# Cocaine use surges among middle-aged UK parents and professionals, sparking health and social concerns



In recent years, the burgeoning market for cocaine in the UK has revealed troubling trends, as a notable portion of users now consists of middle-aged parents and professionals. While organic vegetable boxes, meal kits, and Amazon deliveries have become staples in British households, a less visible but equally alarming trend is the increasing consumption of cocaine among these demographics.

According to a recent report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, approximately one in 40 British adults are regular cocaine users, positioning the UK as having the second-highest usage rate globally, and the highest in Europe. The demographic of users has shifted dramatically, now including stressed parents, executives, and everyday professionals who resort to the drug as a coping mechanism. This trend is markedly concerning as it brings a powerful and harmful substance into family environments.

Cocaine-related deaths reached unprecedented levels in 2023, with over 1,100 fatalities, a tenfold increase compared to a decade earlier. The highest rate of deaths is observed among Millennials and Generation X, particularly men aged 40 to 49. Rachel Cooper, now 36, shares her personal experience, stating, “From the very first time I tried it, I knew I was going to love it. And I knew that I was going to have a problem with it.” Cooper’s addiction intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic while she was furloughed and at home with her children, ultimately spiralling out of control.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) estimates that around 117 tonnes of cocaine are consumed annually in England, Scotland, and Wales, contributing to a market valued at approximately £11 billion. In the year ending March 2024, law enforcement seized over 28 tonnes of cocaine—a staggering 52 per cent increase from the previous year, marking the largest recorded quantity since 1973. Cocaine has remained priced at around £50 per gram, but its purity has increased, appealing to a broader user base.

One parent in west London described the pervasiveness of cocaine use in her community, asserting, "Where I live, everyone – and I mean everyone is doing it." Such comments reflect an alarming normalisation of drug use among seemingly ‘respectable’ households. Mixing cocaine with alcohol poses additional dangers, as it creates a volatile combination that can lead to severe health consequences, including memory loss and increased risks to the liver and heart.

The socio-economic dynamics of cocaine use have led to an emerging pattern where middle-aged parents resort to the drug for added energy and focus. According to Scott Ardley from the addiction treatment charity Rehabs UK, cocaine often serves as a "secret drug," allowing users to maintain their day-to-day functioning while masking their substance dependency. “When people start using, most of them do it for a bit of fun,” Ardley notes, but the transition to habitual use often occurs without immediate detection.

The issue extends beyond personal experiences to wider societal ramifications, linking the cocaine trade to heightened levels of crime, including violence and human trafficking. Despite some users attempting to justify their habits by sourcing "ethically produced" cocaine, experts have cautioned against these claims, underscoring the serious consequences tied to the drug trade.

Recent legal cases highlighted the dangers of drug-related behaviours, as seen in incidents involving a mother who drove under the influence of cocaine while transporting her children. Such instances demonstrate the potential risks to familial safety posed by addiction.

Cooper describes her struggles as a mother battling addiction, stating, "I never did it when they were in the house. That was my rule. But when they were gone... I would go absolutely mad." She recounts the apprehension she felt regarding intervention from social services, which compounded her reluctance to seek help.

The trend in cocaine use is increasingly affecting older generations; in 2023, there were 441 hospital admissions for individuals aged 60 to 69 suffering from overdoses or seizures related to cocaine use. Surprisingly, even patients in their 90s have been documented seeking treatment.

As the demographic of cocaine users expands and the associated risks grow, concerns about the long-term impact on the health and well-being of families and communities become ever more pressing. The emergence of cocaine use amongst an ageing demographic raises additional questions about how societal attitudes towards addiction and recovery can evolve to address these shifting patterns effectively.

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

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