

## Fentanyl kills 16 in English city

KINGSTON UPON HULL — There was something different in the batches of heroin that circulated through this English port city over the summer, but most addicts had no idea what it was until their friends and fellow addicts, 16 in all, had died of overdoses.

Those who tried the drug described a “warm,” “euphoric” high, followed by a sudden knockout effect, one that has killed dozens of Britons over the past year and left hundreds hospitalized.

The new kick came from fentanyl, an opiate painkiller 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine, that was mixed in with the heroin.

The drug has killed thousands of Americans, including rock stars Prince and Tom Petty, but the lethal risk it poses has barely deterred addicts in Kingston Upon Hull, known familiarly as Hull. In fact, many of them cannot get enough of it.

“It makes all the pain go away,” said Chris, 32, a homeless resident of Hull and a heroin addict for eight years.

Britain already has Europe’s highest proportion of heroin addicts, and last

year, drug-related deaths hit a record high in England and Wales, with 3,744 deaths mainly from heroin and other opioids.

While the scale is small compared with deaths in the United States — where more than 100 Americans die each day from opioid abuse — British authorities fear that fentanyl could become the country’s next most dangerous drug.

“People here are prescribed opioids for pain, but nothing to the extent of the US, where extremely potent opioids are being prescribed on a large scale,” said Dr. Prun Bijral, the medical director for Change, Grow, Live, a nonprofit organization that focuses on substance abuse.

No place has been hit harder by heroin, fentanyl and opioid addiction recently than Hull, a former fishing town of 260,000 people about 150 miles north of London that was improbably named Britain’s 2017 “City of Culture.”

On a cold day last month, several addicts lay bundled up, stashes of drugs and alcohol secreted in blankets and other belongings. — NYT

\*DRUGS

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