Embargoed until 00:01 on Monday, 15 November 2021

**Raising awareness of the impact that alcohol can have on our**

**health and wellbeing and our relationships**

To mark the start of this year’s Alcohol Awareness Week, which runs from 15-21 November, [YOUR ORGANISATION OR GROUP] will be joining over 4,000 other community groups across the UK to raise awareness of the ways in which alcohol can affect us and our relationships with those around us.

Many of us drink alcohol for a variety of ever-changing reasons, including: to relax, to socialise, to de-stress, to have fun, to relieve boredom, to deal with feelings of loneliness, and to try and cope with or avoid problems. However, drinking too much and too often can cause or exacerbate all sorts of problems with our physical and mental health, including damaging relationships with our loved ones.

For some of us, alcohol can become a central aspect of our relationships with friends, family or partners. When this happens, it can actually stop us taking action to improve our drinking habits, even when those habits aren’t working for us.

Alcohol can also negatively affect our relationships. It can heighten family tensions, get in the way of clear communication, and mean we are less present for each other, including our children. And if a loved one is drinking heavily, it can cause huge worry. There is also a real risk of someone’s drinking causing conflict, with alcohol being a factor in many cases of child neglect and domestic abuse.

Alcohol is strongly associated with mental health problems like anxiety and depression. Over the course of the pandemic these problems have undoubtedly got worse for many of us. As we return to a more normal life, there will be new pressures too – pressures to drink, sober shaming (being made to feel not drinking is wrong), and the pressures we put on ourselves to get back to ‘normal’ socialising.

So, in support of this year’s campaign[YOUR ORGANISATION/GROUP]is speaking out about the impact that alcohol can have on our relationships, encouraging us all to talk, and be prepared to listen more, about the way your own or someone else’s drinking is affecting you and those around you, and to consider making some changes for a healthier and happier life.

YOUR ORGANISATION/GROUP will be INSERT DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOU ARE PLANNING.

NAME, from YOUR ORGANISATION/GROUP, said:

INSERT QUOTE ABOUT ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK.

Led by Alcohol Change UK, Alcohol Awareness Week aims to get people thinking and talking about alcohol, to motivate change at every level – individual, community and national.

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

“Our relationships with other humans are wonderful but complex, and at times they can be really tough. With many of us drinking much more during the pandemic, for many different reasons, our relationships at home, with friends and at work can become even tougher. And if our partner, friend or loved one is drinking heavily, it can cause huge tensions and disagreements, and even lead to us drinking more too, in an attempt to cope or escape.

“By talking to each other about alcohol and our relationships (while we’re sober!) we can help each other to better understand how alcohol might be affecting us and those around us.

“And by taking control of our drinking, rather than letting it control us, we can develop better, happier relationships, as well as improved health and wellbeing. A great way to start is by recording what you drink for a few weeks to help you understand your drinking pattern, then setting yourself some small achievable goals to get it back under control. Use the free app [Try Dry](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january/get-involved/the-dry-january-app) to help you keep track and set goals to help you cut down.”

Alcohol Awareness Week provides an important opportunity for us all to:

* Talk about the issues around alcohol and its effects on our physical and mental health, and our relationships, helping us make more informed choices about our drinking.
* Listen to each other, properly, and with curiosity, to understand how our behaviours may be affecting our friends and those we love.
* Realise that it’s normal to develop a bit of a drinking problem, and it’s possible to take back control.
* Call for action to help those most in need, including the 200,000 children living with an alcohol-dependent parent or carer.
* Explain to people where they can access a bit of extra support if they are struggling to take control of their drinking on their own.

It’s easy to take part in Alcohol Awareness Week. Join us by:

* Sharing your stories, events and activities on social media using the hashtag #AlcoholAwarenessWeek.
* Visit the [Alcohol Change UK website](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/) and [sign up for free resources](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1/about-alcohol-awareness-week/take-part-in-alcohol-awareness-week) to share across the week.
* Use the Alcohol Change UK resources to highlight the issues and drive a conversation in your community.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

Contact INSERT CONTACT DETAILS for more information about YOUR GROUP/ORGANISATION’s Alcohol Awareness Week activities.

**Alcohol Awareness Week**

Alcohol Awareness Week is a chance for the UK to get thinking about drinking. It’s a week of awareness raising, campaigning for change, and more. This year the week takes place from 15-21 November on the theme of Alcohol and relationships.

Join this year’s #AlcoholAwarenessWeek campaign and help drive the conversation about alcohol and relationships. Anyone can [sign up for free resources](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week/about-alcohol-awareness-week/take-part-in-alcohol-awareness-week) to run Alcohol Awareness Week in their communities.

For information on what’s happening in your community search the hashtag #AlcoholAwarenessWeek.

Find out more: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1>

**Alcohol Change UK**

Alcohol Change UK works for a society that is free from the harm caused by alcohol. It creates evidence-driven change by working towards five key changes: improved knowledge, better policies and regulation, shifted cultural norms, improved drinking behaviours, and more and better support and treatment.

Find out more: [www.alcoholchange.org.uk/](http://www.alcoholchange.org.uk/)

**Contact**

For interviews with Dr Richard Piper and other members of the Alcohol Change UK team, contact:

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