

Declined records would have their HER status removed, so that they were not inadvertently placed on the list again after any subsequent revision.

The HER status of records would probably not be shown publicly on the database, but would be viewable by UKDFD staff editing the records in order to ensure that updated records were listed again on the HER screen.

The designated HER representatives (HERs) would periodically log into the dedicated area and go through the process of accepting or declining their respective records. On taking either action, the applicable records would be removed from the listing.

3.0 Implementation

If the proposed arrangements were to go ahead, there would inevitably be a number of technical and other issues that would require resolution during implementation. It is envisaged that the implementation process would consist of the following stages.

Stage 1: Reach agreement between UKDFD and HERs on the general principles of the system that will be developed. Establish whether all HERs wish to participate, and if not, is there a sufficient number to justify the effort required and meet the overall objective. Agree lines of communication. Identify one or two HERs prepared to take part in a pilot scheme.

Stage 2: UKDFD develop and test the database software in accordance with the agreed principles. Notify recorders of forthcoming changes and explain broadly how the new arrangements will work. Advise other interested parties - archaeological and metal-detecting organisations, websites, etc. - of the situation.

Stage 3: Establish a pilot scheme with one or two previously identified HERs and eliminate any teething problems. A minimum period of six months is probably required.

Stage 4: Progressively extend the system to all participating HERs.

4.0 Important points to note

The proposed arrangements would apply only to those records created after agreement had been reached and revised terms and conditions had been published on the UKDFD website and communicated to its recorders.

The UKDFD would seek a binding undertaking that no findspot it provided would be published on the Internet, or in any other publicly available format, to an accuracy greater than a four-figure grid reference or parish, unless previously agreed to by both the finder and landowner.

While the UKDFD actively encourages voluntary recording, and this forms part of its mission statement, it recognises the right of detectorists to make that choice freely. The expectation is that the majority of recorders would also choose to make their data available to the HER via the proposed scheme, but there is no implied assurance that this would be the case.

The proposed system entails a considerable amount of work on the existing software, which the UKDFD is prepared to undertake. However, no fundamental changes to the format of the existing data structure or data type would be made. (The data in some of the record fields may not be required by the HER (e.g. detector information), so it would be necessary to agree in advance a standard list that is acceptable to all participating HERs.)

The UKDFD reserves the right to withdraw unilaterally from the proposed scheme in the event that it results in any adverse consequences for the UKDFD or the metal-detecting hobby.