

Service helping to keep families together goes Wales-wide

The Reflect programme was initially developed by Newport City Council, with the assistance of Barnardo's Cymru, to support mothers following the compulsory, permanent removal of one or more children due to child protection concerns.

In every year since 2010, Newport has seen between 11 and 16 babies removed at birth and placed for adoption when the child's mother has previously had a child removed. In one family, nine children had been removed at birth. Heads of Children's Services across Wales have established this pattern is common across the country.

Last year, the Welsh Government announced an additional £8m investment to provide further support for looked after children. £850,000 a year has been allocated to support the roll-out of the Reflect programme across Wales.

Reflect delivers intensive, one-to-one support to at-risk women in the hope that they can improve their lives, by reducing the emotional, social and financial costs of children being taken into care in the future. Those involved are offered emotional support alongside practical help including contraceptive advice and access to housing, education and employment services.

Services have already supported nearly 100 women across the country.

The Reflect programme is a key preventative work strand within the Welsh Government's programme of work to improve outcomes for looked after children.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"The Reflect project aims to break the cycle of children being taken into the care system and to give women the opportunity to develop new skills and responses that can help them create a more positive future for themselves, their child and wider family.

"Recurrent care proceedings have a significant human cost on the mothers involved, their children and their families. That is why I'm pleased the Welsh Government has been able to fund the Reflect programme, allowing it to be rolled out across Wales, helping to ensure even more families receive the help and support they need to stay together."