**Please send only to local media outlets.**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Embargoed until 00:01 20 December 2021**

**1 in 6 adults who drink are planning to go alcohol-free this January –**

**and 1 in 3 would prefer to take part in Dry January®**

A new survey by [Alcohol Change UK](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/), the charity behind [Dry January®](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january), shows that one in six (18%) adults who drink alcohol are planning to have a month off drinking for January 2022. And for those planning to take a break from drinking, around one in three (30%) would prefer to take part in the Dry January® campaign by using the tools and resources provided by Alcohol Change UK, rather than trying to give up alcohol on their own in January.

[Insert your area/organisation] is encouraging people to download Alcohol Change UK’s free app, Try Dry®, and take part in Dry January® to double their chances of having a successful alcohol-free month.

Research has consistently shown that many people are drinking more heavily due to the additional stresses brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This new research shows that almost three in 10 drinkers (28%) have found themselves drinking more in 2021, compared to 2020. Around one in six drinkers (17%) feel concerned about the amount they have been drinking since the removal of COVID-19 restrictions in the summer.

A quarter (25%) would like to reduce the amount they drink in 2022 and research shows that Dry January® is an effective and lasting way to cut down. Research by the University of Sussex published in 20202 found that those who take part in Dry January® via Alcohol Change UK’s free Try Dry® app and/or free email coaching programme are twice as likely to have a completely alcohol-free month, compared to those who try to avoid alcohol in January on their own, and have significantly improved wellbeing and healthier drinking six months later.

[Insert your organisation] is encouraging people in [insert your area] to take part in Dry January® via the **free app,** [**Try Dry®**](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january/get-involved/the-dry-january-app), to get benefits like more energy, saving money and losing weight, and to help them drink more healthily year-round.

**Dr Richard Piper**, Chief Executive of **Alcohol Change UK**, said:

“We know that things are feeling uncertain at the moment and lots of us will be looking for ways to try to cope. As the pandemic continues to take its toll, research consistently shows that, for many people who were already drinking heavily, our drinking habits may have taken a turn for the worse.

“With many of us experiencing heightened levels of stress, it’s hardly surprising that some of us might be drinking more without realising.

“The good news is that being in control of our drinking can improve our overall health and wellbeing. And that’s where Dry January**®** comes in. It offers the opportunity for a total reset. 31 days to try something new. Sleep better and have more energy, improve your mental health and concentration, look fabulous and get brighter skin, save money and feel an amazing sense of achievement.

“What’s more, over 70% of people who do Dry January**®** continue to drink less six months later – so it’s an investment in your health and happiness year-round.

“Dry January® isn’t about giving something up. It’s about getting something back. Get your fun back. Get your calm back. Get your energy back. Get your *you* back.”

[Insert quote from your spokesperson]

[Insert information about any events planned in your area to support participants or encourage signups]

**ENDS**

[Insert details of your media lead]

For interview requests and briefings from Alcohol Change UK, the charity behind Dry January®, please contact: Julie Symes, Interim Director of Communications, Alcohol Change UK

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**Notes to editors**

**Alcohol withdrawal warning**

Stopping drinking *suddenly* can be very dangerous, and can even kill you, if you are dependent on alcohol. If, after a period of drinking, you experience any of the following symptoms, you may be dependent on alcohol and you should NOT suddenly stop drinking completely:

* seizures (fits)
* hand tremors (‘the shakes’)
* sweating
* seeing things that are not real (visual hallucinations)
* depression
* anxiety
* difficulty sleeping (insomnia).

But you can still take control of your drinking. Speak to a GP who will be able to get help for you to reduce your drinking safely.

**References and notes from release**

1The survey was carried out online by Opinium between 30 November and 3 December 2021. Total sample size was 2,001 UK adults, of whom 1,414 said they were drinkers. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

The figure of 7.9 million was calculated as 15% of total population aged 18+ in the UK (52,890,044 – reference: [ONS, Mid-year Population Estimates 2020](mailto:https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2020%23the-uk-population-at-mid-2020) for all adults in the UK aged 18+).

2 de Visser, R. and Nicholls, J. (2020) Temporary abstinence during Dry January: predictors of success; impact on well-being and self-efficacy, Psychology & Health, 35:11, 1293-1305

**The charity behind Dry January®**

Alcohol Change UK works for a world free from alcohol harm. We fund, commission and share research; provide information and advice; work to ensure more and better support and treatment; encourage better policy and regulation; shift drinking cultures through our campaigns; and work to change drinking behaviours. [**Find out more.**](https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/about-us)

**How to do Dry January®**

Download the **free** [**Try Dry®**](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january/the-dry-january-app) via the App Store or Google Play. Via the app you will be able to receive optional daily coaching emails. You can sign up for just the emails at [dryjanuary.org.uk](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january).

The app allows people to track their units, calories and money saved not drinking, plus set personalised goals and earn badges year-round.

People who take part in Dry January®, whether online or via the free app, are twice as likely to spend the whole the month alcohol-free, despite being heavier drinkers to start with (de Visser and Nicholls 2020).

**Year-round healthier drinking**

People who take on Dry January® drink more riskily than the general population (asfin measured by AUDIT-C, a tool developed by the World Health Organisation). Yet six months after the challenge ends their average drinking risk score has decreased dramatically – in contrast to people who do not take on Dry January®, whose risk scores remain similar.

* Drinking days per week dropped on average from 4.3 to 3.3;
* Units consumed per drinking day dropped on average from 8.6 to 7.1;
* Frequency of drunkenness fell on average from 3.4 per month to 2.1 per month.

Reference: de Visser, R. and Nicholls, J. (2020) Temporary abstinence during Dry January: predictors of success; impact on well-being and self-efficacy, Psychology & Health, 35:11, 1293-1305

**Physical health**

Research published in 2018, conducted by the Royal Free Hospital and published in the British Medical journal, found that a month off alcohol:

* Lowers blood pressure
* Lowers cholesterol
* Reduces diabetes risk
* Reduces levels of cancer-related proteins in the blood

**Reference:** Mehta G, Macdonald S, Cronberg A, et al. Short-term abstinence from alcohol and changes in cardiovascular risk factors, liver function tests and cancer-related growth factors: a prospective observational study BMJ Open 2018;8:e020673. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2017-020673