Irish Examiner
A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION
NOVEMBER 20, 2007

drugs
and Ireland
Gardaí seize drugs with street value of €400,000

Fourth man in cocaine seizure sent for trial

by Eoin English

**INSIDE**

4 and 5  The alarming growth in heroin and cocaine use in Dún Laoghaire and Kerry

6 and 7  Talking to mothers whose families have been devastated by drugs

8  Kim was just a year out of school with her life before her when she died

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20  Cormac O’Keefe talks to an addict about her 14-year battle with drugs

**X-ray shows where man packed vitals for jail term**

**Three face trial for 100m cocaine haul**

**by Eoin English**

**Cannabis resin worth €50,000 seized off Irish coast**

**by Kathryn Hayes**

**Accident lands 200m cocaine haul**

**by Eoin English**
A news report turned into a 10-month journey with Rachael

Recovering heroin addict
Rachael Keogh says the fear of relapse will always be with her

Before I knew it, I was 26 and it was either get clean or die. I had gone as far as I could go

I was ashamed of the state of my area that I wouldn’t even go anywhere else. There was a feeling of cut-off, devoid of life.

I was addicted to heroin, and I kept going to various doctors and therapists. My son told me to stop, but I couldn’t see how.

After a long time of fighting drug use, I got my act together and found myself in rehab.

I was still at school at the time of the opiate treatment and was accepted onto the program.

I never really felt clean or hopeful, but I did see a glimmer of hope when I started to take things seriously.

I was now more serious about my treatment and was starting to see a change in my life.

I also wanted to highlight lack of treatment facilities and long waiting lists for drug addiction.

Another reason for doing the course was to learn more about my own addiction.

I was finally able to be honest with myself and make a real change in my life.

The training on the drug use for me was really helpful, as I was able to understand the science behind addiction.

I was also able to help some people in similar situations.
In Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, it is a double-up between catering for the continuing, but accepted, heroin problem and the surge in cocaine use across all social groups and classes. 

Drug use in Dun Laoghaire was traditionally confined to disadvantaged areas. But as Noel Baker discovered, this is no longer the case.

In Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown community assistant inspector Paul and Boyd, who works with the Clo-verse community addiction teams, said: ‘For Mr Cartier’s camp of view, the cocaine has two components-requiring us to use methadone for heroin users and not putting enough in treatment for those who are addicted to cocaine. We’re trying to balance the two sides, and not just put more in one area by weaning people, but focusing on harm reduction, focus on educat-ing people on what is cocaine use, the same way in which we do a point where people realised that cigarettes were killing people’.

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Conor Ryan examines the growing drug problem in Kerry and the ease with which it is crossing geographical and social boundaries

The needle and the damage done

Conor Ryan says heroin has already been introduced into Kerry to a new generation

T he continued spread of heroin throughout Kerry’s is the biggest and most worrying problem for young drug workers. At the moment it is being smoked rather than injected, but recently I have heard of people doing heroin intravenously, but I’m told it is not a small number, but it is showing up at parties where issues arise which is being non-

The problem is that people are starting to use heroin and therefore are at risk of experiencing with heroin,” said Pádraig Cronin.

Mr Hanafee is the newly appointed intervention worker dealing with young people tak-

ing drugs in Tralee. He has been working in the area for 10 years when drugs use was linked to a sub-culture only recognisable to a certain degree code among the younger generation. He expressed the view that these social labels are redundant and norma-

les only serve to obscure those still facing the fact that teenagers in Tralee often find it easier to buy drugs than drink.

Drugs which are carried out on the Greater Tralee area, by Pádraig Kiel, found teenagers had little difficulty sourcing whatever they wanted.

The days when cocaine took centre stage, money smoked out and rich people smoked cocaine are over, drug users are trying everything.

“Any change the drug culture born, con-

sequently, the drug culture is more fashionable and understandable.

“All of a sudden a kid of all backgrounds were taking drugs, but it is so plentiful that what is happening now is a pre-drug use, you could get somebody coming into me who only takes one drug,” he said.

“I see heroin out in the country. The problem Blaithinner saw not fit for the profile of a drug user but this did not stop him from the use of heroin.

The 20-year-old’s life worked hard with six people working under him. He worked hard and stayed the path. He got off the drugs.

Mr Blaithinner’s family did not notice he was taking drugs. His uncle Bill Blaithinner said “my information is that among young people that age group around here 50% have dab-

led-in drugs.

“Those times when cocaine was a rich man’s drug, but these young people are well able to afford it, I see all kinds, from kids and jobs and are using drugs.

“I am told it is very common in the talking drug users locally,” he said.

Contrary to system, Mr Blaithinner was not a wild party the night before but with a drunk friend and went home to take some drugs after a night out.

“I suppose later, one of his friends, David Michael Coffey, was found dead in a hotel room, also after a reported cocaine overdose.

The 20-year-old, from Abbeydore Road, Tralee, was in Killarney for a wedd-

ing. Enquiries service stated the hotel room on the morning of the occasion.

Mr Leen said for those representing an anomaly, largely people for travelling to Kerry.

“Those are all respectable kids from respectable families. It is not the junior’s or the drug user to those who did not have a change in their life, not for controlling.Visible

One of the main problems was “who will be the first con-

sumed with a local heroin way. The ground is in recognition of the large number of people in their late teens and early 20’s who are already taking drugs. This is the age group at most risk.

“ar the age group start from 15 which is a surprise to see because I thought it was too young,” he said.

“Are they the age group where there is already a significant drug use history,” he said.

For those referred to the project the aim is not to get these kids back on track as in many cases their lives have yet to begin. Instead it is designed to set a system in place to avoid any problems in the future.

Both these services were established under the Kerry Drug Workers’ Experience. Kerry Drug Workers’ Experience has been operating for more than a year in Kerry and are free to anyone who wants to talk to them and the young people who want to talk to them.

These young people are 18 to 24 who have been on the street, and help them to make the links which help them start treatment,” he said.

This is a reflection on Substance Abuse/Miner research carried out in the greater Kerry and North Kerry area last year. The infor-

mation was gathered from young people about the drugs they were taking.

Mr Blaithinner was still the number one drug and provided the social setting for subsequent drug use. It also found that among drug users most had tried cannabis from the second family of se-

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Heroin is the second most popular drug used in Kerry, in the research, followed by cannabis. This is also reflected in the fact that the drug is used by both people who have been on the street and by those who have not.

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At the end of the lane

Sharon loves her daughter, but sometimes she almost wishes she was dead.

Cormac O’Keeffe talks to the mothers whose families have been devastated by drugs

I have unconditional love for her but I think I’d rather be visiting her graveyard

Reclaiming a generation

Challenge of breaking a cycle

Positivity is the key for change

BEYOND MOTHERS’ HELP

Pat’s Bar: 11 The Parade, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Theatre FInale of the many who have risked everything to get their kids away from addiction.

This is a story of change and survival.

In this world, there are no guarantees.

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‘The system failed my son’

Paul’s mother says he was not offered help in prison. Georgina O’Halloran investigates

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MARTIN and Claire O’Halloran were shocked to learn their daughter was being charged in the Circuit Criminal Court. This was after the 21-year-old from Cabra in Dublin was found dead at her apartment on November 27, 2019.

They were in the house with their son, who was in hospital with meningitis, when they were shocked to receive a call informing them of their daughter’s arrest.

The family were shocked to learn their daughter had been charged with the murder of her ex-boyfriend, John, who had recently been found dead in his home.

The family are now calling for the establishment of a proper system to support young people who have been through the trauma of a fatality in their family.

Georgina O’Halloran on the aftermath of a tragic death caused by a fatal combination

family believed addict was ‘clean’

The family believed their daughter was ‘clean’ until they were shocked to learn of her arrest. They were shocked to learn that their daughter had been charged with the murder of her ex-boyfriend, who had recently been found dead in his home.

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HER FIRST AND LAST TIME

Georgina O’Halloran on the aftermath of a tragic death caused by a fatal combination

Family believed addict was ‘clean’

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DUG DEATHS

Brain injury for ecstasy ‘first-timer’

IT PAIN Paul McPherson’s first encounter with the dangers of ecstasy came at a friend’s house in 2018. He was 23 at the time and had been taking ecstasy on and off for a few months. He was taken to hospital after suffering a brain injury, but he is now recovering and planning to return to work.

Men in house died after drug party

Lauren and Eoin Donnelly and Eoghan Flynn were found dead at the house in Portarlington, Co Offaly, on April 2. The family believe Eoghan’s death was due to a drug overdose, but the Gardaí are investigating.

Woman overdosed near mother’s home

Carriganmore, near Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim, was the scene of a drug overdose in April. The woman was found collapsed on a street near her mother’s home. It is believed she was taking ecstasy.

Heroin addict dies from pneumonia

MARK MURPHY, a 32-year-old heroin addict from Rathcoole, died in Clonmel Hospital on October 17, 2019. He had been suffering from pneumonia and had been in hospital for several days. He had been diagnosed with HIV and had been prescribed medication for the condition.

At an inquest into Martin’s death, the coroner ruled that the death was due to pneumonia. The family believe he was not offered help in prison.

FATAL COCKTAIL OF COCAINE AND HEROIN

Mark’s death is a tragic reminder of the dangers of drug addiction. The family believe he was not offered help in prison.

Men dies after small dose of cocaine

Michael O’Callaghan, 36, was found dead in his home on March 1, 2019. He had been prescribed medication for a small dose of cocaine, but he died in hospital.

Man dies after swallowing cocaine find

John Doherty, 43, was found dead in his home on April 10, 2019. He had been prescribed medication for a small dose of cocaine, but he died in hospital.

Irish Examiner
DANGEROUS HABITS

Malried Lyons and Deacon Corrigan, right, on the vulnerability of certain age groups and professional groups to drugs

ILLEGAL drug use is a youth phenomenon, more men than women use drugs and cannabis is the commonest drug taken, followed by cocaine for last year. However, illegal drug prevalence has not declined in any age group, but has increased across most professional and occupational groups. Individuals in higher age groups and cannabis is uncommon and has consequences for family and personal health. Illicit drug use increases continuing with an estimated two-thirds of people who use illegal drugs are of this age group. Treatment for this age group can have a negative impact on positive outcomes of the short to medium term.

The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) has over the last six years conducted a series of national surveys on illegal drug use, which can have a negative impact on positive outcomes of the short to medium term.

In addition, some people drug users face multiple issues such as poly substance use, mental health, homelessness or lack of education, which can have a negative impact on positive outcomes of the short to medium term. The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) has over the last six years conducted a series of national surveys on illegal drug use, which can have a negative impact on positive outcomes of the short to medium term.

The NACD was first to commission a national study of prevalence and which showed that one-in-five people are illegal drug users, but this is likely to be underestimated, as other groups experience greater marginalization than others in our communities. In addition, some people drug users face multiple issues such as poly substance use, mental health, homelessness or lack of education, which can have a negative impact on positive outcomes of the short to medium term.

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