

## Drinkaware Encourages Alcohol-Free Start to 2025 with Dry January and Safe Driving Tips

### *New Data Reveals 42% of Adults Who Drink Do So to Enhance Social Gatherings*

**16th December 2024** – Drinkaware, the national independent charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol misuse, encourages adults to consider undertaking Dry January – a month-long challenge to go alcohol-free and reassess drinking habits. As the New Year approaches, Drinkaware is also emphasising the importance of safe driving around the New Year’s Eve celebrations.

Recent data provides insights into the role that alcohol plays in social experiences. According to Drinkaware’s 2024 Barometer Report, the percentage of adults who drink to make social gatherings more fun has increased from 34% in 2023 to 42% in 2024, suggesting that alcohol plays an increasing role in adults socialising and connecting with others. With fewer social events in January, Dry January offers a timely opportunity to reset drinking habits and enjoy a fresh start, avoiding situations where alcohol may be the focus.

For those looking to take part in Dry January, Drinkaware is providing tips to stay on track throughout the month:

- **Set Clear Goals** – Write down your reasons for participating, whether to improve your health, save money, or feel more energised.
- **Reimagine Socialising** – Opt for alcohol-free social events, like walks, cinema outings, or coffee catch-ups with friends.
- **Challenge Yourself** - Step out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself by attending events without drinking alcohol. Whether it's a theatre performance, a comedy club, or a live music gig, you can fully immerse yourself in the experience and enjoy the energy of the crowd without the need for a drink.
- **Don't Be Hard on Yourself** – If you slip up, don't be discouraged. Every alcohol-free day is a success.
- **Consider Alternative Beverages** – Try alcohol-free options like mocktails, sparkling water, or non-alcoholic beer. Having various enjoyable drinks on hand can help you feel less tempted and make the experience more fun.
- **Make it a Lifestyle** — If Dry January is helping you, consider continuing some of the positive habits beyond the month. For example, choose certain days a week or month to remain alcohol-free or reduce your overall intake.

**Dearbhla O'Brien, CEO of Drinkaware**, said: *“Dry January offers a valuable opportunity for adults to redefine their relationship with alcohol, improve their physical and mental health, and build long-lasting habits for the year ahead. We know that the first month of the year can be difficult for some people, which is why Drinkaware offers practical resources and support to help participants stay on track. As always, our priority is to reduce the harm caused by alcohol misuse, particularly when it comes to the risks of drink driving.”*

According to the 2024 Barometer, 37% of adults now agree they would like to drink alcohol less often. Among those who would like to drink less often, 23% cite alcohol-free periods such as Dry January as a helpful tool and technique for moderating drinking. Additionally, 37% say they have made recent small positive changes to their drinking habits. Among those that have reduced their consumption, 63% of adults' motivation to drink less is to improve their physical health followed by 38% for personal finances and 37% to improve their mental health.

# DRINKAWARE

Drinkaware's [Drink Calculator](#) continues to be a vital tool in helping individuals track their alcohol consumption. To date, the calculator has helped over 207,899 people understand how many standard drinks they have consumed, enabling them to make more informed decisions about their drinking and avoid risky behaviours like drink driving.

As people celebrate New Year's Eve, Drinkaware urges the public to plan ahead for safe driving. New Year's Eve and the surrounding days see a rise in alcohol consumption, and it's important to remember that alcohol can impair your ability to drive long after the party has ended. Alcohol can remain in your system for hours, meaning that driving the morning after drinking can be as dangerous as driving the night before. The only way to remove alcohol from your system is time. Certain things might make you feel better or may make you feel safe to drive, but unless you have allowed your body at least one hour to process one standard drink, you are not safe to drive.

According to Drinkaware's 2024 Barometer Report, 89% of adults agree that any amount of alcohol impairs the ability to drive, up from 86% last year. Additionally, 80% of adults believe that driving the morning after drinking is just as dangerous as drink driving.

With 167 road deaths in 2024<sup>2</sup>, many of which are linked to alcohol, Drinkaware is encouraging everyone to be mindful of their drinking and always plan ahead for a safe journey. Drinkaware strongly supports official guidance from the RSA and An Garda Síochána that any amount of alcohol will impair your driving and increase the risk of a collision. If you're unsure whether you're fit to drive, it's always best to find an alternative way home, such as using a taxi, public transport, or a designated driver.

**Visit [drinkaware.ie](https://drinkaware.ie)** for more information, advice, and tips on participating in dry January. Those who may find January a difficult time of year can always look at our [support page](#) if they feel they need extra support.

## Ends

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## *Notes to the editor:*

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

For more information on research projects and publications, visit [www.drinkaware.ie/research](https://www.drinkaware.ie/research)

## References

1. The Drinkaware Barometer 2024 is a national population-based survey of 1,000 adults aged 18+ conducted by Ipsos B&A in July and August 2024. It included a series of internationally recognised modules on alcohol consumption and mental health.

2. The Road Safety Authority.

<https://www.rsa.ie/news-events/news/details/2024/12/02/rsa-launch-christmas-road-safety-campaign>