

KETAMINE GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

A guide for professionals in
Sheffield

**Like
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Change
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**The
Corner**
Sheffield Young People's
Substance Misuse Service



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**LETS TALK
ABOUT
KET**

Why is it important to learn about ketamine?

Understanding ketamine, its effects on the body, and the support available is vital for keeping people who use ketamine safe.

Ketamine is one of the most widely available street drugs in the UK. In recent years, its use has increased both nationally and locally in Sheffield. While ketamine use is most common amongst young people and young adults, it is important to recognise ketamine can be used at any age.

What is ketamine?

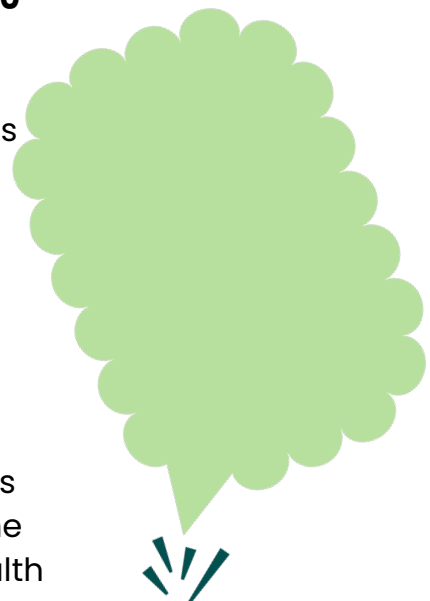
Ketamine is a **Class B anaesthetic drug with dissociative effects**, which can produce a feeling of **detachment** from the body and surrounding environment. It is used in human and veterinary medicine and has also been a popular recreational drug since the 1990s rave scene.

It is typically sold as a **crystal white powder** and most commonly snorted, although it can also be injected or swallowed.

What are the short-term risks of ketamine?

The effects of ketamine typically last between **30–90 minutes**, although this can vary depending on the amount taken and the method of use. Ketamine at higher doses can have **hallucinogenic effects**. It has been described as producing feelings of relaxation, euphoria, and calm, as well as reducing pain. However, ketamine can also carry short-term and long-term risks.

A major short-term risk with ketamine is that it can make someone less coordinated and less aware of danger. This can increase the likelihood of accidents and may make someone more vulnerable. Ketamine can also sometimes aggravate existing mental health conditions.



Fatal overdose from ketamine alone is rare, as it does not typically cause life-threatening respiratory depression. However, if someone loses consciousness, this should be treated as an emergency – call 999 immediately.

Ketamine can also lead to what is known as a “K-hole”, a hallucinatory experience that causes intense detachment from reality. If someone is experiencing a K-hole, place them in the recovery position and call 999.

Mixing ketamine with other drugs

Ketamine is often taken alongside other substances, such as cocaine or alcohol. Mixing drugs can significantly **increase the risks** associated with ketamine.

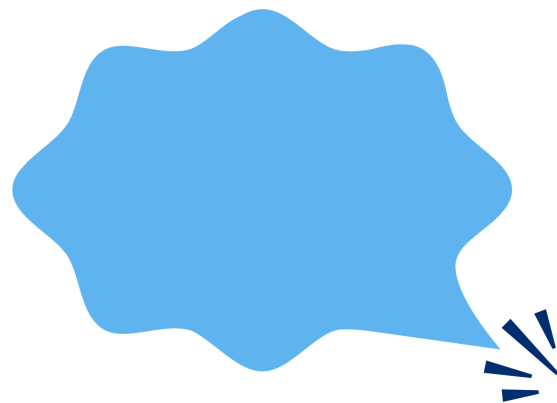


Ketamine and cocaine can place additional strain on the heart by increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Ketamine and cocaine can increase the likelihood of an accident.

Ketamine and alcohol: the full risks of this combination are not fully understood, but using them together can greatly increase the likelihood of passing out, vomiting, and experiencing confusion. This can also leave someone in a more vulnerable state. When ketamine is mixed with other depressive drugs it increases the risk of both those drugs and overdose.

Combining ketamine with alcohol can also affect tolerance to both substances, increasing the risk of harm.

Longer term Impact of Ketamine use



Tolerance and dependence

Ketamine is not considered **physically addictive**, but it can lead to **psychological dependence**. As use becomes more frequent, a person may need to take larger amounts to achieve the same effects. This can increase the risk of harm and unwanted side effects.

People who use ketamine regularly may also experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop or reduce their use.

For individuals who have been using ketamine long term and develop physical pain as a result, some may take more ketamine to try to manage or mask these symptoms.

If you support people who use ketamine – here's how you can help

1 Make accommodations

People who use ketamine may begin to experience **physical health effects**, such as **ketamine bladder**, which can make it harder for them to engage with services. It's important to check in with clients to understand whether they need any **adjustments to access support**.

For example: for those who find it difficult to attend appointments due to physical discomfort, consider offering home visits or meeting in a more comfortable location.

For those experiencing bladder issues, ensure meetings take place somewhere with easy access to toilet facilities. Outreach can be particularly effective for people using ketamine to build trust and engagement.

2 Education and harm reduction

It's important to ensure that people who use ketamine are aware of the associated **risks**. However, overly negative or fear-based messaging can be off-putting. A balanced, honest approach helps maintain open communication and trust.

Providing accurate, practical **harm reduction advice** can make a meaningful difference. For example, simple steps such as staying hydrated may help reduce some of the harms associated with ketamine use.



Download our [harm reduction leaflet here](#), or look at our other ketamine resources - www.likewisesheffield.org.uk/advice/lets-talk-about-ket/ketamine-harm-reduction-guide/

If you need more training on drugs and/or alcohol– Likewise and The Corner offers training for professionals, covering awareness of alcohol and other drugs, and an overview of local support services. Likewise also offer naloxone training and kits.

Training from The Corner

www.changegrowlive.org/service/sheffield-the-corner/professionals

Training from Likewise

www.likewisesheffield.org.uk/get-help/training-for-professionals/

3

Encouraging access to support

If someone is experiencing physical effects related to ketamine use, it is important to encourage them to seek medical advice from their GP and access treatment services. Early support can help prevent symptoms from worsening.

Support is available through local drug and alcohol services in Sheffield.

The Corner: Support
for Young People
(10 – 18)



The
Corner
Sheffield Young People's
Substance Misuse Service

Who We Are

The Corner is Sheffield's young people's (under 18's) substance misuse service. We provide advice, guidance, support and treatment to young people under 18 in the Sheffield area who are experiencing problems with drugs and alcohol.

What We Do

We offer full assessment and treatment for substance misuse. Through our one-to-one work we deliver effective interventions which promote positive change. This can include drugs advice, information and harm reduction work as well as structured psycho-social sessions.

We also offer telephone and email advice, information and guidance to young people, their families and workers. We offer a flexible and accessible service. We accept telephone referrals from young people, family members/concerned others and professionals, as well as accepting referrals through our website. We are happy to offer support at our city centre base, at young people's homes or any other suitable venue.

To refer someone:

www.changegrowlive.org/service/sheffield-the-corner/referrals

Contact Details:

0114 2752051 or email thecorner.sheffield@cgl.org.uk

Likewise: Support for
Adults (18+)

Like
wise

Likewise provide information, advice and support for drug and/or alcohol use. It offers:

- 1-2-1 support with a key worker to help someone meet their goals, whether it's cutting down or completely stopping.

- Harm reduction support- Likewise's harm reduction team run a needle syringe provision and harm reduction advice and support.
- Health and wellbeing checks – such as health care assessments
- Substitute medication for certain drugs
- Support for family members and friends with our weekly Concerned Others Drop-in
- Recovery Hub offering holistic group support from a daily breakfast club, to structured group sessions, to activities like arts and crafts. They also run a weekly Ketamine Support Group.
- Detox within the community/at home or at a rehab centre

To refer go to:

<https://likewisesheffield.org.uk/get-help/>

Contact details:

**0114 308 7000 or email
info@likewisesheffield.org.uk**

1625 Outreach



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Sheffield

1625 outreach provides drug and alcohol advice and information to young people aged 16 to 25 in Derby, Derbyshire and Sheffield. We're a free and confidential outreach service aimed at helping young adults to make informed decisions around drugs, alcohol and staying safe. We provide non-judgmental, fact-based, information and support surrounding drug and alcohol use and the associated risks. We aim to give young people the knowledge and skills to make more informed choices, to keep themselves and their peers aware, safe and well.

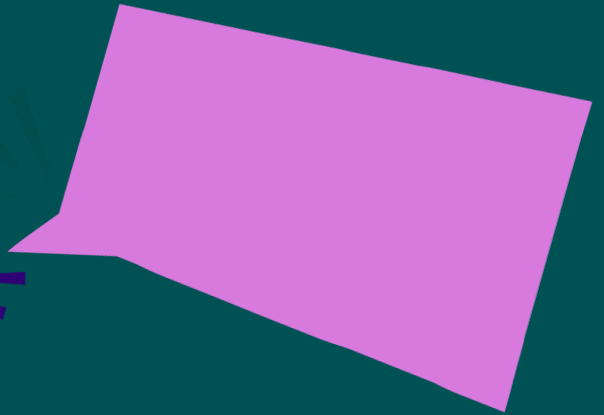
What we offer:

- Harm reduction advice and information (around drugs and alcohol)
- Tips and advice around staying safe on a night out
- Support with accessing other help, such as wellbeing and sexual health services
- Outreach in the community, at schools, colleges, universities and events such as festivals
- Interactive workshops in colleges and universities to keep young people informed about drug and alcohol use
- Virtual support via Instagram (DM us for advice 1625_outreach)

For more information:

- **www.1625outreach.co.uk**
- **Instagram: 1625_Outreach**
- **Email: 1625outreach@cgl.org.uk**





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