



# Mum told son to take his beating from drugs gang

## INVESTIGATIVE REPORT REVEALS SHOCKING STORY

■ David RALEIGH

**A DESPERATE** mother of a 16-year-old boy, who fled his Dublin home after running up a drug debt to a criminal gang, "pleaded" with him to return and "take his beating" after the thugs began threatening his parents.

The shocking incident was outlined by the author of a six-year investigative report into why children can fall into a life of crime.

*Published yesterday, 'Lifting the Lid on Greentown' — commissioned by the Department of Justice and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs — found that "criminal gangs are using drugs, alcohol, and the notion of status to entrap children into a life of crime".*

The report's author, Dr Sean Redmond, Adjunct Professor of Youth Justice, School of Law, University of Limerick, said a

"new thinking" was needed to free children trapped in crime networks.

*Dr Redmond revealed how, prior to compiling the report, he had a "dark" conversation with a Dublin youth worker about how crime was destroying children and their families.*

### Hastily

"They told me about a 16-year-old boy that (they) had been working with for some time. This boy had run into debt with the local drugs gang and had decided to leave the area hastily," Dr Redmond explained.

"...The next part of the story shook me, as a professional, but also as a father.

"The boy's mother contacted him after he left and pleaded with him to (return) home and take his beating. Apparently the local gang had made the parents' life a living hell.

"The family had been issued with threats and only a beating (or presumably the debt repaid) would restore a perverse equilibrium and get things back to a 'kind of' normal in their local reality."

Dr Redmond added: "I could only imagine the anguish that the mother was going through to bring her to this point of despair."

*At the time Redmond was Head of Young Offender Programmes for the Irish Youth Justice Service, which has policy responsibilities in the area of youth crime.*

Greentown is a real but anonymised location outside of Dublin.

Redmond, using real data from the Garda PULSE (Police Using Leading Systems Effectively) system, found that "a criminal network which had been present for a number of years effectively ruled over the lives of the residents, adults and children, who lived in Greentown".

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