

Dear Headteachers and Safeguarding Leads

I hope you are all well and have had a well-earned summer break. As many of you will remember, I attended the WASH meeting before the summer break with colleagues to discuss the increase we are seeing of young people using Ketamine in Wirral and Nationally.

Through Wirral's Combating Drugs Partnership, I have been asked to lead on the response to Ketamine and I have been working with partners from Public Health, Police, Adult Service and Children and Young people's department to look at how we respond.

As many of you are aware, we run the In the Zone programme for Year 9's that covers Ketamine use but feel that the message needs to be more widespread and more specific as a standalone session to give young people the information about the long-term irreversible damage that Ketamine can cause.

Within WASH we discussed if it would be possible, given the numbers of schools and young people, that schools could run a lesson on Ketamine within form time or PHSE lessons, as we would ideally want to run the lesson for Year 10's, Year 11's, Year 12's and Year 13's as well as linking into local colleges for the older college aged students.

We are mindful that staff within the schools will not have a great deal of knowledge on the subject matter, so have devised a lesson plan for you and have set aside bespoke training sessions for staff on Teams. In these session staff from drug services will go through the lesson plan with staff who will deliver and answer any questions to upskill your staff.

Wirral's Ketamine Response

Ketamine is a powerful pharmaceutical anaesthetic, but used recreationally, and excessively, it can cause significant, even severe, damage to the bladder, kidneys and other elements of the urinary system. What is causing particular concern is that, in some cases, where the use of this drug has been frequent and regular, this damage can be irreversible.

This growing prevalence of ketamine use, and the associated risk of possibly significant harm, has been identified as an issue both nationally and locally and in response to this the Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) will run a risk awareness raising campaign aimed at reducing these drug-related harms in our communities.

Schools clearly have an important and very valuable role to play in preventing drug misuse, particularly as part of their pastoral responsibilities. In line with the Wirral Schools Drug Policy, which can be found via [Wirral Schools Drug Policy Framework - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) there is also a statutory duty on schools to promote pupils' wellbeing.

As part of a whole school approach the campaign the CDP will provide a co-ordinated approach to all Wirral secondary schools, alternative provisions, and colleges through the offer of a package of age-appropriate support. You will note overleaf the section 'Recommended Actions' which summarises the planned approach, and we really appreciate your support in enabling us to deliver this. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Kind regards

Kathy Gill
Interim - Head of Service: Harm Outside the Home, Contextual Safeguarding

Recommended Actions:

- **Step 1: Ketamine Awareness Lesson Plan and Guide**

Please find attached a lesson plan and a guide for delivering ketamine awareness messages to students. This can also be accessed online via <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/ketamine>

- **Step 2: Ketamine Z-Card Leaflet Distribution**

You will also have noted the attached Ketamine “Z-Card” leaflet, which is also referenced in the attached lesson plan. This leaflet has been developed by the Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership and focuses on harms that can be caused by Ketamine use. It has been designed to fold into a pocket-sized leaflet and can also be opened into an A4 sheet.

We have attached the digital version in advance of you receiving physical copies of the leaflet, which will be delivered by Wirral Public Health colleagues to School Offices prior to planned delivery of the Ketamine Awareness Lesson Plan. If leaflets can be stored and distributed to teachers as appropriate to be distributed to students during lesson delivery that would be very much appreciated.

- **Step 3: Staff Training**

To support staff who will be delivering the lesson plan, 4 training sessions will be delivered specifically for education staff. The sessions will be delivered via Microsoft Teams and will cover the background of Ketamine, effects on young people, an opportunity to look at the lesson plan and ask any questions.

It is recommended staff attend one of the sessions prior to delivering the session to students.

The dates of these sessions are:

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|-------------------------|----------|
| • Tuesday 1st October | 4 – 5 pm |
| • Wednesday 2nd October | 4 – 5 pm |
| • Monday 7th October | 4 – 5 pm |
| • Wednesday 9th October | 4 – 5 pm |

Staff are required to book a place for their session of choice via [Virtual Safeguarding Training for schools and education - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).

Please note registration as a learner on the Wirral Safeguarding website is required to book.

- **Step 4: Delivery of Lesson Plan**

We recommend that the attached lesson plan is delivered by a pastoral lead responsible for a form group of year 10 or above, as part of protected form time, or as part of PHSE lesson delivery for these year groups.

- **Step 5: Responding to a Disclosure of Ketamine Use**

We anticipate that following the delivery of the lesson, individual students may make disclosures about their or their friends Ketamine use or related issues. Such disclosures should be responded to in line with School Safeguarding policies and procedures.

All students can access confidential support in school from their school Youth Worker via [Health Services in Schools](#).

If the student is experiencing physical harms such as Ketamine Bladder Syndrome, it is strongly recommended that they contact their GP at the earliest opportunity.

- **Step 6: Responding to the Management of a Drug Related Incident**

For further confidential advice and support, or in the event of a drug related incident, schools are advised to contact the Wirral School Drugs Adviser.

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