

For immediate release

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Ladies First: This International Women's Day and Mother's Day Weekend, Drinkaware Shares Latest Data On Women's Alcohol Consumption in Ireland

- *While men generally engage in more harmful drinking patterns, we are seeing worrying increases among women compared to pre-pandemic*
- *Women are twice as likely as men to report that they or someone in their household has increased alcohol consumption in the previous 30 days*
- *Ahead of significant weekend for women, Drinkaware is encouraging everyone to have open, honest conversations about alcohol consumption*

Ahead of a significant weekend for women in Ireland, Drinkaware, the national, independent charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol misuse, is sharing insights from its latest research into women's drinking patterns, motivations, and behaviours. Thanks to the Drinkaware Barometer 2023*, we can see in detail the trends that are emerging among *Mná na hÉireann* when it comes to their alcohol consumption.

Firstly, what we should note regarding women's alcohol consumption in Ireland, is that their level of harmful drinking behaviours is generally lower than that seen for men. For example:

- The incidence of adults that drink at least once weekly** is higher among men at 63% than women with 55%
- Binge drinking*** as a typical pattern in the last 30 days also peaks among male drinkers at almost 1 in 3, compared to just under 1 in 5 female drinkers who typically binge when drinking
- Men's frequency of binge drinking is also significantly higher with 64% of those that drink consuming 6 or more standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 30 days compared to 47% of women that drink

Of course, we cannot be complacent regarding the above figures, with concerning patterns evident for both men and women. For example, with almost two thirds of male drinkers and half of female drinkers saying that they have binge drank in the last 30 days, much work remains to ensure that people can be informed and empowered to recognise and tackle their own harmful drinking behaviours.

When it comes to women specifically, the 2023 Drinkaware Barometer clearly indicates a worrying rise in harmful drinking patterns since the COVID-19 pandemic. While they may partake in these behaviours less often than their male counterparts, some notable rises are much more pronounced among women over the last few years, including:

- A 10-point increase for females year-on-year who drink weekly; up from 45% in 2022 to 55% in 2023

- A 12-point rise since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic in women binge drinking at least once in the last 30 days; up from 35% in 2020 to 47% in 2023

Females are also twice as likely as males to indicate that they or someone in their household has increased their consumption of standard drinks in the past 30 days (25% of females compared to 13% of males). Taken alongside the increases outlined above, what is clear is the need for all drinkers and their families and friends to be willing to have open, honest and non-judgemental conversations about alcohol consumption.

Ultimately, with data from the Drinkaware Barometer 2023 also showing the highest ever level of positive intentions from drinkers, these conversations can lead to incremental changes that reap significant benefits.

Drinkaware CEO Dearbhla O'Brien commented:

"Drinkaware's annual Barometer survey shows us the real time behaviours and attitudes of Irish adults towards alcohol. As we examine further how key demographics, such as women, are consuming alcohol, it gives us the opportunity to offer tailored messages, information and resources that people can use to ensure they are reducing any potential harmful impacts of their relationship with alcohol."

*Qualitative research**** shows that for many women drinking alcohol is perceived to reduce loneliness and isolation while competing responsibilities (working, caring and domestic duties) lead to many feeling invisible and unacknowledged. With International Women's Day and Mother's Day both taking place this weekend, now is a great time for all parents, families, friends and loved ones to discuss how the daily stresses of life, from parenthood to work and everything in between, may be impacting their relationship with alcohol."*

With 1 in 3 adults in Ireland now saying they would like to drink less, it's worth thinking about the small positive changes you too can make to create a healthier relationship with alcohol in the long-term."*

-Ends-

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

** 59% of adults in Ireland said they drink at least once a week. 15% say they have drunk alcohol 2-3 times in the past 30 days, while 18% don't drink - a figure which includes 9% who have not drunk in the past 30 days and 9% who never drink alcohol.

*** 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.

**** <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/aug/25/oh-well-wine-oclock-what-midlife-women-say-about-drinking-and-why-its-hard-to-stop>

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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