



Changing your name and title

Information on changing your name

This document covers deed polls, statutory declarations, and Gender Recognition Certificates.

Changing your title

The majority of titles are not controlled by UK law, these include Mr, Ms, Miss, Mrs and Mx. You can change your title without any documentation. Your gender and assigned sex do not affect what titles you can and can't use. Organisations should be able to update your records with your chosen title if you simply write to them and ask them to do so.

Certain titles (such as Dr, Prof, Lord, Lady, Dame, Sir, etc.) are controlled by law and you cannot change your title to them unless you are entitled to use them.

Although it is not required or necessary in most cases, it is possible to include your title change on a deed poll or statutory declaration.

Changing your name

Your "legal name" is simply the name you're generally called and known by. You can change your name by simply starting to use a new name, however many organisations will ask to see some documentation as evidence of a name change.

To do this you can use a deed poll or statutory declaration which will allow you to use your new name on all legal documents (except your birth, death and marriage certificate). To change your birth certificate you will require a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

Deed Poll

A deed poll is a simple document you can make and print yourself for free. There are websites online that generate these for you at no cost e.g. freedeedpoll.org.uk. Be aware that you will need 2 witnesses to sign your deed poll in order for it to be valid.

If you are under 16 years of age, you will need permission from the person/people who have parental responsibility for you to complete a deed poll. This is usually the people named on your birth certificate or adoption certificate. If you are under a care order then the Local Authority will have parental responsibility for you, so they will have to give consent.

There are services that you can pay to create your enrolled deed poll for you. There is no legal advantage of using one of these services, but as they may look more official they are sometimes seen as a more 'official' document.

Statutory Declaration

The difference between a statutory declaration and a deed poll is that a statutory declaration requires one signature and this signature must be witnessed by someone who is authorised to certify it. This is usually a solicitor and will cost around £5.

A solicitor will charge you a fee to draw up the document, but you don't need to do this as you can create and print a statutory declaration yourself and just pay the small fee for a solicitor to sign it.

Once your deed poll or statutory declaration is printed and signed you can send it to anyone who you would like to start using your new name. Be aware that some places will require you to provide the original document, whereas others will accept copies. If you're hesitant about sending the original through the posts you can get "certified copies" using a solicitor at a small fee. Places you may wish to inform include the HM Passport Office, Driver & Vehicle Licensing Authority, your bank, doctors, dentist, telephone company etc.

It's not a legal requirement to renew your passport in your new name straightaway. However, you need to make sure that any trips you book that require a passport are arranged using the same name as the one on your passport.

It is a legal requirement for your drivers license to be in your legal name.



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Applying for a new passport

You can apply for a new passport on the gov.uk website. There is a specific PDF detailing information for trans people applying for a new passport.

You will need a passport sized photograph, an original name change document (deed poll or statutory declaration) a doctors letter or a gender recognition certificate and, if this is your first passport, your original birth certificate.

Your doctor letters must confirm language around your change of gender is likely to be permanent.

You must send your old passport back if you have one.

There is no minimum age restriction on when you can change the gender on your passport but if you are under 16 you will need permission from the person/people who have parental responsibility for you.

Applying for a new driving licence

You can apply for a new driving license on the gov.uk website. If this is your first driving license the simplest way to get one is to change your passport and then go to “apply for your first provisional license” on the website. Then you will need your passport and a 3 year history of your addresses.

If you already have a driving license you will have to renew your driving license. Again, you can do this on the gov.uk website and will need your name change document (deed poll or statutory declaration), a passport sized photograph and a covering letter requesting your name change and/or gender marker change.

On your cover letter include that you wish your legal name on the licence be changed to your new legal name and that the gender marker to be changed if necessary.

Failure to update the DVLA of your name change is an offence under section 99 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Gender Recognition Certificates

If you obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) it would mean you can update your birth or adoption certificate to reflect your gender, all of your legal rights and responsibilities will correspond to your legally updated gender and it would be, in most cases, illegal for people who know that you once had a different gender to pass that information on. To apply for a GRC you have to be aged 18 or over, have a gender dysphoria diagnosis and been “living” in your affirmed gender for at least 2 years. You do not need to have undergone any medical transition.

Unfortunately at present you can only be recognised as male or female, non-binary identities are not legally recognised in the UK.

If you're currently married or in a civil partnership your partner will need to sign a document to agree to having your gender legally recognised.

To apply you'll need to visit gov.uk. You'll need copies of any name change documents, a letter from two different medical doctors or doctor and a clinical psychologist, evidence of living in your affirmed gender for 2 years, a statutory declaration and your birth or adoption certificate. Different factors can affect what documentation you'll need but the application process will inform you of this.

Applications cost £5.00 and can be done online or via the post.

All GRC applications go to a panel who will look at your application within 22 weeks of applying, see if it has met all legal requirements and decide whether to grant you a GRC.

Processes are subject to change. You are advised to visit the gov.uk website for further information. This factsheet was developed August 2022.

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