Elections Staff - Job description

Postal Vote Opening Assistant	
Responsible to (this will be confirmed in your appointment letter)	Postal Vote Manager
Rate of pay (this will be confirmed in your appointment letter)	Hourly rate to be advised in appointment letter. A time sheet must be completed and handed in to your supervisor at the end of your shift. Internal staff wishing to be paid an hourly rate will be required to take annualised hours or annual leave.
Duration of role (this will be confirmed in your appointment letter)	Temporary : this will usually be for up to 10 days • Training – first morning • Day time opening session daily the week before and week of the election (up to 9 days) • Overnight opening on election night
Hours (these will be confirmed in your appointment letter)	Start time will be confirmed in your appointment letter. Daily finish times will vary depending on volumes – you will be expected to remain until all processing is up to date, or when dismissed by the Postal Vote Manager. Internal staff may return to their normal duties once dismissed by the Postal Vote Manager.
Location	Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon
Employer	Either: Returning Officer (District and Parish Elections) Deputy Returning Officer (County Council Elections) Local Returning Officer (UK Parliamentary Elections) Counting Officer (Referendums)
DBS check required	No
Date job description updated	June 2026

Purpose of the post

To assist with the opening of postal votes in accordance with the opening procedure and any instructions given to you by the Postal Vote Manager and Supervisors and/or Deputy Returning Officer.

Summary of responsibilities and personal duties

- You are required to work quickly and accurately to count, open and sort all incoming postal votes under the instruction of the Postal Vote Manager and Supervisors and completing relevant paperwork.
- Collect incoming postal votes from the post room area.
- Sort and count Postal Votes into batches.
- Open and check Envelope B's (ensuring number on the PV statement matches number visible through the window of Envelope A.
- Pull out and count any mismatched ballot paper envelope 'A's or postal voting statements.
- Opening ballot paper envelope 'A's and count contents.
- Ensure that the total number of Ballot Papers opened and placed int the Postal Ballot Box matches back to the control total.
- Following any other instructions the postal vote supervisors may have.
- Working to a strict deadline for the final, overnight opening session in order to ensure that all Postal Ballot papers are delivered swiftly to the count venue.
- Maintaining the secrecy of the ballot.

Special Conditions

Remote working is not available for this role.

You are employed to complete the tasks and you must be prepared to stay as long as it takes to ensure that all postal ballot boxes are ready by the deadline.

You must read and adhere to the attached Requirement of Secrecy provisions.

Person specification

Experience

- None required, as training will be provided.

Skills/personal attributes

- Numerate
- Calm under pressure

- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Punctual and reliable
- Confidentiality
- Excellent team player

Essential requirements

The post holder must not have helped or been employed in any way, either for or against, any candidate, election agent or political party involved with any election.

The post holder must not have been convicted of an offence under electoral legislation.

In accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the post holder must demonstrate that they are permitted to work in the UK (evidence will be required such as a passport showing that the post holder is a British citizen or a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies having the right of abode in the United Kingdom).

The Electoral Commission

South Oxfordshire District Council
Listening Learning Leading

Vale of White Horse District Council

Notification of secrecy requirements – the poll

Section 66 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended)

(1) The following persons –

(a) every returning officer and every presiding officer or clerk attending at a polling station,
(b) every candidate or election agent or polling agent so attending
(c) every person so attending by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of voting and shall not, except for some purpose authorised by law, communicate to any person before the poll is closed any information as to –

(i) the name of any elector or proxy for an elector who has or has not applied for a ballot paper or voted at a polling station;
(ii) the number on the register of electors of any elector who, or whose proxy, has or has not applied for a ballot paper or voted at a polling station; or
(iii) the official mark.

[...]

(3) No person shall –

(a) interfere with or attempt to interfere with a voter when recording his vote;
(b) otherwise obtain or attempt to obtain in a polling station information as to the candidate for whom a voter in that station is about to vote or has voted;
(c) communicate at any time to any person any information obtained in a polling station as to the candidate for whom a voter in that station is about to vote or has voted, or as to the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper given to a voter at that station;
(d) directly or indirectly induce a voter to display his ballot paper after he has marked it so as to make known to any person the name of the candidate for whom he has or has not voted.

[...]

(3F) A person voting as proxy for an elector at a relevant election—

(a) must not communicate at any time to any person other than that elector any information as to the candidate for whom the person is about to vote, or has voted, as proxy for that elector;

(b) except for some purpose authorised by law, must not communicate at any time to any person other than that elector the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of a ballot paper sent or delivered to the person for voting as proxy for that elector.

[...]

(4A) No person having undertaken to assist a relevant voter to vote at a relevant election may communicate at any time to any person except that voter any information as to—

(a) the candidate for whom the voter intends to vote or has voted, or

(b) the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper given for the use of the voter.

(4B) In subsection (4A) “relevant voter” means a voter who is blind, has another disability, or is unable to read.

(5) No person having undertaken to assist a blind voter to vote [at an election in Scotland or Wales under the local government Act] shall communicate at any time to any person any information as to the candidate for whom that voter intends to vote or has voted, or as to the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper given for the use of that voter.

(6) If a person acts in contravention of this section he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months.