

For Immediate Release

24th January 2024

Drinkaware Encourages People to Make Their New Year's Resolutions Stick In 2024

Drinkaware the national charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol misuse in Ireland is encouraging adults who took part in 'Dry January' to take learnings from their experience and explore whether they'd like to make any more long-lasting changes in 2024.

Many people will have taken part in challenges such as Dry January in the past and then gone back to their previous behaviours once the clock struck 12:01am on February 1st. If this rings a bell, Drinkaware is here to support you in continuing your new healthy habits past January 31st and creating a healthier relationship with alcohol.

The Drinkaware annual Barometer* survey for 2023 found that 36% of drinkers in Ireland would like to drink less alcohol (the highest figure ever recorded in our Barometer to date) and 41% have already made small positive changes to their habits in the past 30 days. January is a time when many people will take stock of the previous year and decide to start new habits in the hopes that they will have a healthy, happier new year.

Challenges such as taking part in Dry January - where a person cuts out alcohol for the month - can be a great kick start to creating new, healthier habits, which can last throughout the new year and beyond. But these new habits can be difficult to maintain, so Drinkaware is encouraging people to look back in order to look forward, by taking stock of the improvements they experienced through cutting down or out alcohol and take on 2024 with a more mindful approach to their drinking behaviours.

Drinkaware is providing some useful tips for people who want to continue 2024 with a more mindful approach to their drinking:

- **Understand your drinking behaviour:** Were you drinking to excess before you started the challenge? The HSE advises no more than 11 standard drinks for women and no more than 17 standard drinks for men, spread out over the week with a least 2 alcohol free days.** Common examples of a standard drink are, half a pint of beer, 100ml glass of wine and 35.5ml of spirits.
- **Make a list of the positives:** If you took part in Dry January, you may have noticed that you have been sleeping better, that your mental health, energy, and overall wellbeing has improved, your skin might look brighter, and you might have some extra money in your bank account. Consider all the positive changes you have experienced before you fall back into old habits.
- **Consider your motivations:** 55% of drinkers in 2023 said they drink to cope*. Spend some time thinking about why you drink alcohol and consider different coping strategies you could use in times of stress or difficulty. You can find more information and resources on the 'Mental Health and Alcohol' page on www.drinkaware.ie also.
- **Remember it doesn't have to be an all or nothing:** January is over, so even if you choose not to continue to abstain, it's worth thinking about whether you were happy

with the amount of alcohol you were drinking before you started the challenge, and to practice mindful drinking, making your mental health and wellbeing the priority.

CEO for Drinkaware Dearbhla O'Brien commented: *"There are so many benefits to cutting down or cutting out alcohol, and Dry January is about people experiencing those benefits firsthand. But sticking to new healthy habits can be a challenge. We all tend to prefer short-term, smaller rewards, rather than rewards that take longer to achieve. We are encouraging not only people who took part in Dry January but anyone who wants to change their habits in relation to alcohol to consider the benefits and to take a more mindful and considered approach to their drinking in 2024.*

Our annual Barometer shows that many drinkers may be using alcohol to help them cope and this can have unintended consequences on mental health and wellbeing - poor sleep and moods or low energy. As 2024 progresses, we want to support people to take care of their wellbeing and to make positive changes in relation to alcohol. Our website, www.drinkaware.ie is a good place to start and is where hundreds of thousands of people every year find practical and non-judgmental tips to help them to better understand their drinking".

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Notes to the 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: drinkaware.ie/research/

**Drinking within the HSE Low Risk Weekly Alcohol Guidelines reduces your risk of alcohol-related health issues. The Low Risk Weekly Guidelines for adults are:

- Women: Less than 11 standard drinks (110g pure alcohol) spread out over the week, with at least two alcohol-free days
- Men: Less than 17 standard drinks (170g pure alcohol) spread out over the week, with at least two alcohol-free days

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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