

Job Description

Senior Electoral Services Lead (Elections Principal Officer)

Reference: 4600

Date: October 2025

Job Family:	Legal and Governance / Democratic and Electoral Services
Level:	3
Band:	10
Career Track:	Technical, Professional & Supervisory & Management

Job Purpose

To lead the Council's elections and electoral registration functions, delivering a legally compliant, efficient and customer-focused service.

Service Purpose

Northumberland County Council's Member Services and Elections teams are responsible for delivering high-quality democratic and electoral services that uphold transparency, accountability, and public engagement. The service supports elected Members in fulfilling their roles through administrative assistance and training, while also managing civic events and ceremonial functions. It oversees the coordination of Council meetings and scrutiny processes, ensuring that decision-making is efficient and inclusive. The Elections team ensures the lawful and smooth running of all electoral processes, from voter registration to the administration of local and national elections. Together, these functions promote active citizenship, uphold democratic integrity, and ensure that Councillors and communities are well-supported in shaping local governance.

Duties and Responsibilities

- **Lead Electoral Services:** Act as the Council's lead officer for elections and electoral registration, ensuring all services are legally compliant, efficient and customer focused.
- **Provide Expert Advice:** Advise the Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer, senior officers, Members and service users on legislation, strategy, policy and practice across all electoral matters, including Town and Parish Councils.
- **Deliver Statutory Elections and Polls:** Plan and manage all statutory elections, referendums and local polls, ensuring compliance with legislation and national performance standards.
- **Support and Deputise for Returning Officer:** Ensure the Returning Officer and staff are equipped to fulfil their duties and deputise with full powers when required.
- **Manage Electoral Registration:** Lead the annual canvass and maintain the electoral register in line with statutory requirements and performance standards.
- **Promote Democratic Participation:** Maximise public engagement in the democratic process using appropriate media and innovative techniques.

- **Lead Governance Reviews:** Conduct reviews of polling arrangements, boundaries and community governance, including preparing reports for Council and committees.
- **Maintain Electoral Integrity:** Develop mechanisms to prevent electoral malpractice or fraud and ensure robust compliance and transparency.
- **Build Strategic Partnerships:** Develop effective relationships with internal teams and external partners, including suppliers, the Electoral Commission and government agencies.
- **Manage Resources and Budget:** Oversee the electoral services budget, ensuring financial compliance, value for money, and timely submission of accounts and grant applications.
- **Lead and Develop Staff:** Provide line management and leadership to the team, including recruitment, performance management, training and motivation.
- **Monitor and Improve Service Delivery:** Maintain effective systems and processes, review practices in light of legislation and technology, and contribute to service planning and continuous improvement.
- The post holder will be required to work additional, unsocial hours during the election period including weekends and bank holidays.

Person Specification

Professional and Technical Requirements

- **Qualifications and Professional Development:** Degree-level education or equivalent experience, with evidence of continuous professional development. Certificate from the Association of Electoral Administrators or equivalent is desirable.
- **Electoral Law and Governance Knowledge:** Comprehensive and current understanding of electoral law, procedures and legislation, including Town and Parish Council governance.
- **Project and Risk Management:** Proven experience in managing large-scale, time-critical projects such as elections, including cost control, risk appraisal and successful delivery against objectives.
- **Electoral Administration Expertise:** Extensive experience in electoral registration, annual canvass, and the organisation of elections, referendums and boundary reviews.
- **Policy and Procedure Development:** Skilled in designing and drafting policies, procedures and technical documents to support electoral integrity and service transparency.
- **Leadership and Staff Management:** Demonstrated ability to lead and manage staff, including recruitment, supervision, performance management and motivation.
- **Communication and Political Awareness:** Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to interpret complex legislation and engage effectively with politicians, agents and stakeholders.
- **IT and Data Competency:** Advanced IT skills, including the use of dedicated election software and the ability to analyse complex data and statistics.
- **Resilience and Problem Solving:** Ability to work under pressure, remain calm in stressful situations, and apply diplomacy, tact and discretion while solving problems and influencing outcomes.
- **Strategic Relationship Building:** Experience in building productive partnerships internally and externally, representing the service at local, regional and national levels.
- **Transport Requirements** The duties will involve travel to different locations across the County which will be more frequent at election time. The postholder must be able to meet this requirement.

Core Competency Requirements

- **Communication:** Communicates across services to influence outcomes. Adapts style across organisational and manages sensitive communications.
- **Collaboration:** Facilitates collaboration across teams, services, and external partners to deliver joined-up solutions.
- **Service Delivery:** Aligns delivery with strategic priorities and maintains high performance. Improves services using innovation and effective use of resources to deliver value for money.
- **Decision-Making:** Balances risk and impact in decision-making across teams or projects.
- **Digital & Data Literacy:** Uses digital systems to manage performance and inform decisions. Applies ethical judgement and explores new data sources. Analyses complex data to improve service outcomes.
- **Adaptability:** Leads teams through change using structured approaches that support clarity and resilience. Builds team cohesion and sustains service culture during transitions.
- **Problem-Solving:** Enables collaborative problem-solving and challenges existing practices to address cross-service challenges.
- **Community & Customer Focus:** Applies community insight and customer feedback to shape responsive and inclusive services.
- **Leadership:** Aligns team capability and resources to deliver meaningful outcomes. Leads projects and services within areas of expertise and across disciplines.

Strengths

- **Organiser:** You make plans and are well prepared. You seek to maximise time and productivity.
- **Precise:** You concentrate on detail and make sure everything is accurate and error free.
- **Resilient:** You have inner composure, recover quickly from setbacks and learn from them.
- **Explainer:** You communicate thoughts and ideas, verbally or in writing. You simplify complexities and adapt communication so others can understand.
- **Team Leader:** You are confident to lead a team. You effectively manage team dynamics toward a shared goal. You consider everyone's individual needs and create a genuine team spirit.

Desirable

- Association of Electoral Administrators – Diploma.
- Experience of compiling and submitting election accounts to Government and other public bodies.
- Experience of conducting Community Governance Reviews.
- Experience of using Xpress election software systems.
- Holds a full driving licence and has the use of a car.