**Changing Your Name**

Anyone in Scotland can call themselves by any name they wish as long as it is not for fraudulent purposes. If you are going through a gender transition you do not have to wait for permission from others (like doctors, family or employers) before changing your name. It is your choice. Most organisations will ask to see some proof of the name being used if it is different from the name on the birth register.

**What is a Statutory Declaration?**

Statutory Declarations are statements noting the new names witnessed by a Justice of the Peace, Councillor or Notary Public. Statutory Declarations are quite informal documents, in the sense that no central record is kept of them. They can be used for bank accounts and passports.

**Where can I get a Statutory Declaration?**

LGBT Health has examples of Statutory Declarations for changing your name. You can use this and add your own details in the spaces and print it ready to be signed at the appointment with the Justice of the Peace, Councillor or Notary Public (most solicitors). You can get help with this through the trans information service. You can also ask a solicitor to write a Statutory Declaration for you, but you will usually be charged for this.

**How do I book an appointment with a JP (Justice of the Peace)?**

For Edinburgh Phone 0131 225 2525 and # key and then enter 472590 or 472154 to request an appointment. Appointments are in a private room and you can take someone with you for support. Appointments are at the Sherriff and JP Court, 27 Chamber Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1LB. You can read more about the signing of documents at a Justice of the Peace Court at <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/jp-court/signing-documents>. For people outside Edinburgh, there is also a drop down list on the right of the page where you can get details of your local court.

**How do I book an appointment with a Councillor?**

In Edinburgh phone 0131 200 2000 to book an appointment with a local Councillor. The appointment will be at the City Chambers or at the Councillor’s surgery. In other areas you can find details of your local arrangements by contacting your council.

**What is the difference between a Change of Name Deed and a Deed Poll?**

A Change of Name Deed can be drawn up by a Scottish Solicitor and there is a register kept by the Registers of Scotland. A Deed Poll is similar to a Change of Name Deed, but it is mainly used by people born in England and the register is kept at the Deed Poll section of the Royal Courts of Justice in London. There is likely to be a fee charged by the solicitor for this service and it is usually more expensive than a Statutory Declaration.

**Where can I get a Change of Name Deed?**

A Scottish Solicitor can write this for you. There is likely to be a fee charged for this.

**Where can I get a Deed Poll?**

There are many websites which can generate a deep poll. Some charge money and others are free. An example of a free website is [www.freedeedpoll.org.uk](http://www.freedeedpoll.org.uk). You will need to have 2 witnesses for your deed poll.

**What if I lose my Statutory Declaration, Change of Name Deed or Deed Poll?**

It is a good idea to have more than one copy signed. Some organisations require an original document. If they accidentally lose your document you will still have a copy that you can use. If you lose all copies of your document you can go through the process again and have a new document signed.

**What kind of paper should I use?**

If you print your own document it is a good idea to use high quality paper, especially if you are not using a witness such as a Justice of the Peace, Councillor or Notary Public. This is not compulsory, but it reduces the chance of your document being rejected due to an organisation or business suspecting it is not genuine.

**How much does it cost?**

JPs and local Councillors cannot charge for signing a document. Friends may agree to witness a deed poll for free. If you print your own documents (or use the statutory declaration form supplied by the court) and use witness(es) who do not charge, there is no cost to change your name. Solicitors usually charge a small fee for signing a Statutory Declaration. A Change of Name Deed or a Deed Poll written by a solicitor is the most expensive way of changing your name.

**What should I bring to have a Statutory Declaration signed?**

You should have a Statutory Declaration ready to take to the appointment with the Justice of the Peace, Councillor or Notary Public. It is useful to have more than one copy. Do not sign the document until you meet them.

**What ID will I need?**

You will need photo ID and proof of address e.g. a utility bill if you decide to go to the Justice of the Peace Court, a Councillor or a Notary Public. If you do not have photo ID you could consider getting a Proof of Age card (there is a choice of officially approved schemes). Without photo ID it is at the discretion of the witness to decide whether they are satisfied that you are who you say you are, based on other documents and ID that you show them.

**My birth is registered in Scotland. Can I change the name on my birth certificate?**

Anyone with a Scottish birth or adoption certificate can apply for a new name to be recorded on their birth certificate. The original name will also be shown (except for children under 12 months) and the gender will not be changed. This is different from the process for getting a new birth certificate with a new name and gender for gender reassignment. For more information on this see <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/registration/recording-change-of-forename-and-surname-in-scotland>.