer.
- 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;

**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 their agreement to maintain the secrecy of the poll.

#### **Payment**

Payment will be made by cheque within 2 weeks of the election day. The pay rate for this post is likely to be not less than £195.

## **Personal Specification - Presiding Officer**

<b>DESIRABLE</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>
Previous customer-service experience	Experience of having worked 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	Access to own car which is also insured for Business Use
	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(s) (e.g. lifting and carrying of equipment, and setting up physical arrangement of the polling station)

*Updated: February 2011*

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