**Deed Poll FAQs**

1. **I am over 16 and I want to change my name officially so I can get an ID in my name. How do I do it?**

You can change your name by a Deed Poll. A Deed Poll is a legal document which officially recognises someone’s change of name. The document will include your old name and your new name and will state your intention to only use the new name. A template document for you to fill in is available. You will need to edit it to include your details. You can also change your title like ‘Miss’, ‘Mr’ and ‘Mx’ for example. This will allow you to get all your documents like passport, bank account, medical records, changed to your new name.

You don’t need a lawyer or to go anywhere, you just need two independent witnesses (someone who isn’t a member of your family) to sign it. This won’t be enough to change your gender on official documents – that’s a different process – but it can be an important step in your transition.

1. **I want to change my child’s name officially so I can get an ID in their name and they are under 16. How do I do it?**

If your child is trans or non-binary, they may want to change their name to reflect their identity. You can change their name by a Deed Poll. A Deed Poll is a document that says your child’s old name and new name and states your intention to only use the new name. Anyone with parental responsibility for your child can do this for them if they are younger than 16, provided that they have received consent from everyone with parental responsibility. A template document for you to fill in is available. You will need to edit it to include your and your child’s details. You can also change their title like ‘Miss’, ‘Mr’ and ‘Mx’ for example. This will allow you to get all of your child’s documents like passports and medical records changed to refer to their new name.

You don’t need a lawyer or to go anywhere, you just need two independent witnesses (someone who isn’t a member of your family) to sign it. This won’t be enough to change your child’s gender on official documents – that’s a different process – but it can be an important step in their transition.

1. **Is consent from both/all parents with parental responsibility required when a child under the age of 16 wants to legally change their name via Deed Poll?**

Generally, consent must be obtained from all those with parental responsibility (more information about what is meant by ‘parental responsibility can be found [here](https://deedpolloffice.com/change-name/children/parental-responsibility)) when a child is under the age of 16. If one parent does not give their consent, the other parent can apply for a Specific Issue Order to the Family Courts, but legal advice should be sought before deciding whether this is appropriate. You can find out more information at the [UK Deed Poll Service](https://deedpoll.org.uk/can-i-change-my-childs-name/#eleven).

1. **I can’t get in touch with my child’s other parent and so I can’t get them to sign the Deed Poll. Can I still change my child’s name?**

Yes, if you have been unsuccessful in making reasonable attempts to find and get in touch with the child’s other parent. You will be able to say that the parent is absent and that you have parental responsibility on the form. It is a good idea to seek legal advice in this area before proceeding.

1. **Who can sign the Deed Poll?**

Anyone can sign the Deed Poll and be a witness for it as long as they are over 18, know you, and not a relative, partner or living at the same address as you.

1. **I am not British but live in the UK. Can I still change my name this way?**

Yes. The Deed Poll will be accepted by institutions in the UK. However, you should check with the embassy of the country that you are a citizen of in order to get your passport changed. If you’re a US citizen for example, the Deed Poll will be accepted if it has been signed by a UK qualified solicitor.

1. **I live in Scotland and am Scottish. Can I still change my name this way?**

Yes, a deed poll is a valid way to change your name in Scotland — as much as it is in England & Wales, and it will be accepted by all organisations and government bodies. There are some differences in Scottish law about parental responsibility that apply to children who were born in Scotland, and to some extent to children who live in Scotland.  People who were born in Scotland also have the option to [change their name on their birth certificate](https://deedpolloffice.com/change-name/changing-your-birth-certificate#scotland).  There are some limitations to this service, and there are both advantages and disadvantages to changing your name in this way.  Note that it does not affect your right to change your name by deed poll instead, and many people choose to change their name by deed poll anyway.

1. **I live in Northern Ireland and am Northern Irish. Can I still change my name this way?**

Yes, a deed poll is a valid way to change your name in Northern Ireland – as much as it is in England & Wales, and it will be accepted by all organisations and government bodies.

There are some differences about the process should you wish to register your new name. These processes are different if you are under and over 18, with under 18s needing to have parental signature. For more information, go to this [address](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/recording-change-name).

1. **Can I get my exam certificates changed to reflect my new name?**

Unfortunately, no as they were correctly issued in your old name at the time. However, if you need to produce these at a job interview for example, you would also produce the Deed Poll and this shows the link between the two names. Married women also have to do this if they take their husband’s surname so it’s not uncommon. However, if you have a Deed Poll before you sit your exams, the Exam Centre will accept this.

1. **When do I need to have my or my child’s Deed Poll witnessed by a solicitor?**

You only need to have a Deed Poll witnessed by a solicitor or a notary public if:

* you or your child is a British national living abroad
* you or your child are a British national living in the Bailiwick of Jersey
* you are a foreign national
* you need to have you or your child’s deed poll legalised (this is an important if you need your deed poll to be recognised in another country – click [here](https://deedpolloffice.com/change-name/frequently-asked-questions/legalisation) to learn more)
1. **Can I use my or my child’s deed poll abroad?**

Yes, it’s possible (and sometimes necessary) to use your deed poll as proof of your change of name outside the U.K., but you’ll probably need to have it [witnessed by a solicitor](https://deedpolloffice.com/change-name/frequently-asked-questions#having-deed-poll-witnessed-by-solicitor). You may also need to have it [legalised](https://deedpolloffice.com/change-name/frequently-asked-questions/legalisation) (as discussed in question 10 above). Whether or not you need to have this done is a question for the organisation or authority that you want to show the deed poll to. However, you can’t use your deed poll as an international identity document — a deed poll is not a [proof of identity](https://deedpolloffice.com/change-name/frequently-asked-questions#proof-of-identity). When you go through border control, you need to have a valid passport in your current name. In fact, it’s important that all your tickets, visas, travel insurance, and other travel documents are all in the same name as what’s in your passport — or else you may have difficulties being allowed through border control and customs.

1. **What do I do with it once it’s signed?**

Adapt the consent letters as appropriate (available on the [website](https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/legal-resources/)) and send them with each deed poll as this is the part that instructs to change the gender marker and title. We suggest that you make a list of everywhere you will need to send the deed poll to, which will perhaps include, school, GP, bank, passport and anywhere which has a record of the previous name and gender.

1. **Who are some of the people I send it to?**

GP Surgery

You can complete the GP template letter available on the [website](https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/legal-resources/) requesting a change of name, gender and that your surgery applies for a new NHS number.

Department of Work and Pensions - Benefits

Report any changes to you or your child’s details online [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-benefit-general-enquiry). You need a Government Gateway user ID and password. If you do not have a user ID, you can create one when you report.

National Insurance and other tax information

To tell HMRC yourself about a name change or gender change, you can write to Special Section D with your National Insurance number, new and old names and send them to:

HMRC

Special Section D

Room BP9207

Benton Park View

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE98 1ZZ

Driving licence

To change the name and gender on a driving licence, you need to request form D1 from any post office, fill in the form and send it to the DVLA using the process on the form with a copy of any documents that show your new name and gender, like the deed poll and a letter from a GP.

More information on the DVLA website is [here](https://www.gov.uk/change-name-driving-licence).

Passports

Complete the passport application (including. the statutory fee) and send this with a copy of your doctor's letter stating that “this change is likely to be permanent,” a copy of the deed poll and your old passport (if you have not held a passport before then enclose an original birth certificate) to the passport office online [here](https://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport).

Bank accounts

Simple, just send a covering letter with a copy of the deed poll to your bank. They will then require a new signature.

GCSE and A level certificates

It is possible to obtain new ones in the new name, each examining board will be different, so look at them individually online. For example, [AQA](https://www.aqa.org.uk/contact-us/past-results-and-lost-certificates/amendments-to-original-certificates#transgender) will do it for free if you email them with a copy of your deed poll and new ID. You may also be able to write to your old school and request that your records be changed accordingly - some employers/further education colleges may ask schools for a reference.