# Family of The Vivienne raises awareness about ketamine dangers



The family of James Lee Williams, known for their drag persona The Vivienne, has confirmed that the performer died from cardiac arrest linked to ketamine use. The 32-year-old artist passed away at their home in Cheshire on January 5, a tragedy that has prompted their family to raise awareness about ketamine, a substance they describe as increasingly dangerous.

In a statement released by Simon Jones, Williams' manager and friend, he articulated the family's desire to publicly discuss the circumstances of Williams' death. “We hope that by releasing this information, we can raise awareness about the dangers of ongoing ketamine usage and what it can do to your body,” Jones stated. He noted the rising prevalence of ketamine use, especially among young people, and highlighted that the full extent of its risks is often not communicated effectively. Following the artist's death, calls for increased dialogue around substance abuse and its implications have resonated throughout the community.

In an inquest slated for June, the circumstances surrounding The Vivienne's death are expected to be further examined. Cheshire police have indicated that there were "no suspicious circumstances" identified at the time of discovery. The announcement of the cause of death marked a continuation of the family's effort to highlight the dangers associated with ketamine use, a drug that can lead to dissociative experiences and carry substantial health risks.

Ketamine is a legally recognised anaesthetic in the UK with applications in both human and veterinary medicine. It has also gained popularity in recent years as an off-label treatment for depression, although warnings persist about its addictive potential. According to current statistics, approximately 299,000 individuals aged 16 to 59 reported using ketamine in the past year, a worrying trend that has prompted governmental inquiry into possible reclassification of which category the drug falls under within the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Chanel Williams, the artist's sister, expressed the family's devastation while emphasising their resolve to turn grief into advocacy. She stated, “If we can help raise awareness of the dangers of this drug and help people who may be dealing with ketamine addiction then something positive will come from this complete tragedy." The family will collaborate with Adferiad, a charity focused on mental health and addiction support, to launch a campaign later this year aimed at reducing stigma surrounding addiction and providing necessary resources for those in distress.

The Vivienne gained fame as the inaugural winner of "RuPaul's Drag Race UK," where they exhibited not only talent but also vulnerability regarding their past struggles with substance use. Their candidness during the competition about seeking help for their ketamine addiction resonated with many fans and advocates for mental health.

Public figures from the drag community have expressed their condolences in the wake of Williams' passing, referring to them as a "beacon" within the entertainment landscape. Tributes have highlighted their dynamic personality and the impact they had as an artist.

As the campaign approaches its launch, both the family and mental health experts hope that these conversations will facilitate a deeper understanding of ketamine's effects, as well as the need for accessibility to support services for individuals grappling with addiction. The upcoming documentary on The Vivienne’s life is poised to further illuminate their journey and the circumstances surrounding their untimely death.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/the-vivienne-cause-of-death-ketamine-rupaul-b2717076.html> - This article confirms that The Vivienne's death was due to cardiac arrest caused by ketamine use and highlights the family's efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of ketamine.
* <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2025-03-18/drag-queen-the-vivienne-died-after-taking-ketamine-family-says> - This news piece corroborates the cause of The Vivienne's death as linked to ketamine use and mentions the family's initiative to raise awareness.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/the-vivienne-cause-of-death-ketamine-rupaul-b2717076.html> - The article discusses ketamine's legal status and its increasing use, especially among young people, aligning with the rising concerns about its dangers.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/the-vivienne-cause-of-death-ketamine-rupaul-b2717076.html> - It mentions The Vivienne's past struggles with substance use and their openness about addiction during their appearance on RuPaul's Drag Race UK.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/the-vivienne-cause-of-death-ketamine-rupaul-b2717076.html> - The article notes the upcoming inquest and the lack of suspicious circumstances identified by Cheshire police, further detailing the investigation into The Vivienne's death.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/the-vivienne-cause-of-death-ketamine-rupaul-b2717076.html> - It highlights the collaboration between The Vivienne's family and the charity Adferiad to reduce stigma around addiction and provide support resources.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/the-vivienne-death-what-is-ketamine-and-how-popular-is-it-in-the-uk-GEGBUMN755P4JAL3G3T2YKIGBQ/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.starobserver.com.au/artsentertainment/the-cause-of-death-for-the-vivienne-has-been-revealed-to-raise-awareness/235891> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2025-03-17/the-vivienne-cause-of-death-ketamine> - Please view link - unable to able to access data