



Fact Sheet: When is a Child at Risk of Significant Harm

A Child is at Risk of Significant Harm if they are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, from neglect, abuse or psychological harm.

Some signs a Child might be at Risk of Significant Harm include:

Signs relating to basic physical or psychological needs not being met.

- low weight
- untreated physical problems
- poor standards of hygiene
- scavenging or stealing food
- Child is not attending school

Signs relating to physical abuse.

- bruising, bite marks, scratches
- burns and scalds
- the Child's explanation of injury is not consistent with the injury itself
- the Child is exposed to domestic violence
- there is a family history of violence
- parents or guardians use excessive discipline

Signs relating to sexual abuse.

- the Child is pregnant
- injuries to the genital area
- the Child has a sexually transmitted infection
- the Child is describing Sexual Acts
- the Child has sexual knowledge or exhibits sexual behaviour inappropriate for their age
- the Child has accumulated money and gifts without explanation

Signs relating to psychological harm.

- constant feelings of worthlessness
- lack of trust
- extreme attention seeking behaviour
- persistent running away from home
- anorexia or over-eating
- anxiety or depression
- the Child is engaging in risk-taking behaviours including self-harm and attempted suicide
- the Child is exposed to domestic violence