



# Child at Risk taken from the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014)

A 'child at risk' is a child who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

When a child has been reported under section 130, the local authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare under section 47 of the Children Act (1989).

The Act provides definitions of abuse and neglect.

**Abuse** means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse (and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place), and 'financial abuse' includes theft, fraud, pressure about money or misuse of money.

**Neglect** means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health).

**Harm** means abuse or the impairment of (a) physical or mental health, or (b) physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Abuse or neglect may constitute a criminal offence. These include offences against the person (violent offences), sexual offences and property offences such as theft. If abuse or neglect is motivated by someone's personal characteristic – disability, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender / gender identity – then this may be a hate crime.

The definition of harm in the Act is very similar to the one in the Children Act (1989).

More information can be found on the Social Care Wales Information and Learning Hub at [socialcare.wales/resources/information-and-learning-hub](https://socialcare.wales/resources/information-and-learning-hub)