

FAQs for election staff

When is election work available?

Scheduled elections usually take place on the first Thursday of May.

The poll runs from 7am to 10pm. If you work at a polling station you will need to arrive by 6.30 am at the latest to have time to get everything ready.

Polling station staff are not permitted to leave the premises between 7am and 10pm. You should take enough food and drink with you for the whole day.

The votes are usually counted and results announced at night after the polls close (10pm on polling day), or the following morning / day after the election. Postal vote opening takes place prior to and including the day of the poll. The length of time a count takes depend on the type of election, how many people turned out to vote and whether re-counts are required. You must be prepared to stay as long as it takes.

Where are the jobs?

Polling stations are located across Brentwood. You should be flexible and prepared to travel anywhere in the borough and we cannot guarantee you will be asked to run a polling station closest to where you live. You may also be asked to change polling stations at short notice to cover another polling station.

The election count usually takes place at the Brentwood Leisure Centre.

Who can apply?

The minimum requirements are set out in the eligibility section

If you are appointed to work at a polling station, it is important you remain politically impartial when you are working at the election. This means you cannot publicly show your support for a particular political party or candidate in any way.

How do I prove I am entitled to work in the UK?

If you are appointed to work at a polling station, you will need to provide evidence of your eligibility to work in the UK by showing us either:

- Your valid passport, or
- Your birth certificate and proof of National Insurance number (e.g. P60, P45, payslip)

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for motivated and enthusiastic staff.

To work at a polling station, you should have excellent customer service skills and attention to detail. You will need to ensure that the proper procedures for voting are followed including checking voter identification.

To work at an election count, you should have good numeracy skills.

We expect anyone working at an election to act impartially and be polite and professional in dealing with all voters, candidates and agents, Electoral Commission representatives and any accredited observers.

How do you appoint staff?

Appointments are temporary and made by the Returning Officer rather than the council. The council's usual recruitment policies and procedures do not apply, but follow the principles of equal opportunities and good employment practices.

Anyone who is not given a role is automatically added to our reserve list and may be contacted closer to election day if a role becomes available.

Will training be provided?

Yes. All polling staff must take part in face to face / online training, more details will be included in your appointment letter.

Count staff will be briefed about what they need to do before the count begins.

Who will I be working with?

You will be supported by experienced staff.

If you are employed to work in a polling station, you will usually be working with two or three other staff.

If you are employed to work at a count, you will be part of a bigger team of counting assistants.

How much do you pay?

Pay rates vary depending on the role and type of poll. Fees for attending training and travel expenses may also be paid where appropriate.

The amounts will be confirmed before polling day.

All fees are subject to tax on a PAYE basis but are exempt from National Insurance contributions.

Can election work affect my benefits / pension?

Yes, any election work you do may affect any benefit or state pension received. You will be responsible for telling your benefit or pension provider about your earnings.

How can I vote if I am working at a polling station?

If you are working at a polling station, you may want to apply for a postal or proxy vote.

Will there be more opportunities to work at elections?

We are always looking to add people to our elections staff database.

We must stress that being appointed to work at an election is not a guarantee of work at future elections. The work available depends on the number of applications and available vacancies. We also cannot guarantee that you will always work with the same people or in the same location.