

Change of Name

A brief guide on
How to change your name in Guernsey

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Surnames

If you are 18 or over and follow the correct procedure it is not difficult to change your surname in Guernsey, although it must not be done for the purposes of fraud or deception. No formality is legally required, but it is recommended that a name change is by deed poll (see below), in order to provide evidence of the change for such purposes as obtaining a passport, opening a bank account etc.

When a woman marries it is not automatic that she takes her husband's surname, and many women do not. However, if a woman does change her name on marriage, it is generally the case that a marriage certificate will be sufficient to prove her name. If she subsequently divorces it is not automatic that her name reverts to her maiden name and she will need to take the same steps as any other adult who wishes to change surname.

Forenames

Changing your first name is often done informally although there are no legal means to do so. However, it may be that for certain official purposes, such as applying for a passport, it will be necessary to make a sworn declaration as to the name change in order to show why your new name is different from that by which you were known previously.

Children's surnames

The change of a child's surname is considered to be an important change in a child's life and requires the consent of all who have parental responsibility. In the event of a dispute, an application to the Family Court for a specific issue order will be necessary and the Court will decide what is in the best interests of the child.

Preparing the Deed Poll application

The change of a surname must be done by a deed poll which must be prepared and presented to the Contracts Court on your behalf by an advocate. A fee will be charged but you will then have a document which will provide you with evidence for all purposes of your change of name. A Register of Deed Polls is available for inspection in the strong room at the Greffe.

You will normally need to provide your advocate with the following –

- Proof of your present name (e.g. passport)
- A recent utility bill
- Date and place of birth
- Marital status and details of dates of marriage etc
- Place of residence for the last 3 months
- Address
- Full name by which you wish to be known

If you are applying on behalf of a child, you will also need to provide details of all persons having parental responsibility and their relationship to the child.

Court procedure

Where the application is for an adult, the application in the form of a draft Deed Poll will be presented to the Contracts Court, normally held at 9.30 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You will sign the document before a Jurat who will witness your signature. Certified copies of this document can be obtained for use in proving your new identity.

Where the application is made on behalf of a child, where all parties consent, the application will be made in a closed session at the end of the Contracts Court. All persons having parental responsibility will need to be present, in person or by an attorney, to consent to the application. The child may, but need not, be present. Where there is any dispute, an application will need to be made to the Court (see above).

General disclaimer

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