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## Copyright and volunteers

Copyright normally belongs to the person or persons who created the work. While the [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988](#) states that material produced by employees belongs to their employer, it makes no mention of volunteers. This means that the copyright of a volunteer's work remains with them and not the organisation.

Organisations should ask their volunteers to assign or transfer copyright to them, or even agree a licence to use the work in certain situations or publications. This might seem like a trivial issue, but Volunteering England has heard of cases where volunteers have been producing work for important publications such as an Annual Review, but following disputes with their organisations have refused to allow them to use their work.

### Further information

- Read the section on copyright on page 50 of 'Volunteers and the Law' (now free to download from VE's website)
- Volunteering England's Information Team has drafted a form of words which you can adapt for use with your volunteers when dealing with copyright issues. To request a copy, please email [information@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:information@volunteeringengland.org) or call 0800 028 3304 (telephone and textphone)

**Our thanks to Volunteering England, author of this information sheet**

