

Template FAQs for election staff

When is election work available?

Scheduled elections such as Scottish Parliamentary elections usually take place on the first Thursday of May. Other elections such as by-elections can take place at any other time of the year, and on any weekday.

The polls for people casting their votes at the polling station are all run from 7am to 10pm. If you work at a polling station, you need to arrive by 6:30am at the latest to have time to get everything ready for opening at 7am.

Polling station staff are not permitted to leave the premises between 7am and 10pm. You should take enough food and refreshments with you for the whole day. It is a long day, and you must be willing to work more hours than the working time directive limit.

The votes are usually counted, and results announced at night after the polls close at 10pm on polling day. 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 the Highland Council area. Please see the list of the current [polling places in our area](#). You may be asked to travel anywhere in the Highlands as sometimes we cannot always guarantee you will be employed at a polling station closest to where you live.

In the past, election counts have been held in the Dingwall Football Academy and Inverness Leisure Centre.

Who can apply?

The minimum requirements are set out in [Eligibility here](#). 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 you 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.

To work at an election count, you should have good numeracy skills and be a good team player.

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

Further details for each job role can be found [here](#).

How many jobs are available?

For every election the number of staff we recruit varies.

We can employ approximately 650 number of temporary staff to work at polling stations, 30 in the postal votes team and 250 for the count.

For local government by-elections, the number of staff needed depends on the size of the ward and how many polling stations are needed.

How do you appoint staff?

Appointments are temporary and made by the Returning Officer rather than The Highland Council. As the Returning Officer is a separate legal entity, the Council's usual recruitment policies and procedures do not apply, but we follow the principles of equal opportunities and good employment practices and recur to the processing of the fees using the council's payroll system.

We appoint Council and external staff to work at polling stations and at the count. The more senior positions at the count are mainly filled by council employees.

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.

When will I know if you want me to work?

We will contact you by email if you have been appointed so that you can confirm if you are or not able to assist. We will then send you an appointment email detailing all the key information that will be relevant to you in fulfilling your role i.e. training. We often have more applications than vacancies, please do not be disheartened if you are not given a role, we will add you to our reserve list and you may be called upon closer to polling day.

How do we allocate staff?

If staff have expressed a preference for a particular role, or to work with certain colleagues, we will try our very best to accommodate this request, however, the needs of the overall election will take precedence.

More senior position appointments will be made based on previous experience

Will training be provided?

Yes, it is mandatory for all staff to participate and complete the training that will be provided. This will be provided for all polling and count staff to help assist them in fulfilling their roles.

Further details will be included in your appointment pack.

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 one or two other people. If you are employed to work at a count, you will be part of a bigger team, with other counting assistants and a supervisor.

How much do you pay?

Pay rates vary depending on the role and type of poll e.g. £165 for a poll clerk and an hourly rate is paid for staff working overnight. Fees for attending training and travel expenses may also be paid where appropriate. Your fee will be confirmed in your appointment pack. All fees are subject to tax on a PAYE basis but are exempt from National Insurance contributions. The amount we pay for each role is regularly reviewed.

The Election Team will ask you to complete and submit a claim form for you to receive payment.

Can election work affect my benefits/pension?

Yes, any election work may affect any benefit or state pension receive. You will be responsible for informing your benefit or pension provider about your earnings.

I have just been selected to work at an election and in order for me to get paid, how do you obtain my bank details?

You will be set up with employee payee number on the election payroll and will be paid thereafter by an agreed date electronically into your chosen bank or building society account.

The Highland Council's payroll team will send you an email with your unique payroll number and the instructions on [How to log in to MyView | Accessing MyView | The Highland Council](#) to update your bank details. Once you have updated your bank account details on My View, please make sure you click SUBMIT for the details to come through to payroll. If you just click SAVE, the details won't get passed on to us.

I have issues accessing my bank details online or viewing a copy of my payslip or P60?

If your account is locked please contact the FSAT Team at FinanceSystemsAdministrationTeam@highland.gov.uk

For queries relating to payroll please contact the Payroll Team at payroll@highland.gov.uk

My bank details have changed what do I do?

If your bank details have changed, please log onto [myview](#) with your payroll number and update your details yourself. Your payroll number can be obtained by emailing election@highland.gov.uk

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. Applications can be downloaded [here](#).

Will there be more opportunities to work at elections?

We are always looking to add people to our elections staff database. However, being appointed to work at an election is not a guarantee of working at future elections. The work available depends on the number of applications, available vacancies, and locations. We also cannot guarantee that you will always work with the same people or in the same location.

What do I do if I want to be removed from the election database or my personal details have changed?

If at any time you wish to remove your details from the database or you have a change of details ie. home address, email address, mobile number etc.

Please notify the Election Team by email election@highland.gov.uk