

For Immediate Release

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Here's To Change: Drinkaware Invites People to Join the Mindful Drinking Movement Ahead of This Year's St. Patrick's Day Celebrations

- *Almost 1 in 3 adults in Ireland believe Irish drinking culture has changed for the better in the past three years.*
- *New campaign features specially commissioned spoken word piece by Dublin hip-hop artist Nealo, who has cut out alcohol, and partnership with alcohol-free venue Board.*
- *Focus of #HeresToChange is on celebrating small positive changes everyone can make, as well as the shifting cultural narrative around alcohol in Ireland.*

As we approach the annual St. Patrick's Day festivities, Drinkaware, the national, independent charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol misuse is launching a new campaign that encourages the public to embrace positive change when it comes to alcohol.

St. Patrick's Day is a bank holiday and our national celebration, with many people at home and abroad revelling in our Irish identity, culture, and heritage. However, it can also be a time where old stereotypes are reinforced as, rightly or wrongly, some may associate March 17th with excessive drinking and harmful behaviours around alcohol such as binge drinking**.

But times are changing, as more people than ever before embrace the idea of making incremental shifts in their relationship with alcohol. The Drinkaware Barometer 2023* highlights certain key indicators that show how things are progressing, namely:

- Almost 1 in 3 adults (30%) say Irish drinking culture has changed for the better in the last three years.
- 36% of adults now agree they would like to drink alcohol less often, the highest such incidence in the Drinkaware Barometer to date.
- 41% say they have made small positive changes to their drinking habits in the past 30 days.

In further encouraging news, young people appear particularly motivated to change, with 54% of those under 25 saying they would like to drink less often and 57% of the same age group saying that they have made small positive changes to their drinking habits.

It is in this spirit and against this ever-evolving backdrop that Drinkaware launches '**Here's To Change**' a new campaign that celebrates the simple changes everyone can make, as well as the change that has already been achieved culturally and socially when it comes to alcohol consumption.

Central to the campaign is a specially commissioned [spoken-word piece](#) by Dublin-based hip-hop artist Nealo, who recently decided to embrace a sober lifestyle and feel the benefits that it could bring to him.

Speaking as part of the campaign, Nealo said:

“Change is not a bad thing. I think that for a long time I just never questioned my alcohol intake. I went out drinking once or twice a week and I never even considered the option of cutting back. I had no idea about the benefits that it would have on my life.

And there’s something powerful about taking ownership over yourself and saying either; right tonight I’m going to go home early and hit the gym first thing, or I’m going to drink water between drinks, or I’m going to take a month off. It’s about working out what’s right for you. It’s about not just going along unconsciously with the crowd and binge drinking every weekend.

I think we’re all just trying to get to know ourselves a bit better, and making a change in your alcohol consumption really gives you a chance to do that.”

As part of the campaign, Drinkaware is also partnering with Dublin’s brand-new alcohol-free venue [Board](#), which offers a wide and varied menu of food and non-alcoholic drinks which can be enjoyed while playing one of their many board games. Launched by renowned hospitality group Bodytonic, Drinkaware is offering social media users the chance to win their very own alcohol-free night out throughout the week leading up to St. Patrick’s Day.

Drinkaware CEO Dearbhla O’Brien commented:

“At Drinkaware, our message with the #HeresToChange campaign is clear; by making positive changes to our drinking habits, particularly harmful behaviours like binge drinking, we can truly feel the benefits for things like our mental and physical health and our overall wellbeing.

We want to celebrate those who have already made small positive changes to their drinking habits, for example, the 31% of drinkers who cite improving their mental health as a reason to drink less alcohol.*

We’re also celebrating the shift in Irish culture where mindful drinking and sober curiosity are now recognised and talked about, where mental health is openly discussed and valued. And we’re celebrating our national holiday and all those who have decided to think about changing their alcohol consumption over the long weekend.

Between the final match of the Six Nations on Saturday and the Bank Holiday on Monday, we know it’s going to be a bumper weekend for many people, but we do hope that the positive message we are sharing with this campaign will encourage them to reflect and consider joining the mindful drinking movement. Here’s To Change!”

Change doesn’t have to be huge or overwhelming and Drinkaware is encouraging everyone to focus on changes that work for them, and if they find it difficult, to focus on why they are making the changes and what their motivations are. For anyone who is interested in joining the mindful drinking movement, and embracing some small, positive changes of their own this St. Patrick’s Weekend, Drinkaware has some simple tips including:

- If drinking at home, it can be as simple as choosing a smaller glass or using a measure.
- If drinking while you’re out at a pub or another venue, think about alternating each round with a glass of water.
- Think about choosing low or no-alcohol options at the bar.

- Set yourself a spending limit so that you can anticipate reducing your alcohol intake in advance.

You can find further information, advice and useful resources on www.drinkaware.ie including a [blog](#) dedicated to celebrating this St. Patrick's Weekend mindfully, and lots of useful tools including the [Drinkaware Drinks Calculator](#). Have a happy and safe St. Patrick's Weekend - and Here's To Change!

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

*The Drinkaware Barometer 2023 is a national population-based survey of 1,000 adults aged 18+ conducted by Behaviour and Attitudes in July/August 2023 and included a series of internationally recognised modules relating to alcohol consumption and mental health.

For more information on research projects and publications visit www.drinkaware.ie/research

** Binge drinking (or heavy episodic drinking) is consuming six or more standard drinks in one sitting, usually in a short space of time. Common standard drinks include a half pint of 4.5% lager, 100ml glass of 12.5% wine and a pub measure of 40% spirits.

About Drinkaware:

Drinkaware is the national charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol misuse in Ireland, governed by an independent board and regulated by the Charities Regulator. Registered Charity Number: 20204601

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