

# Practice guide

## Family Help & Children's Social Care

### Youth Justice - Ketamine Response, Wirral

#### Background, purpose and rationale

There are several initiatives that have been run in Wirral Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the wider Harm Outside the Home Service (HOTHs). Within Wirral, we are always looking at ways to add innovation, education, training and support to children in our services, to improve outcomes for the children and their families and listening to the voice of the victim and child. We wanted to investigate several elements and launched numerous projects. There has been an increase in the number of young people referred to us for ketamine use and being arrested for possession of ketamine.

#### What we did to improve children's outcomes and policies/experiences

Through the Wirral Drugs Partnership, we set up a working group to look at this in more detail. The group convened partners across Wirral's Combatting Drugs partnership with treatment, recovery, enforcement and / or early intervention responsibilities, from adult and children's services, led by the lead for Harms Outside the Home (HOTH). We felt as a group that universal education and prevention was key. The aim was to enable young people and adults to make informed decisions about the dangers of ketamine. There have been several interventions that have been delivered, these being as follows:

- Ketamine harm leaflet – adapted from a leaflet developed by St Helens, a local leaflet co-produced with young people was designed. 40,000 have been printed and distributed to young people and services who work with young people.
- Ketamine Awareness Sessions in Schools – Ketamine Awareness sessions to all young people in years 9 to 13, as well as Wirral Met and Sixth Form College. These were delivered through bespoke lessons teachers undertook after training with our drug and alcohol services on what to deliver and how. The schools were excellent at taking on this role as we knew, as a partnership, that we did not have the available staff or resources to deliver awareness sessions to the thousands of young people in the above year groups in Wirral.
- Additional Bespoke Ketamine Sessions - Several schools have asked staff to attend their schools to deliver a full staff school training session as they felt that there was a need for all staff to be aware of the issue.
- Ketamine Awareness Sessions for Professionals - to raise awareness of the signs, symptoms, and support services available to all professionals. We delivered many online spotlight training sessions, open to any professionals to access. Over 600 professionals have attended the spotlight session training on ketamine. These included GPs, hospital staff, social care, teachers, police officers and more.

- Ketamine Screening Tool – to support health care settings with the identification of and onward treatment of ketamine bladder harm. Wirral Ways (Change Grow Live) produced a Ketamine Screening Tool document and have presented this to colleagues in the health and care system.
- Ketamine Harms Video - we commissioned Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts (LIPA) to write, produce, and film a piece of work with regards to a real-life event of a young adult using ketamine. This is just in the editing stage and will be available for professionals to use with their clients and for schools / youth clubs.
- Response service developments – Wirral's young person's drug and alcohol service have taken forward several service developments in response to ketamine.
- Wirral Ways service developments – Wirral Ways adult drug treatment service have been integral in delivering activity in support of the ketamine response.

### What was the impact?

- Over 600 professionals from across Wirral have attended the Ketamine response spotlight training sessions.
- Having professionally trained adults to spot the signs of ketamine use, the dangers of ketamine use and where to go for support has seen a large increase in referrals to drug and alcohol service and medical services. Meaning support can be given earlier before life changing injuries such as Ket Bladder occurs.
- Over 15,000 children and young adults have had a bespoke lesson plan on dangers of ketamine, where to go for support if needed, and how they can access support.

### Resources

Ketamine Awareness Lesson Plan  
 Ketamine Card  
 Head Teacher Letter

### Find out more Contact

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