



# Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968

## 1968 CHAPTER 34

### PART II

#### PREVENTION OF CRUELTY AND EXPOSURE TO MORAL AND PHYSICAL DANGER

##### MISCELLANEOUS OFFENCES IN RELATION TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS

#### 20 Cruelty to persons under sixteen.

- (1) If any person who has attained the age of sixteen and has<sup>[F1]</sup> responsibility for] any child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health<sup>F2</sup> ..., that person shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable—
- (a) on conviction on indictment, to<sup>[F3]</sup> an unlimited fine] or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding<sup>[F4]</sup> ten years] or to both;
  - (b) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding<sup>[F3]</sup> level 3 on the standard scale] or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to both.
- (2) For the purposes of this section—
- <sup>[F5]</sup>(za) a reference to—
    - (i) ill-treatment is to ill-treatment whether physical or otherwise;
    - (ii) suffering or injury is to suffering or injury whether physical or otherwise;]
  - (a) a parent or other person legally liable to maintain a child or young person<sup>[F1]</sup>, or the legal guardian of a child or young person] shall be deemed to have neglected him in a manner likely to cause injury to his health if he has failed to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid or lodging for him, or if, having been unable otherwise to provide such food, clothing, medical aid or lodging, he has failed to take steps to procure it to be provided under the [Health and

---

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968, Section 20. (See end of Document for details)*

---

Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 ] or<sup>F6</sup> Part VII of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992];

- (b) where it is proved that the death of an infant under three years of age was caused by suffocation (not being suffocation caused by disease or the presence of any foreign body in the throat or air passages of the infant) while the infant was in bed with some other person who has attained the age of sixteen, that other person shall, if he was, whilst in bed, under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs, be deemed to have neglected the infant in a manner likely to cause injury to its health.

(3) A person may be convicted of an offence under this section—

- (a) notwithstanding that actual suffering or injury to health, or the likelihood of actual suffering or injury to health, was obviated by the action of another person;
- (b) notwithstanding the death of the child or young person in question.

*Subs. (4), (5) rep. by 1989 NI 15*

(6)<sup>F7</sup>.....

<b>F1</b>	1995 NI 2
<b>F2</b>	Words in s. 20(1) repealed (21.2.2022) by <a href="#">Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 (c. 2), s. 21(a)</a> ; S.R. 2022/57, art. 2(u)
<b>F3</b>	1984 NI 3
<b>F4</b>	1989 NI 15
<b>F5</b>	S. 20(2)(za) inserted (21.2.2022) by <a href="#">Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 (c. 2), s. 21(b)</a> ; S.R. 2022/57, art. 2(u)
<b>F6</b>	1992 c. 9
<b>F7</b>	S. 20(6) repealed (20.9.2006) by <a href="#">Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/1945 (N.I. 14))</a> , arts. 1(3), <b>2(5)</b>

**Changes to legislation:**

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968, Section 20.