

Statement on update to Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) and Child Index

This is to inform you that in the light of a WIMD being produced in 2011, the time needed to properly review all potential indicators (including the 2011 Census), conducting a review of the conceptual basis of deprivation and following an assessment of user needs (which were gathered as part of the last consultation) it has been decided that 2014 provides, on balance, the most optimal date for the next WIMD update.

WIMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. Since the first Index was produced in 2000, there have been three subsequent publications (in 2005, 2008 and 2011) with a WIMD Child Index being produced in 2008 and 2011. The prime purpose of the Index is to identify the most deprived areas of Wales in order to inform policy and funding decisions.

When it was originally announced that WIMD would be updated in 2013, it was anticipated that this would be the first update since the 2008 WIMD. The rationale behind the choice of 2013 had been that it would allow time for a full review of the WIMD domains and indicators, to develop data sources, to enable data from the 2011 Census to be incorporated as quickly as possible and to take account of any boundary changes to the lower layer super output areas (LSOAs), the statistical geography used by WIMD. However, following a public consultation in 2009, a decision was made to publish an 'interim' WIMD in 2011, a re-calculation of the Index with the most recent data available but without any changes to methodology or indicators.

There are a number of reasons why delaying the next WIMD beyond 2013 now appears logical;

- it would allow not only a full review of the WIMD domains and indicators, the first since prior to the 2008 WIMD, but also in advance of this a full conceptual review of deprivation and how well WIMD, in its current guise, measures area based deprivation;
- it greatly reduces the risk of postponement to the implementation should there be a delay in the availability of 2011 Census data ;
- it appears to be the best fit with the transition from individual benefits to universal credits;
- no strong, specific user requirements for updating WIMD in 2013 have been identified.

While 2014 is recommended as the most optimal date for the next update, there is still some uncertainty regarding the implementation of welfare reform, so there is a possibility that external factors may result in the update being set beyond this.