

Change of name

December 2020

Changing your name in Guernsey is relatively straightforward. As an adult, you may change your name in whatever way you wish provided it is not done fraudulently, is for illegal purposes or may cause offence.

Unlike the UK where the simple signing of a formal deed can be effective immediately, Guernsey law requires a short attendance before the Conveyancing Court which sits every Tuesday and Thursday morning. A formal change of name deed is drafted, then presented to the Court and signed before three Jurats. Once the deed has been executed, it is registered at the Greffe as a matter of common record. This registration process usually takes up to six weeks, however in the meantime you will be provided with certified copies of the document to allow you to change your passport, bank account, driving licence, etc. Once complete, the original deed poll is returned to your advocate for forward transmission to you.

On divorce, your surname does not automatically revert to your former or maiden name and you will need to instruct an advocate to draft a deed poll on your behalf if you wish to revise it.

Changing a child's name

It is possible to change a child's name, subject to certain restrictions. A child is defined by the law as a person under the age of eighteen years.

It is necessary to obtain the consent of all parties who have parental responsibility in relation to the child. The law regarding parental responsibility is set out in the 'Children (Guernsey & Alderney) Law, 2008' and if you have any doubt as to who has parental responsibility then you must take legal advice. If there is any dispute as to parental responsibility or if a party with parental responsibility refuses to consent to a change of name, then it may be necessary to make a specific issue application to the Court. See Orders available.

If all the relevant consents are in place, a formal application will need to be lodged at Court by noon the day preceding the date of the proposed application. All persons having parental responsibility in relation to the child must attend to consent to the deed poll, or arrange for a third party to be given power of attorney to consent on their behalf. The child to whom the deed poll refers may be present. The application is then dealt with at the conclusion of the Conveyancing Court, sitting as closed court. If the application is granted, a formal deed poll is issued and subsequently registered.