



# Enrolling a name change in the Royal Courts of Justice

## What is a deed poll?

If you wish to legally change your name, or your children's names, you can use the Deed Poll process, which has been used by hundreds of thousands of people for over 150 years.

By Deed Poll, you can officially change any part or all of your name. For example, you can change your forenames, surname (or both), add names, remove names, change the spelling of your names. You can change your name by Deed Poll as often as you want, at any time and for any reason provided it is not for deceptive or fraudulent purposes.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no central register of name changes in the United Kingdom. Deed Polls are not registered anywhere unless they are 'enrolled' i.e. lodged for safe keeping, in the Close Rolls of the Chancery (from 1851 to 1902) and from 1903, in the Enrolment Books of the Supreme Court of Judicature, which is located within the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, London.

Enrolling a Deed Poll provides a public record of a person's name change and since 1914 the details of the name change are published in either the London Gazette or Belfast Gazette.

Deed Polls that have been enrolled at the Royal Courts of Justice in London remain with us for five years. After which (and going back to 1851), they can be found at the National Archives, which is located at Kew in Richmond, Surrey.

## What you need

- Change of Name Deed Form (**DEED POLL**)
- Statutory Declaration
- Notice for the London Gazette
- Affidavit of Best Interest (for use when enrolling a Change of Name of a Minor)
- **The fee**

Court Enrolment Fee	£10.00
Advertisement Charge	£90.00
Copy of London Gazette	£2.00

**TOTAL £102.00**

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service'.

## What if I am divorced?

If you wish to return to your Maiden name after a divorce you only need to take your divorce papers to your bank, place of work, passport office etc. rather than change your name.

## What if I am adopted?

If you are adopted and you wish to change your name you need to have your adoption papers.

## Whose permission do I need?

If you are married you need the written consent of your husband or wife. If you are a minor then you need the written consent from all parties involved. The birth Mother and Father, and new partner (if applicable). All of those people who have "Parental Responsibility" for you.

## What if I was born in Scotland?

You must contact the Scottish Courts to arrange a change of name under their procedures.

## What if I am living in Scotland, but was born in England?

You may do your Deed Poll with us. You should apply to the Queens Bench Division, Action Department, Room E15, Royal Courts of Justice, London WC2A 2LL.

## What section am I in accordance with the British Nationality Act 1981?

If you were born in the United Kingdom the section that applies varies depending on your age.

- If you were born **on or after January 1st 1983** and a British Citizen the Section relevant to the applicant is Section 1 (1)
- If you are a person who at December 31st 1982 was a Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies and had the right to reside in the United Kingdom under the Immigration Act 1971 the relevant section is Section 11 (1)

## Commonwealth citizens

If you were born outside of the United Kingdom and in any of the following countries the relevant section will be **Section 37 (1)**

The following Countries are those recognised as being incorporated in the Commonwealth.

Antigua and Barbuda	Ghana	Namibia	South Africa
Australia	Grenada	Nauru	Sri Lanka
The Bahamas	Guyana	New Zealand	Swaziland
Bangladesh	India	Nigeria	Tanzania
Barbados	Jamaica	Pakistan	Tonga
Belize	Kenya	Papua New Guinea	Trinidad & Tobago
Botswana	Kiribati (Republic of)	St Christopher & Nevis	Tuvalu
Brunei	Lesotho	St Lucia	Uganda
Canada	Malawi	St Vincent & The Grenadines	Vanuatu
Cyprus	Malaysia	Seychelles	Western Samoa
Dominica	Maldives	Sierra Leone	Zambia
Fiji	Malta	Singapore	Zimbabwe
The Gambia	Mauritius	Soloman Islands	

There are other sections for the British Nationality Act 1981 however these are the most common.

### Statutory Declaration

A Statutory Declaration is a sworn document, which declares in writing that the applicant is who the Deed and the relevant Exhibits refer to.

There is a set format for which all applicants must follow.

### The administration of the oath

This is where the Declarant (person declaring) swears on a Holy Book or gives an Affirmation (where a statement of fact is carried out). This must be carried out before a Solicitor, Commissioner for Oaths or an Officer of the Senior Courts.

The Statutory Declaration **FOR ADULTS MUST** be completed by:

- A person who is not a near relative of yours or your spouse or civil partner
- A Commonwealth or British Citizen (as defined above)
- A person who has known you for no less than 10 years
- A home owner (this is required to prove the person is a permanent resident within the United Kingdom).

The Statutory Declaration **FOR MINORS MUST** be completed by the above described Declarant. However they **MUST**:

- Declare how long they have known the person with parental responsibility, which must be for no less than 10 years, and also how long they have known the Minor.

### What happens if the applicant has known no-one for 10 years?

If you have not known anyone for 10 years or more, an additional Affidavit must be included, which explains the reasons why. This will then be referred to the Senior Master for permission to enrol the change of name.

### What are exhibits and what must be exhibited to the Statutory Declaration?

An Exhibit is a document produced in a Court of Law and defined as a piece of evidence. The Court needs Exhibits as proof of who you are. The Court requires copies of documents that are exhibited to the Statutory Declaration by way of Exhibit, Exhibit sheets are required with the correct wording for example:

This is the Exhibit marked \_\_\_\_\_ referred to in the Declaration of \_\_\_\_\_  
Declared before me \_\_\_\_\_  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

The person administering the declaration on the exhibit **MUST** be the same person who administered the Oath or Affirmation for the Statutory Declaration. This is in accordance with the Commissioner for Oaths Act. Exhibited to the Statutory Declaration must be;

- A copy of the Deed Poll
- Evidence of British Citizenship, i.e. Birth Certificate or Passport or Certificate of Naturalisation
- Marriage Certificate (if applicable)
- Decree Nisi (if applicable)

- If you are married then written consent of your spouse must be obtained and should state that there are no objections for you to change your name from 'X' to 'Y'. This can be in the form of a letter.

### Notice for the London Gazette

The Notice for the London Gazette is mandatory when enrolling a Deed through the High Court. The Notice must be drafted by you. The London Gazette is a Publication that evidences the Change of Name through the High Court.

### Affidavit of best interest

An Affidavit of Best Interest is required **FOR ALL MINOR'S** applications.

There is no set format for this document however it is required that the person or persons with parental responsibility complete this and it is sworn before a Solicitor, Commissioner of Oaths or an Officer of the Senior Courts.

The Affidavit of Best Interest should state the reason or reasons why it is in the Minor's best interest to change their name.

**All applications for change of name of a minor are referred to the senior master for permission to enrol.**

### What happens when the court receives it?

Once the Court receives the paperwork we check all the documentation and ensure that it follows the correct format.

Once it is correct we seal the original Deed Poll and allocate it a number, which will be displayed in a round seal on the Deed. The original Sealed Deed is then returned to you and it is then up to you to inform all the relevant parties regarding your name change.

The Court forwards the draft notice to the London Gazette, which is then published at their earliest convenience. You will receive a copy of the published notice.

### Who is the Senior Master?

The Senior Master is currently Master Whitaker. Masters have judicial responsibilities and deal with cases before they go to trial. The Senior Master has been given authority on behalf of the Master of the Rolls to accept or refuse any application for a change of name deed.

## Contact Details

### For Deed Poll enquiries:

The Manager  
Room E15  
Queen's Bench Division  
Action Department  
The Royal Courts of Justice  
STRAND  
LONDON  
WC2A 2LL

Telephone: 020 7947 7772 (option 2)  
Fax no: 0870 324 0024

Please **do not** send your Deed Poll application by fax

### For Deed Polls in Scotland:

Change of Name Unit  
General Register Office  
New Register House  
Edinburgh  
SCOTLAND

### For The London Gazette:

The London Gazette  
PO Box 7923  
London  
SW8 5WF

## A list of all the forms you might need

LOC020	Deed poll - Change of name deed
LOC021	Deed poll - Statutory declaration for an adult
LOC022	Deed poll - Minor's change of name deed
LOC023	Deed poll - Suggested form of Affidavit of best interest
LOC024	Deed poll - Statutory declaration for deed poll for a minor
LOC025	Deed poll - Notice for the London Gazette on change of name for an adult
LOC026	Deed poll - Notice for the London Gazette on change of name for a minor