

Overview

Reporting to

The Electoral Services Team on behalf of the Returning Officer at Mid Sussex District Council.

Main Purpose of the Role

- Comply with any instructions from the Returning Officer.
- Verify, sort and count ballot papers in accordance with instructions provided.
- Act impartially at all times and respect the confidentiality of material handled.
- Refrain from engaging in conversations with candidates, agents, councillors or guests.
- To maintain the integrity and secrecy of the count and comply with secrecy requirements.
- There are two stages to the count:

1. Verification

During the verification stage, ballot papers are counted to determine the total number of ballot papers in each ballot box. These figures are then verified against the Ballot Paper Account submitted for each polling station.

2. Count

During the counting stage, the verified ballot papers are first sorted by candidate, and any ballot paper identified as 'doubtful' are separated for adjudication by supervisors. Once sorted, the ballot papers for each candidate are then counted, with the result determined thereafter for the election.

Main Duties & Responsibilities

- Comply with instructions from the Returning Officer and Count Table/Count Area Supervisors.
- Work as part of a team.
- Count the number of ballot papers in each ballot box, quickly and accurately, whilst working under pressure and under the close supervision of candidates and agents.
- As instructed, identify any doubtful papers and bring them to the attention of the Count Table Supervisor.
- Sort ballot papers into votes for individual candidates/parties and count them using the method specified by the Returning Officer.
- Check the counting of others, as required.
- Re-count ballot papers if required, at both the verification and count stages.
- Refrain from engaging in conversations with candidates, agents, councillors or guests.
- Remain at the count until it has concluded, unless instructed otherwise.
- If instructed, assist with the clear up of the count centre upon conclusion of the count.
- Assist with any additional duties where appropriate.
- To maintain the integrity and secrecy of the count and comply with secrecy requirements.

Working Hours

- Count Assistants must remain at the count until it is complete, unless instructed otherwise.
- For scheduled elections, the count will typically take place at The Triangle Leisure Centre, Triangle Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8WA. The location of the count will be confirmed as part of your appointment letter.
- The date of the count for each election will be published as part of the relevant election timetable, which can be found on our website [here](#).
- The length of time the count takes, will depend on the size and nature of the election and whether any re-counts are required. You must be prepared to stay as long as it takes. If the count takes place immediately after the close of poll, you will start work late in the evening and work into the early hours of the following morning (or later), until finished.
- Appointment letters will confirm arrival times for briefings, and the start time of the count. Where possible, an estimated finish time will also be included, although this may be subject to change as detailed above.
- Light refreshments are provided. Staff are also welcome to bring their own refreshments if preferred.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Experience		Previous experience of working at the count.
Skills / Personal Attributes	Good numeracy skills and attention to detail. Ability to handle, sort and count large volumes of confidential papers. Excellent communication skills. Good personal presentation. Ability to work effectively as part of a team, and possess a flexible attitude to the role. Punctual and reliable. Ability to remain politically neutral. Ability to carry out work as instructed accurately and to remain calm while working under pressure.	
Other	Must not have been convicted of an offence under Electoral Legislation.	

Special Conditions

- You must wear politically neutral clothing when working on an election.
- Many election roles involve long working hours, which can exceed the limits set out in the [Working Time Regulations 1998](#). Due to the nature of these roles, it may be difficult or not possible to take breaks as normal. Some roles may also include continuous or late-night working. To undertake these roles, you must consent to working in excess of the normal working hours directive and acknowledge that rest breaks may be delayed or adjusted where appropriate.
- You must comply with secrecy requirements provided to you as part of your appointment letter.
- You must not be employed by, or act on behalf of, any candidate or political party during an election, whether paid or unpaid.
- You must not have any relations to or with any prospective candidate at an election. This includes any close relationships, such as family relationships or a partner.
- You must not subscribe to a candidate's nomination paper at an election.
- Please note that we allocate Count Assistants to count areas in advance of the election and will notify appointed staff of these arrangements, including the names of your supervisor(s) and team members.

Rates of Pay

- The rate of pay for this role varies.
- Pay rates are reviewed annually, and your rate of pay will be confirmed as part of your appointment letter.

The above profile is intended to describe the general nature and level of work required. It is not meant to be a detailed list of all duties and responsibilities which may be required. It will be subject to regular review, and the Returning Officer reserves the right to amend or add to the accountabilities listed.