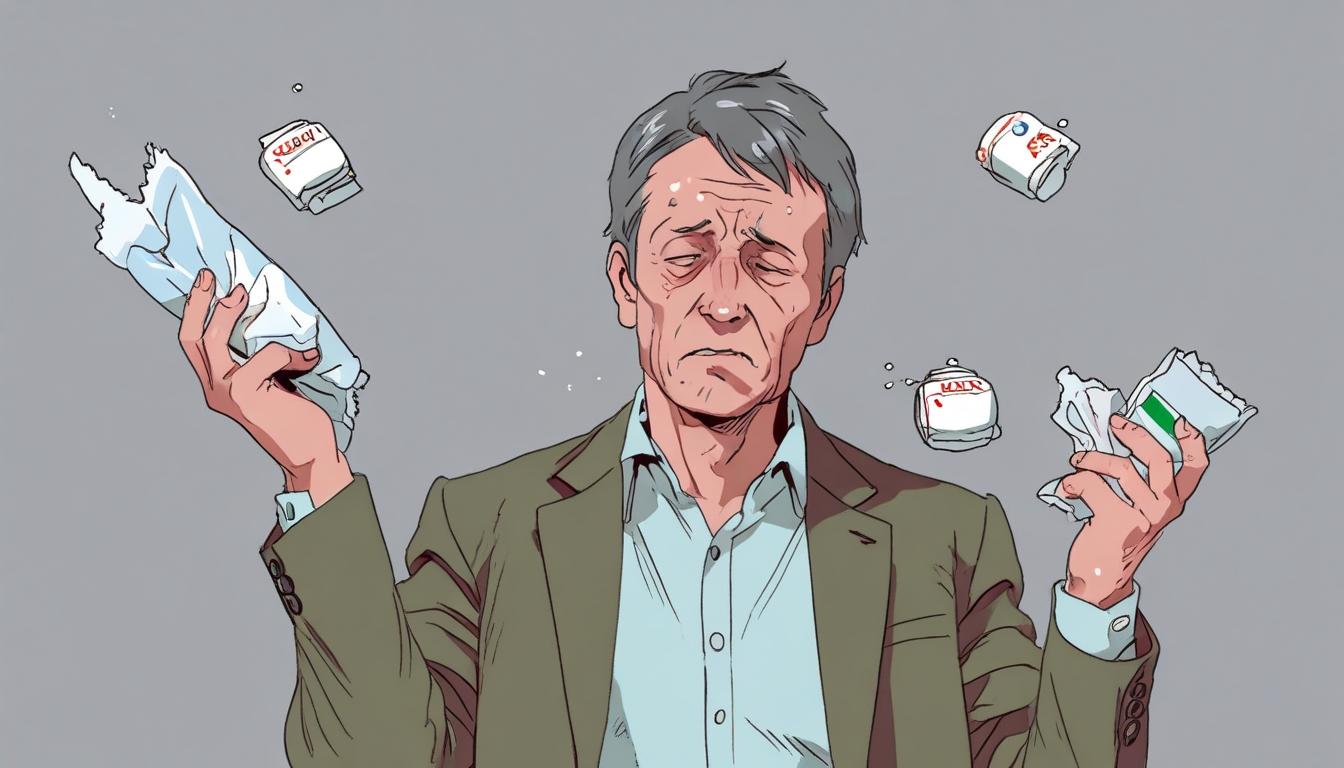
# Cocaine use surges among middle-aged UK parents and professionals, exposing hidden addiction crisis



Across the UK, a disturbing trend is emerging as cocaine usage rises dramatically among an unexpected demographic: middle-aged parents and professionals. Although traditional perceptions of cocaine users often revolve around young, carefree individuals or party-goers, a significant shift has been identified, particularly in urban areas. The increasing demand for cocaine reflects a profound social issue impacting family life.

According to a report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, approximately one in 40 adults in Britain are regular cocaine users, marking the UK as having the second-highest cocaine consumption in the world. This rise is linked heavily to the pressures faced by working professionals and parents, leading them to use the drug as a coping mechanism.

The Office for National Statistics indicates that as of 2023, cocaine-related deaths have surpassed 1,100, a tenfold increase compared to figures from a decade ago. Disturbingly, the highest incidence of drug-related fatalities is observed in men aged between 40 and 49, signifying that it is not merely the youth who are struggling with addiction; rather, it is their parents.

Rachel Cooper, a 36-year-old user from Cardiff, describes her experience with cocaine, recalling that from her first encounter at age 17, she recognised her susceptibility to addiction. She noted a significant decline in her well-being during the COVID-19 lockdown, stating, “All I was doing was sitting in the garden and drinking, and my cocaine use just got really bad. It got to the point where I couldn’t feel happy unless I had it.” Her consuming need for the drug led to substantial financial and personal turmoil.

The National Crime Agency reports an annual consumption of approximately 117 tonnes of cocaine across England, Scotland, and Wales, with a market estimated at £11 billion. The cost of cocaine—a gram typically around £50—has remained stable, although its purity has notably increased. In the year ending March 2023, police seized over 28 tonnes of the drug, marking a 52 per cent increase from the previous year and the largest recorded quantity since 1973.

The phenomenon is exacerbated by high-functioning users who maintain their roles as parents and professionals while hiding their addiction. Scott Ardley, an addiction treatment specialist from Rehabs UK, highlights the insidious nature of cocaine, suggesting that users often start taking it for enjoyment but soon find it becomes essential for day-to-day functioning.

Real-life examples of addiction's reach include several cases involving mothers in distressing situations. One such incident involved Hayley Berry, who was apprehended for being under the influence of cocaine during a school run, resulting in a prison sentence. Similarly, actress Amanda Mealing faced legal repercussions following a traffic accident while intoxicated.

Despite the increasing number of older individuals reaching out for help—evidence that the generational impact of drug use is profound—the stigma of addiction keeps many from seeking treatment. Cooper herself struggled with the fear of intervention from social services, believing her family life appeared stable enough to mask her addiction. She eventually began sharing her recovery journey on social media and is now helping others find support.

As cocaine use extends into later stages of life, health professionals express concern. The number of elderly patients admitted to hospitals for seizures and overdoses has notably increased, with three individuals in their 90s requiring care related to cocaine use. This shift in demographics presents particular challenges for an already overstretched healthcare system.

The changing landscape of cocaine users in the UK underscores the urgent need for awareness and support frameworks aimed at diverse communities affected by substance use. With the drug increasingly creeping into the heart of family life, the implications for public health and social services will require significant attention moving forward.

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

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