



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

An 'adult at risk' is an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The statutory guidance states that the inclusion of 'at risk' enables early intervention to protect an adult at risk. The decision to act does not require actual abuse or neglect to have taken place.

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, 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).

Guidance explains that the impact of abuse and neglect, and what you do, will be affected by the:

- frailty or vulnerability of the adult at risk;
- extent of abuse or neglect;
- length of time and frequency of the occurrence;
- impact on the individual; and
- risk of repeated or escalating acts involving this or other adults at risk.

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 following is a non-exhaustive list of examples for each of the categories of abuse and neglect:

**Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

**Sexual abuse** - rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent and / or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks; coercive control is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.

**Neglect** - failure to access medical care or services, emotional neglect, negligence in the face of risk-taking, failure to give prescribed medication, failure to assist in personal hygiene or the provision of food, shelter or clothing.

**Financial abuse** in relation to people who may have needs for care and support:

- unexpected change to their will;
- sudden sale or transfer of the home;
- unusual activity in a bank account;
- sudden inclusion of additional names on a bank account;
- signature does not resemble the person's normal signature;
- reluctance or anxiety by the person when discussing their financial affairs;
- giving a substantial gift to a carer or other third party;
- a sudden interest by a relative or other third party in the welfare of the person;
- bills remaining unpaid;
- complaints that personal property is missing;
- a decline in personal appearance that may indicate that diet and personal requirements are being ignored; and
- deliberate isolation from friends and family giving another person total control of their decision-making.

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)