

Children’s Social Care - Practice Directive No. 4

Subject:	Change of First Name for Children Placed for Adoption	Issue Date:	29th December 2015 and August 2019
Author:	Michael Taylor, Head of Service - Corporate Parenting	Review Date:	August 2020
Target Group:	Social Workers, Senior Practitioners, Assistant Team Managers, Team Managers, Heads of Service, Independent Reviewing Officers		

Background/Introduction:

Sutton believes in the importance of a child retaining their birth forename chosen by their birth parents as an integral part of their identity.

The first name of a child who is to be placed for adoption cannot have their first name changed unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances include:

- where a child has been given a very unusual name which could easily identify them and the birth family are not in support of an adoption placement, are considered likely to trace and pose a risk to the stability of any adoption placement, or
- the child has a name that could cause them distress or embarrassment.

Under such circumstances the child’s first name may be changed with the agreement of the Head of Service - Corporate Parenting. Where agreement cannot be reached direction to change the first name of the child must be sought from the Court.

When a child who is placed for adoption has their first name changed the reasons for the change must be clearly stated within the Annex A report to Court for the Adoption Order Hearing, setting out the reasons why the Local authority is in support of this change.