

## **Title** *Understanding young adults' drinking practices and experiences with alcohol in Ireland*

### **Abstract**

Whilst emerging data shows positive cultural and expectation shifts with young adults' drinking in Ireland, some areas have not changed or have gotten worse. Data can consequently appear contradictory. For instance, young adults are the most health conscious and sober curious but also show the highest in frequency for binge drinking. Existing quantitative research provides potential explanations for young adults' consumption patterns but there is little understanding of *how* young adults experience alcohol in their everyday lives in Ireland and ultimately what they need and where gaps in information exist. Qualitative research that listens to and captures young adults' own voices and considers what co-created programmes might look like is required. The aim of this project was to explore the views and experiences of drinking alcohol among young adults aged 18-34 years in Ireland. The specific objective was to further investigate quantitative data regarding young adults' experiences by:

1. Gaining insight into the lived experiences of young adults' drinking practices to create a better understanding of its prevalence and drivers,
2. Exploring specific gaps in knowledge, intent and behaviour among young adults and alcohol consumption.

A qualitative methodology using an ethnographic approach was taken putting voices of young adults at the core by ensuring their lived experiences shaped the project. Carefully listening to the experiences of a sample of 24 18-34-year-olds in a non-prescribed manner through semi-structured self-video diaries (5-10 minutes per day) over the course of five days, provided the best approach to enhance understanding in a way that is relatable to how young adults live their lives, in their own words. The role alcohol plays in young adults' lives is complex, with key drivers of behaviour being social and emotional. Social motivators included peer pressure, increased confidence when drinking and social opportunity around drinking - a driver inflated by the cultural construct that drinking is almost the default social event for many in Ireland. Emotion based motivators included escapism, such as using alcohol to temporarily have a break from everyday points of stress and reduce social anxiety. Type of occasion influenced consumption, appearing to increase across impromptu drinking, planned drinking and big events respectively. Acknowledgement of negative effects of alcohol was present with many noting impacts on physical as well as mental wellbeing. Conversely, those who had cut back or stopped noted improvements in both.

This project provides an extensive suite of rich qualitative data to support understanding of the role that alcohol plays in young adults' lives in Ireland with vital learnings into gaps in knowledge among a sample of young adults. Results are crucial to informing the development and roll out of focused information campaigns to assist with reducing alcohol misuse. Ultimately understanding the etiology of young adults' drinking is important to facilitate development of prevention interventions. Timing is crucial post COVID-19 and in the context of an ongoing cost-of-living crisis providing insight into the lived experiences of young adults' drinking practices.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Sample .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Findings .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Next Steps .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>27</b>

## Foreword

We are delighted to present the findings from Drinkaware's latest qualitative research which explores the relationship of young adults across Ireland in 2025 with respect to alcohol- revealing underlying motivations, mental and emotional mindsets and identifying triggers for change.

This research is a first and new departure for Drinkaware, building on over nine years of rich and informative quantitative data by using video diaries and personal testimony to bring to life the lived experiences of young adults in their own words and on their own terms.

I would like to thank and acknowledge Dr Ann Stokes (Research Manager at Drinkaware) in advocating for and directing this qualitative body of work which ensures the voices of young adults are heard and curated in a more holistic manner.

Tribute also must be paid to our research partners, Ipsos B&A, in particular Niall Brennan and Luke Harvey in how they carefully undertook this project and conveyed the findings in a compelling way, providing a vivid insight into the real-life experiences of young adults in Ireland.

Statistics and percentages reveal essential socio-economic data but hearing from young adults in person, speaking anonymously regarding their feelings, thoughts and beliefs around alcohol and its place in their lives really paints a detailed narrative giving rich context to the annual statistics. The findings are uniquely revealing, captured in a compelling form and provides Drinkaware with even more insights that inform how, where and when we need to reach young adults with our messaging, our nudges for behaviour change and the encouragement required to make healthy personal choices. The data also proves hugely valuable in determining the creative look, feel and tone including language required to reach young adults when influencing behavioural change. These findings have informed our strategic direction in offering signposts to the public for events that are not alcohol centred and will continue to inform Drinkaware's various social campaigns such as the "Here's To Change" digital campaign and podcast series.

This research crucially supports Drinkaware in contributing to our strategic objective of changing Irish culture for the better, empowering society to write a different story in terms of alcohol and its place in everyday life in Ireland.

Dearbhla O'Brien,  
CEO of Drinkaware

## Introduction

Existing quantitative research provides potential explanations for young adults' consumption patterns. Whilst emerging data shows positive cultural and expectation shifts with young adults' drinking in Ireland, some areas have not changed or have gotten worse. Data can consequently appear contradictory. For instance, it is encouraging that today's young adults display good levels of self-awareness and positive health-related intentions. Quantitative data shows that young adults are the most health conscious and sober curious (Drinkaware 2025a). Young adults appear to be leading the way with positive shifts identified in our Barometer series, with just over half of 18-24-year-olds making positive changes to their drinking habits in 2024 (Drinkaware 2025a). At the same time, the frequency and recency of binge drinking is most pronounced among young adult drinkers aged 18 to 34 years as identified in the 2024 Drinkaware Barometer (Drinkaware 2024). Healthy Ireland 2024 found that men aged between 15 and 24 (50%) are the group most likely to binge drink on a typical drinking occasion (vs 28% overall) (Department of Health 2024). Recent data from Growing Up in Ireland found that at age 25, two in five (39%) of respondents reported a level of drinking that could be considered risky or hazardous according to the AUDIT scale. Men also (44.5%) recorded a risky or hazardous level of drinking more frequently than women (33.6%) (Central Statistics Office 2025). In addition, evidence of high rates of low wellbeing experienced by young adults is a concerning reflection of the pressures faced by Ireland's younger generations. Low mental wellbeing peaks among young adults in 2024 (49% under 24-year-olds, 45% 25-34-year-olds) (Drinkaware 2025b).

Addressing alcohol consumption issues specifically for young adults requires appreciating and holding these contradictions in tandem and speaking to them in context. There is little understanding of *how* young adults experience alcohol in their everyday lives in Ireland and ultimately what do they need to address gaps in information. Qualitative research that listens to and captures young adults' own voices, with young adults themselves and considers what co-created programmes might look like should be the cornerstone of future interventions targeting this audience. With this in mind, in 2024 Drinkaware decided to undertake a body of qualitative research which focused on young adults. This project was carried out in collaboration with Ipsos B&A ensuring that the project would benefit from the experience of one of Ireland's leading research and data analysis companies, and also its reputation.

The aim of this project was to explore the views and experiences of drinking alcohol among young adults aged 18+ in Ireland. The specific objective was to further investigate quantitative data regarding young adults' experiences by:

- Gaining insight into the lived experiences of young adults' drinking practices to create a better understanding of its prevalence and drivers
- Exploring specific gaps in knowledge, intent and behaviour among young adults' and alcohol consumption

From a qualitative perspective, this research set to explore the following:

1. Further investigate evidence gathered from the Barometer series
2. Young adults' experiences of alcohol from young adults
3. The role that alcohol plays in young adults' lives
4. Young adults' decisions surrounding drinking/not drinking alcohol
5. Factors associated with young adults drinking/not drinking alcohol

6. Key influences in terms of enabling, inhibiting and sustaining change
7. The impact of COVID-19 and the current cost-of-living crisis on their behaviour and attitudes towards alcohol

The core research question that guided this study was: *How do young adults experience alcohol and what role does it play in their lives?*

## Methodology

A qualitative methodology using an ethnographic approach was taken putting the voices of young adults at the core by ensuring their lived experiences shaped the project. Storytelling was at the heart of this study and co-creation was key with young adults themselves having an integral role in both shaping and informing this project through an initial focus group discussion to assist in finalising content of a semi-structured topic guide that in turn supported the main data collection phase.

### Why digital ethnography?

A key objective of this research was to understand the ‘wider picture’ of young adults’ actual lived experiences when it comes to alcohol consumption. As such, deeply understanding the relationship between young adults and alcohol in Ireland required a methodology in which participants feel that they can share their authentic thoughts and attitudes on the topic. In many ways the choice of methodology is as important as the questions we ask them for this type of research topic. Given the complexity and scope of the research objectives, richness of feedback was a key consideration in developing the methodology. Depth of content and openness of expression are key benefits that the ‘selfie video’ format consistently yields. Participants go into a lot of detail and the team can capture ‘stream of consciousness’ feedback. Participants are usually most forthcoming and honest in digital ethnography projects. Overall, it is an immersive, revealing and intimate methodology that allowed the research team to get closer to young adults.

### *Benefits of digital ethnography as a methodology for this project*

Digital ethnography enables the researchers to engage with participants in a naturalistic setting, ensuring authentic and unfiltered insights. The research meets participants where they are at; they engage with the platform and respond to tasks when it suits them, and quality of response is positively impacted by participants feeling relaxed and comfortable. By observing and interacting with young adults via selfie video, this methodology fosters higher levels of participant engagement and openness, making it particularly effective for exploring sensitive topics such as alcohol consumption. For example, from Ipsos B&A’s experience using this methodology, they consistently find that some things that they may be unwilling to share in a room with their peers are shared more easily through the format of a selfie video. This is key to building an understanding of the ‘wider picture’ of alcohol consumption. In contrast, traditional face-to-face focus groups can feel intimidating or intrusive, potentially limiting participants’ willingness to share openly. Digital spaces offer a degree of anonymity and comfort, encouraging more candid discussions. This makes digital ethnography particularly effective for exploring the social and personal dimensions of alcohol consumption, as well as the complex interplay of factors that influence decisions to consume alcohol. Inclusivity and flexibility are also central strengths of this approach. By leveraging digital platforms, the research team were able to engage participants from across Ireland, overcoming geographical and logistical barriers. Additionally, the flexibility of

digital ethnography accommodates participants' busy schedules, allowing them to contribute at their convenience during the day.

It was therefore envisaged that digital ethnography was an appropriate methodology for exploring young adults' experiences with alcohol in Ireland and would provide authentic, comprehensive, and actionable insights into their behaviours and attitudes. This approach not only met the research objectives but also offered a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding alcohol consumption, paving the way for informed strategies and interventions. The following sections will provide detail on how this process took place.

### Initial focus group discussion

Co-creation was key to the data collection in this project as young adults had an integral role in shaping and informing this research project. An initial focus group discussion with a sample of young adults (n=4) was first undertaken in January 2025 to sense check the style of questions proposed for the main phase. During this initial phase, a small group of young adults were invited to review the proposed tasks assigned each day for the self-video diaries and prompts/activities to ensure that they were '*young adult friendly*.' Ipsos B&A recruited and invited a sample of young adults to participate in a focus group discussion. Following informed consent, they came together and participated in an interactive workshop to share their thoughts on the proposed content given their own experiences and in so doing being integral to active development of the project and what decisions were made across all phases. In this focused session that lasted 60 minutes, Ipsos B&A presented young adults with a draft of the topic guide and gathered their feedback on areas for improvement. This focus group discussion concentrated solely on optimising the topic guide and did not delve into participants' personal experiences with alcohol. Participants received a €60 incentive for their participation.

The benefit of this pilot stage was to fine-tune the language and tone in the topic guide. Discussions with the target audience helped to shape the guide to be more engaging. For example, the research team were steered away from usage of the term 'relationship with alcohol', which can be felt to suggest an overstatement of the role of alcohol in people's lives. Other language changes included steering away from suggesting overdependence or lack of control. An example of a change towards more natural-feeling language was:

*'Is there anything you wish you could change about your relationship with alcohol?'*

becoming

*'Is there anything you would like to change about your drinking?'*

Following feedback, a number of changes were made to the topic guide. The establishment and development of the peer pilot focus group discussion with young adults in this activity helped guide the future direction of this project and the main data collection phase that followed.

The semi-structured topic guide devised following this pilot phase is available to view in Appendix 1. The topic guide comprised a series of tasks to explore young adults' relationships with alcohol. A separate guide was developed for the non-drinkers in the sample with language tweaked to capture their experiences and perspectives.

### Main data collection phase:

A qualitative methodology using an ethnographic approach was employed for the main data collection phase, putting the voices of young adults themselves at the core by ensuring their lived experiences shaped the research. It involved carefully listening to the experiences of a sample of 24 18-34-year-olds in a non-prescribed manner through a series of semi-structured self-video diaries (5-10 minutes) over the course of five days. This provided the best approach to enhance our understanding of an under-researched topic in a way that is relatable to how young adults live their lives and in their own words.

## Sample

Sampling was purposeful and aimed to ensure a good demographic spread of geographical location, gender, age category and social class in order to include a representative cross section of the population of young adults in Ireland in 2024-2025. All participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity and their ability to withdraw should they wish to do so.

Following informed consent, a series of qualitative, semi structured individual video diaries were conducted by a sample of 24 young adults aged 18-34 (Total n=24); see Table 1 below for full breakdown. The semi-structured topic guide devised following the pilot focus group discussion helped participants over the course of the five days filming that took place during February 2025. At the end of filming, participants each received a €180 incentive which was paid for five days of participation and as a token of appreciation for their involvement in the research project.

Measures were taken by the research team at the recruitment stage to ensure that the sample did not include anyone with dependency issues or problematic drinking habits. The research team also avoided recruiting any individuals that reported having sought or received professional help relating to alcohol use.

The sample included a range of participants from those who reported that they drank alcohol multiple times a week to monthly and a subsection of five non-drinkers and sober curious individuals.

**Table 1 Sample breakdown (Total n= 24)**

Age group	Gender	Region	Social Class
18-21	Male	Dublin	BC1
18-21	Male	Midlands	C2DE
18-21	Male	Connacht/Ulster	BC1
18-21	Female	Dublin	C2DE
18-21	Female	Munster	BC1
18-21	Female	Rest of Leinster	C2DE
22-24	Male	Dublin	C2DE

22-24	Male	Midlands	BC1
22-24	Male	Rest of Leinster	BC1
22-24	Female	Dublin	BC1
22-24	Female	Munster	C2DE
22-24	Female	Connacht/Ulster	C2DE
25-30	Male	Dublin	BC1
25-30	Male	Munster	C2DE
25-30	Male	Connacht/Ulster	C2DE
25-30	Female	Dublin	C2DE
25-30	Female	Midlands	BC1
25-30	Female	Rest of Leinster	BC1
31-34	Male	Dublin	C2DE
31-34	Male	Munster	BC1
31-34	Male	Rest of Leinster	C2DE
31-34	Female	Dublin	BC1
31-34	Female	Midlands	C2DE
31-34	Female	Connacht/Ulster	BC1

Participants used Indeemo, an online mobile based platform, to respond to the prescribed tasks (in the topic guide) by uploading selfie videos. Ipsos B&A followed participants for a total of five days, with the research team moderating in real time. A total of 12+ hours of video feedback from participants via selfie video was documented. Video content from the platform as well as a recording of the pilot focus group discussion were transcribed verbatim independently with all data anonymised. Visual and audio recordings as well as transcripts were stored securely on password protected devices used by Ipsos B&A and marked for deletion within the required timeframe. All data was carefully analysed. Thematic analysis was applied to examine the data to identify common themes and topics that were coming up repeatedly across the selfie videos and to interpret key patterns of meaning in young adults' stories of their experiences with alcohol.



## Setting the scene - the lives of young adults in Ireland today

### The life of 18-21-year-olds >

#### Lifestyle:

- Mostly **living at home**. They enjoy the benefits of staying with family but also **crave more independence**.
- Juggling **part-time employment with studies**, which helps fund their leisure activities.
- **Money earned is to be spent**.

#### Social Life:

- **Friends are incredibly important to them**.
- They experience a **blend of childhood friendships and new relationships** formed at college/work.
- Often engaging in **spontaneous and informal social activities**. Lower and higher energy occasions.

#### Hobbies:

- **Passionate about sports and other activities**, actively participating in sports teams or societies in college.
- They also enjoy playing video games and attending game nights with friends.

### The life 22-24-year-olds >

#### Lifestyle:

- In the **transitional phase from student to full-time employment**.
- Most living at home but **some starting to live independently**.
- They are navigating **newfound freedom along with increased responsibilities**.

#### Social Life:

- **Social circles are expansive**, including old school friends, college acquaintances, and new work-related connections.
- Balance between **enjoying nightlife, breakfasts and dinners with friends**, travel highly important to them.

#### Hobbies:

- **Some keeping childhood sports up, others dropping off**.
- Often following **true interests** such as photography, fitness, music.

### The life of 25-30-year-olds >

#### Lifestyle:

- Settled into a full-time job and **more likely living independently** or with a partner.
- This period is marked **by conscious lifestyle choices** with many displaying greater emphasis on work-life balance.
- Increase in life responsibilities means **more value being placed on 'free time' which is increasingly rare**.

#### Social Life:

- Social circles become **more entrenched – often shrinking somewhat**.
- 'Big nights out' become **less frequent – occurring periodically**.
- While spontaneous outings occur, time with friends is often **scheduled around professional and life commitments**.

#### Hobbies:

- Pursues personal interests such as fitness, cooking, or travelling **with more intent**.
- **Hobbies often integrate into lifestyle routines** and are increasingly considered to be a **key outlet** for stress relief as well a facilitator of social interaction.

### The life of 31 - 34-year-olds >

#### Lifestyle:

- **More settled routines** compared to the younger counterparts.
- Future comes **more acutely into focus** – considering **mortgages, family** etc.
- **Life is a balancing act** between professional responsibilities, personal growth, and family commitments.

#### Social Life:

- Socialising involves **dining out** with partners, attending gatherings with friends, or enjoying **lower-key meetups** such as walks or exercise classes.
- Socialisation revolves around **quality time** with both friends and family, reflecting a shift in social priorities.
- **Occasion 'blow outs'** still part of their lives.

#### Hobbies:

- Activities like running, gym workouts, and swimming are common, serving both as **hobbies and methods for managing stress**.
- This emphasis on fitness is similar to younger age groups, but the motivation often **shifts toward maintaining health and managing stress**.

## Findings

Seven overarching themes guide young adults' stories and in so doing provide key patterns of meaning to their experiences with alcohol:

1. Ubiquity: Alcohol is embedded in the day to day lives of young adults, especially in a social context.
2. Shifting relationships: Relationships with alcohol for young adults evolve with age and experience, with consumption and attitudes changing as individuals mature.
3. Self-perception: people want to identify as being 'in control' of their drinking.
4. Role of occasion: Consumption is driven by the nature of occasions (and energy levels), and certain triggers can propel speed and volume of consumption.
5. Motivation to reassess: There is a tension between motivation to reduce use, and challenges in doing so.
6. Challenges in abstaining: Not drinking isn't as simple as the decision not to drink; there are social challenges for non-drinkers and those that choose to temporarily abstain.
7. Surging popularity of non-alcoholic variants: potential to allow individuals to feel more comfortable in social settings without drinking alcohol, although younger adults are less interested or convinced of these benefits.

### 1. Ubiquity

#### Alcohol consumption is ingrained in young adults' daily lives

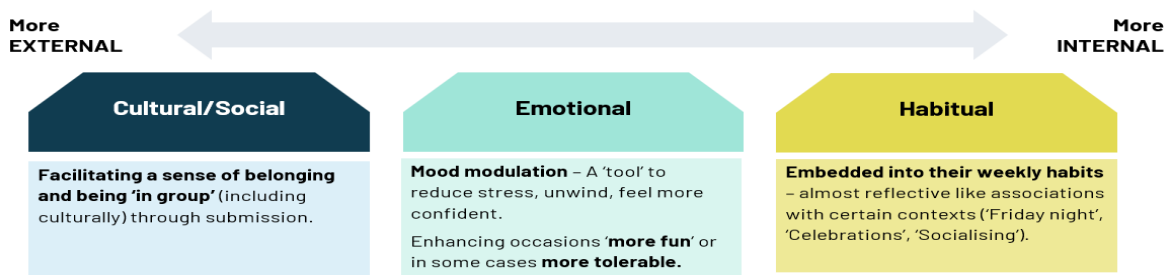
For young adults in this study, alcohol consumption was deeply ingrained in the fabric of their day-to-day lives, routines and social/cultural practices - with much of its influence typically operating beneath the surface of awareness. To the point that these 'truths' about alcohol (as outlined in Figure 1 below) were rarely questioned: *"I need to have a good excuse not to drink"*.

In terms of cultural/social influence, alcohol consumption facilitated a sense of belonging and being 'in group' (including culturally) through submission: *"I need to drink to fit in."*

In terms of emotional influence, alcohol consumption acted as a mood modulation - a 'tool' to reduce stress, unwind, feel more confident: *"A drink is needed to unwind"*. Young adults also spoke about alcohol enhancing occasions and making them 'more fun': *"You can't have fun without alcohol"* or in some cases more tolerable: *"Alcohol enhances social occasions"*.

In terms of habitual influence, young adults described how it was embedded into their weekly habits - almost reflective like associations with certain contexts ('Friday night', 'Celebrations', 'Socialising').

#### **Figure 1: Factors shaping relationships to alcohol**



Alcohol was universally viewed as a gateway to social acceptance and 'in group' belonging among the sample in this study, as seen in the quotes below where two different young adults speak about not going to a social gathering if not drinking alcohol:

*'You know if you turn down an invite you don't want them to **not** invite you the next time.'*

*'Turning down invites from my social groups...for want of a better phrase, you don't want them thinking you're a dry s\*\*\*\*.'*

It serves as a symbol of belonging within various social groups and within the broader cultural construct:

*'If I was planning on cutting down it would probably be getting rid of alcohol from social situations like I feel there would be a lack of social outings and interactions with my friends maybe if I didn't have alcohol... Also like I feel it might be a bit awkward nearly with all of your friends drinking and you're not but...'*

To the point that those who choose not to conform to this social norm feel (and truly believe) that they may face the risk of exclusion:

*'If I was told tomorrow, you're not allowed drink after X (specific event) but all your friends are, I'd be so upset because I'd feel excluded.'*

As non-conformity can be perceived as stepping outside the accepted boundaries of culture and the 'in group':

*'I've never taken a break where like everyone else has been drinking and then I'm not drinking, it's never been a break like that because I feel like left out.'*

Ultimately, alcohol was deeply intertwined with societal and cultural expectations among the sample - resulting in consistent consumption.

## 2. Shifting relationships

That said, alcohol does play different roles at different times of life for the young adults in this study and as participants age, they noted that their approach to alcohol matures as documented in Figure 2 below. Many of those in their mid-late 20s & 30s age group often used their 'worse' past behaviour with alcohol as an 'behavioural anchor' that they in turn used to justify their current drinking behaviours (i.e. "It's ok to use alcohol to destress because at least it's not what I used to do").

**Figure 2: Differences in approach to alcohol across age cohorts**

## Younger age groups (from 18)

## Older age groups (to 35)

Alcohol for 'release' in **higher energy moments** (often 'enhancing' moments).

### Emotional

Alcohol for 'release' in **lower energy** 'unwind/relax' moments (drinks with partner etc).

'Overdoing it' is more **acceptable** (on occasion). Consumption can be **more spontaneous**.

### Habitual

'Overdoing it' **less acceptable** and fear of embarrassment increases. Consumption **more planned**.

**Hangovers accepted** as part of the process.

### Cultural/ Social

Hangovers increasingly viewed as an **inhibitor of other life responsibilities**.

*'Like I won't casually drink on a Friday evening, by myself, to relax. Like I know some of my friends would have a glass of wine on a Friday when they are watching tv, I don't do that. If I'm drinking, it's because I'm going out with friends' (younger adult)*

*'Calming you know, having a few to just relax and unwind and calm down but not hyper crazy or anyway like that, that might have been when I was a lot younger' (Older age group)*

*'I think it's definitely become more civilised or casual, like I'd happily go out to the pub with my friends for some casual drinks with the intention of not getting drunk' (Older age group)*

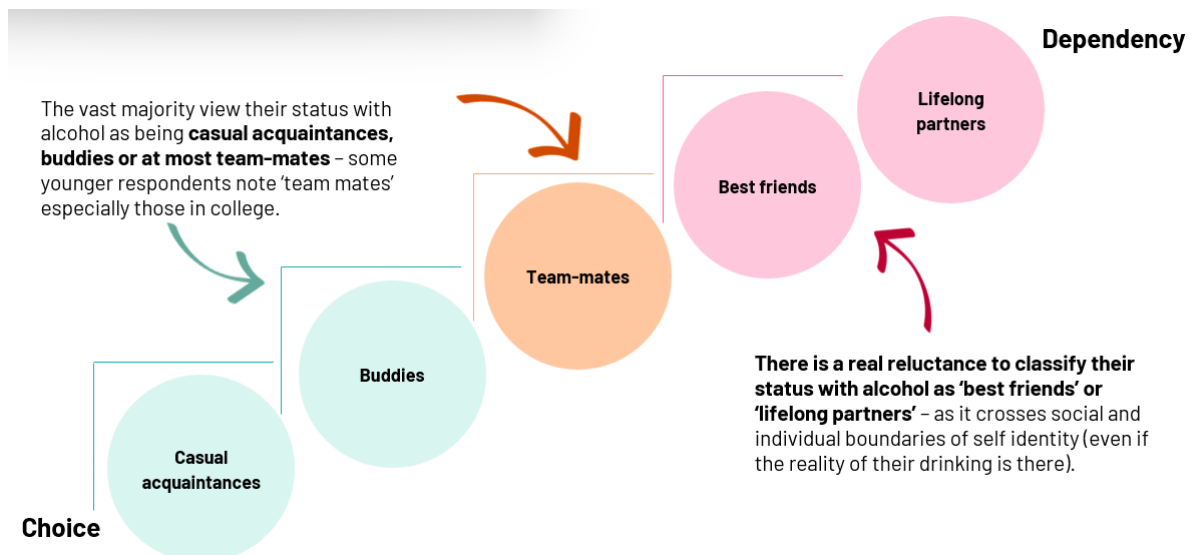
*'...the drinking isn't as heavy, I'm not out all night, at a nightclub or any of that sort of pre-drinking or...it's kind of come away from that over the last couple of years' (Older age group)*

*'Yeah, you couldn't be bothered feeling like crap for a whole day, your weekends are more precious when you're working...so I couldn't be arsed wasting a day' (Older age group)*

### 3. Self-perception

Overall, young adults in this study were eager to communicate to the degree of control they believed that they had over their consumption (regardless of consumption volume). In so doing they spoke about keeping safe distances - with vigilance against not forming 'too close' a bond. Figure 3 below displays how young adults in this study classified their alcohol status.

**Figure 3: How young adults classify their alcohol status:**



It was important for young adults to classify their relationship with alcohol as something that they have control over. In so doing, they also used different terminology to protect the ‘self-concept’ as well as peer comparison as a benchmark of their own consumption. Participants were also quicker to point at others behaviour rather than own behaviour: *‘I think the people in my group would call me a heavy drinker, but I’m not... I’m a fast drinker that’s all and I’ll only stick to beer... Alcohol in the amount I have is good... I see other people having a lot more and I’m like maybe you should cut down a bit’.*

#### Drinking alcohol and college:

With some exceptions - college was seen as a ‘safe space’ for excess. Young adults spoke about it being a rite of passage and deemed part and parcel of the college experience. They recalled how even those less enthusiastic about alcohol tend to take part. It was considered a prerequisite for meeting people and needed for forming social bonds with others: *‘You know the drinking culture was kind of part and parcel of the college experience and getting to know people in your course and going out’.* Young adults attending college spoke about alcohol like it is has ‘passport like’ access to parties and other social opportunities. The expectation at this stage of life is to engage - however, most recognised it’s not a longer-term behaviour that they can engage in: *‘I still think it’s a big thing for my generation, the drinking, it’s not as intense as it used to be a few years ago when we were also in college’.*

#### 4. Role of Occasion

##### Drinking occasions are more frequently planned than spontaneous:

- Planned occasions may be tied to a specific event (sport, concert, celebration, milestone, ticketed events, etc.). Busy schedules often limited capacity for spur of the moment drinks as friends can be harder to get a hold of: *‘Me and my mates there’s so many of us that we need to plan around everyone’s schedule and all...but we need to plan it to a tee almost.’* For female drinkers, there tended to be more preparation involved in going out: *‘...I need to work myself up, hype myself up and like have a nice outfit, it can be like stressful.’*

- Although less common for many, spontaneous drinking occasions still occurred: *'The older you get the less spontaneous they become, everyone has busy lives, like a lot of my friends have families and kids and things like that so it involves more planning.'* The element of 'rule breaking' and unexpectedness contributed towards a sense of excitement and enhanced an occasion: *'Saying that now it's not like I never do spontaneous night out or drinks like that, it does happen, and they are usually the best ones to be honest'.*

### The nature of the occasion greatly impacts young adults' drinking behaviour.

References to both lower and higher energy drinking occasions were spoken about:

#### 1. Lower energy:

'Chill' occasions whereby alcohol acts as an enhancer and is used to unwind. These involved smaller groups or more one-to-one interactions (with partners or friends), whether spontaneous, planned or routine: *'Sometimes I feel like I have to drink because this is the routine that me and my partner have got into over the last few years.'*

More 'low-key' - focus more on a meal, watching a movie, a drink preceded by an activity (e.g. hike), and more common for 25+ cohort. With less spontaneity and less frequency of seeing certain friends with age, participants spoke about how catch-ups become a notable occasion in and of themselves, and in smaller groups, usually low energy.

In-home consumption was usually associated with lower energy and attached to relaxation and unwinding: *'And when I'm at home it's just chill, there's no pressure or anything like that.'* For some, in-home drinking felt unusual: *'It would be pretty rare for me to have a drink at home, I don't, it wouldn't really come naturally to me.'* Some report feeling unnatural drinking alcohol at home and were more likely to drink at home during the likes of Christmas (more occasion-based). Others valued in-home occasions as an opportunity to unwind and spend time with partners. In-home quantities are usually capped at 'a couple', in line with relaxation goals: *'I could have maybe a beer at home on a Friday or Saturday and that would be just one or two beers max.'* For some (25+) health factors in - 'pointless' calories under more scrutiny at home: *'I just think like the calories when I drink a lot, but if I'm going out for dinner I don't, like it's just in that environment I don't think of it but if I'm at home I do.'* 'Saving mode' (e.g. for a house) was also cited that can dictate a higher frequency of in-home occasions: *'Myself and my boyfriend are saving for a house at the moment so like we try not to go out, we will just sit in, make some food and have a few drinks.'*

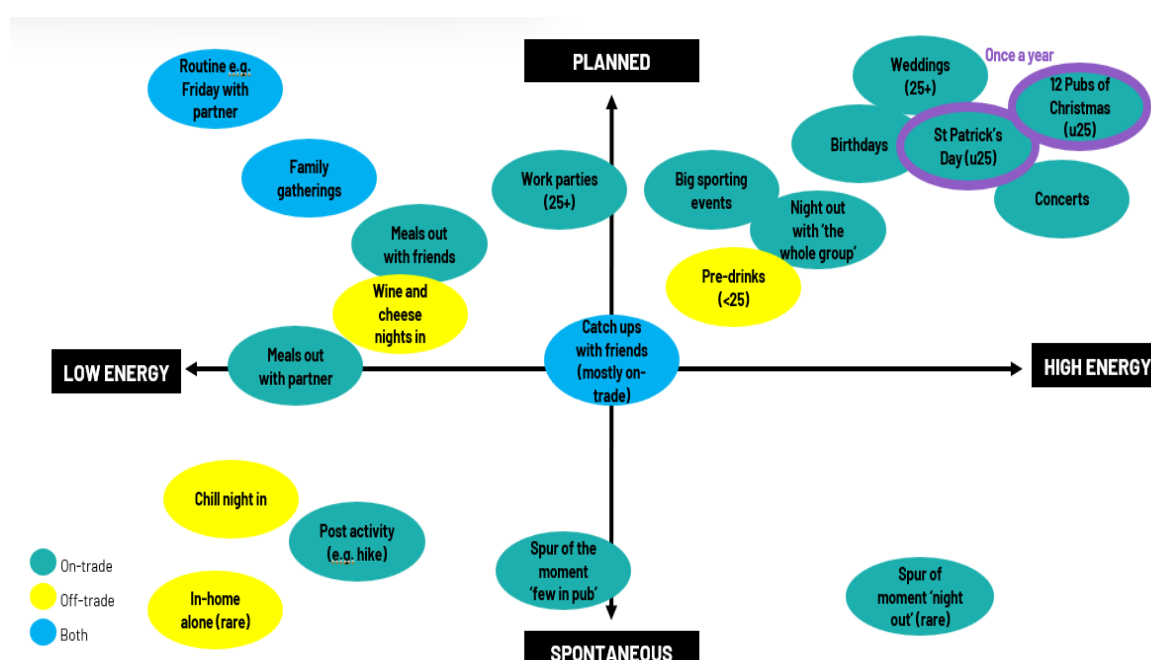
Many 18-24-year-olds felt especially detached from in-home consumption and didn't see a point to drinking alcohol at home: *'I don't really drink at home that much; I never really drink for the sake of drinking.'* They were less likely as a cohort to participate in lower energy alcohol occasions more broadly. Potential reluctance around parents was highlighted. This is not to say younger groups don't drink off-trade; it was more of a 'once it's not my home' attitude. The exception being hosting predrinks, whereby the setting of their own home can feel 'transformed': *'I definitely would only have one or two but if I was going out with the girls, I'd probably have a few more.'*

#### 2. Higher energy:

Certain occasions saw alcohol play a more central role: ‘Like when here’s a big occasion that’s my favourite time to drink and the one I look forward to the most.’ Higher energy occasions may feature alcohol more heavily. These could be large-scale events or celebrations, usually featuring bigger groups of friends/family, and tend to go on longer (may start earlier in the day). Typical examples provided included birthdays (own or friends), weddings, big sporting events, concerts, and ‘big’ nights out: ‘(I) haven’t gone to a wedding and not drank yet so I think weddings in Ireland are especially a huge drinking culture.’ Specific ‘once a year’ occasions were a feature for under 25’s e.g. St. Patrick’s Day, 12 Pubs of Christmas, Halloween: ‘Paddy’s Day or Halloween I feel I’ve a few more drinks then.’

High energy occasions which typically saw greater levels of consumption were usually planned, on-trade events as outlined in the figure below:

**Figure 4: Nature of occasion and impact on drinking behaviour**

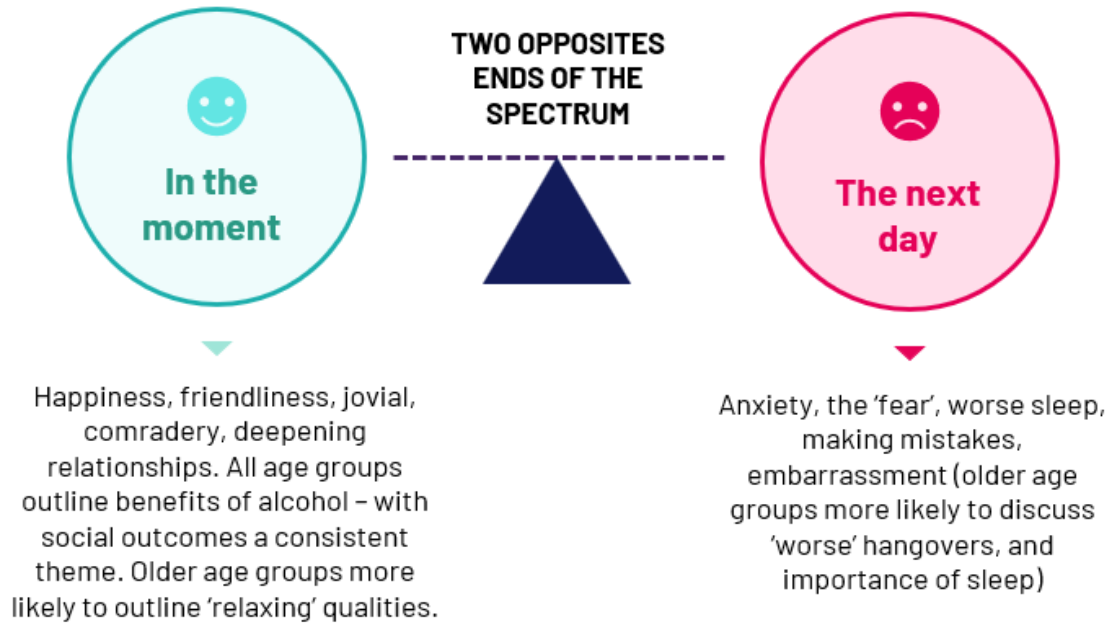


## 5. Motivation to reassess

### Consumption and Triggers

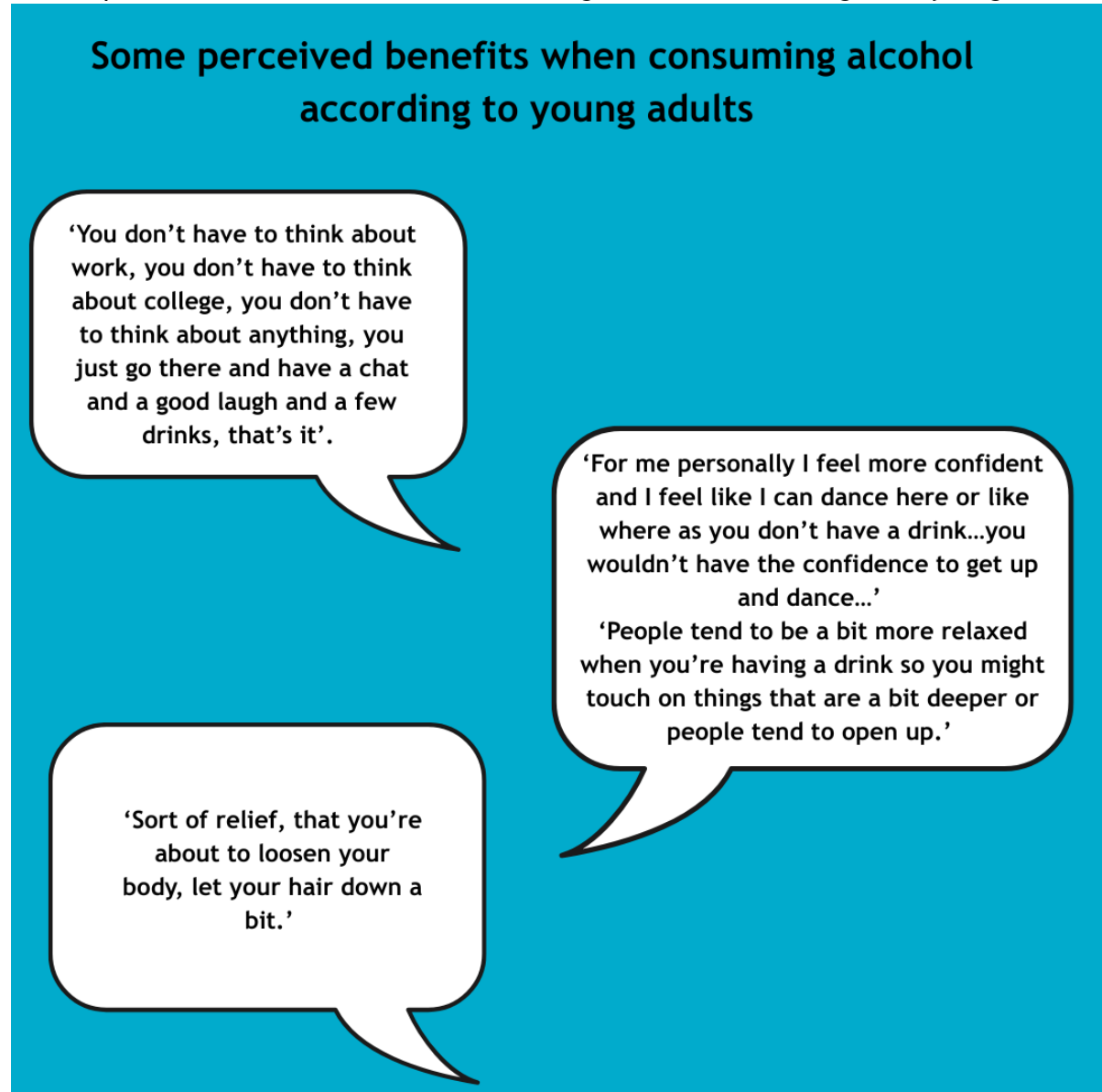
Consumption of alcohol involved a ‘balancing act’ of the pros and cons for young adults in this study. According to their stories, there was the dual (often competing) goal of getting the benefits from alcohol while at the same time minimising the downsides that they could experience - trying to find the ‘sweet spot’ as demonstrated below:

*Figure 5: Balancing act of young adults' consumption*





Some perceived benefits when consuming alcohol according to young adults:



Guidelines for consumption shaped by experience:

'Guidelines' for consumption emerged in the stories told, shaped by young adults' experiences, to help them manage the delicate balance of alcohol consumption. These guidelines were how most of the sample regulated their drinking but were loosely defined, with no guardrails and some leeway evident. Examples of guidelines referred to by young adults in this study included the following:

- Remember the night
- Have wits about oneself
- Drinking water in between
- Don't drink 'too fast'
- No spirits
- Not drinking on an empty stomach

A complex web of consumption triggers exists according to young adults' self-videos with an interplay of three motivational areas that created the triggers that in turn fuelled ongoing consumption as in Figure 6 documented below:

**Figure 6: Interplay of consumption triggers**



**"I need to have alcohol in order to stay in with my friend groups":**

The opportunity to see friends or make new ones was highly valued by young adults (especially at the younger end of the age bracket). The default social activity of drinking means that if people want to hang out with their peers, it was not uncommon that this hangout involved alcohol in some way: *'Hey I want to meet up with you, go for a couple of drinks I'll go like but that's because that's the only things they want to do kind of'*. This results in people connecting the two - drinking as a result of wanting to socialise: *'Saturday nights then is where I would probably pick (alcohol as) the relationship buddy as it's usually when I'd meet up with a few of my mates, have the craic, talk rubbish, mess about, some nights would be messier than others'*. Over time, these became embedded and the norms and expectations of behaviour for the young adults in this study: *'Like if you want to go out for drinks like it's a reason to see your friend'*.

Young adults also spoke about a range of other triggers that propelled the speed and volume of their consumption, such as the following:

- Nerves:  
 Unfamiliar company  
 Out of comfort zone  
 Stuck in awkward conversations or small talk  
 With triggers to drink more, and faster: *'The girlfriends who - it's not that I don't like them - I just don't know them that well, whereas they would be in a close circle of friends. So, the anxiousness of that would make me drink a lot quicker. Like a lot quicker. A lot more as well.'*
- Rituals:  
 Involvement in rounds = predicament and pressure to go faster than own pace: *'Like people kept getting rounds and I felt a bit guilty because I was like... It was just*

*like, oh, I'll have a Coke Zero for this round. And people were like, do you not don't want to drink? And I was like, no, I'll have a Coke Zero. It's like I had to make sure that it was being equal and when I was ordering and making sure that I was looking after my alcoholic drink because I didn't want to feel people feel bad and be like, oh, she's only ordering Coke 0 when she's ordering herself'.*

Shots are 'extra' drinks that are difficult to turn down when paid for

12 pubs of Christmas, drinking games e.g. Kings

- Energy:  
When energy and spirits are high, propensity to drink faster or 'have one more' can increase  
Music and atmosphere key here: *'I think music makes the night anyway and makes you want to drink more nearly'.*
- Setting:  
A place where one might 'need the confidence' or want it to be more tolerable e.g. nightclub: *'If I'm in a nightclub I'm drinking, if I wasn't drinking, I'd never go to a nightclub. I think that's pretty common though.'*  
Pre-drinks - trying to load up: *'If I'm very low on money I could be inclined to drink beforehand even if I didn't really need it.'*
- Keeping Up:  
Being on the same level as the rest of the room can be a pressure: *'Like it's funny when you're drunk and you're drinking because you're in that mindset but if you're sober, surrounded by drunk people, it's not fun for you.'*  
Not fun to be sober around drunk people  
Expectations e.g. Weddings: *'I haven't gone to a wedding and not drank yet...If I was to show up at one of the girls' weddings and not drink they would, it would literally be the Spanish Inquisition'.*

## 6. Challenges in abstaining

### Non-drinkers:

Young adults in this study spoke about those that did not drink alcohol as well as directly according to some participants in this study that did not drink themselves. For non-drinkers in Ireland, it is not just as simple as the decision not to drink alcohol; there is collateral damage, this involved:

- Tiptoeing around it  
Making others feel comfortable around you when they drink  
Listening to people feeling the need to 'justify' or downplay their own drinking around you: *'People try justify you're drinking to you, 'Oh I only drink on certain nights' but actually I do like going out and drinking non-alcoholic, I don't care like really don't but people seem to think they've to justify drinking to me'.*
- Speculation

People assume there is a reason for your abstinence (issues etc.): *'There's always shock like, nobody's just like 'oh yeah there's loads of people who don't drink', 'what's going on, are you sick?'*

Added layer of concern for women as pregnancy speculation is a consideration

- Pressure

Others not taking decision seriously at first: *'The idea of saying actually I just want to go off the drink just for me is alien to people'.*

Buying drinks absent mindedly (or maliciously): *'Some of my friends did act the maggot, they'd tell me it's a zero beer when it's a proper pint.'*

Requirement for 'friend' groups

- Sacrifices

De facto 'responsible one' when others aren't aware of themselves

Being the default person to 'take one for the team': *'You kind of feel like you're missing out on the chit chats (when drinking shots), like they're doing a thing that I'm not there for'.*

Non-drinkers found themselves having to implement certain behaviours around others and dealing with being treated differently by others, as spoken about from the young adult participants in this study that did not drink alcohol: *'I don't care like, I really don't, but people seem to think they have to justify drinking to me.'*

#### Young adults' experiences of cutting down (and attempts to do so):

Several young adults in this study spoke about triggers to cutting down their consumption of alcohol during their self-video diaries. A limited number of motivators to take a break were 'top down' and referred to structured breaks like 'Dry January' and '75 hard', these were:

- Usually social group driven (if my friends are doing it so will I - permission to engage)
- Accompanied with some internal curiosity about their capacity to abstain (in many cases to prove to the self that *"I am in control"*)

Instead, the majority of the remaining motivators to take a break were 'bottom up':

- Mental health reasons
- Health and fitness goals (e.g. marathon)
- Negative experience ('two-day hangover' territory)
- Professional commitments (e.g. exams)
- Life stage such as pregnancy

Taking a break often meant having to grapple with breaking cultural norms. Most young adults feel a 'good' and 'accepted' excuse is needed. However, it's a difficult thing to do - with the role of peer pressure being significant. Peer pressure played a significant role and was most pronounced at younger age groups but by no means exclusively at this age: *'So I might be like oh girls I'm calling it a night, I'm going to go home and they're like ah no don't! Get another drink and you'll be fine. So it's always that kind of pressure as well'.*

Peer pressure was a significant challenge to instigating and maintaining change in consumption behaviour over time: *'Friends and family from the start, whether they were messing or couldn't except it, where I'd meet them in a pub and they'd buy me a drink and I'd be like 'I'm not drinking.' And they're like 'Of course you aren't'. And I'm like 'No I'm not drinking' and they'd still buy me a drink.'*

When contemplating the idea of cutting down, most young adults instinctively considered what they would be losing rather than that they ‘could’ be gaining. In terms of losses, young adults referred to: less friends, less fun, what about my Friday night and what will my friends say/think? In terms of gains, young adults mentioned better mental health, better sleep, more productivity and more money. Ultimately, the perceived losses feel certain and immediate, whereas the perceived benefits feel abstract and distant.

Younger age groups were less likely to express benefits of cutting down: *‘No I don’t think there’d be any benefits, apart from the no hangover, I don’t get those anyway so. I’d just miss the being silly and not being as social if I cut down’*. Older age groups were more likely to acknowledge benefits around mental health, sleep and productivity if cutting down.

Cost does appear to be impacting out of home (OOH) consumption in particular. At one end, the increasing cost of alcohol is making young adults question consumption OOH: *‘Spend way too much money when I’m going out especially just the prices of drink nowadays are crazy, like you’re nearly spending €15 for one drink, it’s madness.’* Older age groups were more likely to consider the opportunity costs of drinking OOH (saving for mortgage): *‘Nights out at the weekends can be quite expensive so like if I am going to be saving for the likes of a mortgage or that I’m going to have to cut down on that.’* However, impact on in home consumption appears limited.

## 7. Surging popularity of non-alcoholic variants

### The growth of ‘sober curious’<sup>1</sup>:

Some of those who are more ‘sober curious’ outlined that there is a growing number of alternatives to drinking emerging: *‘There’s an increasing amount of sober activities, clubs, running clubs, things like that, that are prioritising being social and health and combining the two so it makes it more attractive and beneficial and something that you’d want to do’*. Albeit some noted that availability of these options is still limited (especially geographically).

Of those who have taken a break or cut down, they often expressed multiple benefits they have experienced in their lives and shared as part of their video diaries. This included better mental health, better sleep, more money and more productivity: *‘On my mental health in general I just think I’m doing better in general since I stopped drinking alcohol. I don’t think alcohol was doing much for me as a whole, I know it was having some effect on my mental health, can’t really describe what it was but since I haven’t been drinking I just feel better.’* Generally, this was experienced after more prolonged breaks from alcohol - such as during Covid-19, month off: *‘Health is much better, emotional health, there’s not like stupid arguments with my (partner) over noting now I look back on it. Especially the first two years after I gave up the drink, nothing, I wasn’t sick at all and that’s just your cold, flu, runny nose.’*

Young adults spoke about how non-alcoholic variants help individuals ‘blend in’ and feel more naturally included in occasions (as seen in Figure 7 below). For instance, people don’t

---

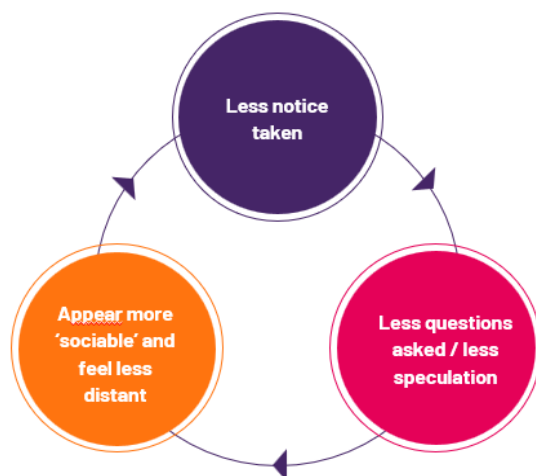
<sup>1</sup> Being sober curious means questioning of when, how much and why we drink. It is a proactive approach to monitoring and adapting your relationship with alcohol and is often associated with terms such as ‘mindful drinking’. Further information is available here: <https://drinkaware.ie/advice/sober-curious-and-mindful-drinking/>

stand out as different from the group with a non-alcoholic drink: *'...and you don't feel out of place'*. They don't deviate from the 'visual norm' and feel more involved: *'It just makes you look a little bit more sociable when you have a zero zero drink in your hand rather than like a pint of water'*. Stemming from visual cues (and historic connotations) - soft drinks, cordials or water can prompt interrogation and conversation. Non-alcoholic variants acted as a shield against scrutiny, questions, and feelings of not fitting in: *'When you're going to a party, it's much better to have the non-alcohol drink in front of you than a coke or anything because 'why are you not drinking? Are you pregnant? All that sort of crap.'* Typical 'headaches' include:

- Unwanted questions and repetitive conversations
- Speculation and rumors e.g. pregnancy, illness, issues
- Having to justify the decision to have a sober night to others

Whilst the preference expressed by young adults in this study was to go 'under the radar' when not drinking, availability (outside of beer) and price also acted as deterrents: *'They're expensive'*.

**Figure 7: How non-alcoholic variants help young adults 'blend in' at social occasions**



Younger adults (<25) were less convinced: *'I feel like it's buying a car without the engine.'* There was a pronounced difference in attitudes for this age group, with the 'point' of non-alcoholic drinks not apparent, especially when paying: *'I don't really see the point in them, it seems like a waste of money.'*

## Conclusion:

The findings from this project provide an extensive suite of rich qualitative data on understanding the role that alcohol plays in young adults' lives in Ireland today, in a way that is relatable to how young adults live their lives, and in their own words, with vital learnings into gaps in knowledge among a sample of young adults.

From the outset, this study did **not** seek to answer or add to the debate as to whether young adults in Ireland are drinking more or less but instead we were interested in understanding the lived experiences and motivations of young adults around the role that alcohol plays or does not play in their lives and the environment from which these motivations arise directly from young adults themselves. Despite a growing body of evidence on young adults being less likely to drink alcohol and more health conscious, alcohol consumption is still deeply ingrained in the routines and social/cultural practices of young adults as documented in this study with much of its influence typically operating beneath the surface of awareness.

Seven Overarching Themes guide the stories of young adult's experiences with alcohol in this research project, namely;

1. Ubiquity
2. Shifting Relationships
3. Self- Perception
4. Role of Occasions
5. Motivation to Reassess
6. Challenges in Abstaining
7. Surging Popularity of Non-Alcoholic Variants

Alcohol is viewed as a requirement for social acceptance and belonging (especially amongst youngest age groups) and is used for 'mood modulation' – relaxation, confidence, and stress reduction (higher energy for younger drinkers, lower energy need states for older drinkers).

Most young adults were eager to communicate the degree of control they had over their consumption. Many don't feel the need to cut back as their consumption can be easily rationalised ('I'm young', "Not as bad as what I used to do", "other people I know drink more").

Consumption of alcohol is a 'balancing act' for young adults as documented in their self-video diaries - trying to get the benefits and minimise the downsides. Young adults established personal 'guidelines' that helped them navigate this balance, with no reference to official guidance. Most aimed for a 'sweet spot' (that they learned from experience), worse mental health was consistently noted as being experienced from time to time due to consumption.

Triggers for alcohol consumption for young adults in this study are multi-faceted, with consumption feedback loops developing due to the interaction of different motivational factors. E.g. *"I need to have a drink on Friday night - so I can relax"*, or *"Alcohol will help me feel confident - in this social situation."*

This study also found that young adult non-drinkers (or even those committing to a break) faced difficulties due to cultural norms expecting alcohol consumption. Peer pressure was significant - particularly at younger age groups and makes taking a break or cutting down

challenging. Most success appears to have come when undertaking shared commitments with friends such as Dry January, or due to fitness related goals.

Acknowledgement of the negative effects of alcohol was present with many noting impacts on physical as well as mental wellbeing. Conversely, those who had cut back or stopped noted improvements in both.

The results are crucial to informing development and roll out of focused information campaigns to assist with reducing alcohol misuse. Ultimately understanding the etiology of young adults' drinking is important to facilitate development of prevention interventions. Timing is also crucial post COVID-19 and in the context of ongoing cost-of-living crisis providing insight into the lived experiences of young adults' drinking practices.

## **Next Steps**

The findings from this project provide Drinkaware with a valuable opportunity to strengthen our efforts to reduce alcohol harm among young adults in Ireland. By listening directly to their lived experiences, motivations, and challenges, we can ensure that future campaigns, tools, and interventions are grounded in real life, speak in relatable terms, and meet young adults where they are. These insights guide our messaging by allowing us to fine tune our targeting between age cohorts for example we speak to the need to fit in amongst the younger adults (18-24) whilst addressing the perception of needing alcohol to relax and unwind amongst the older group.

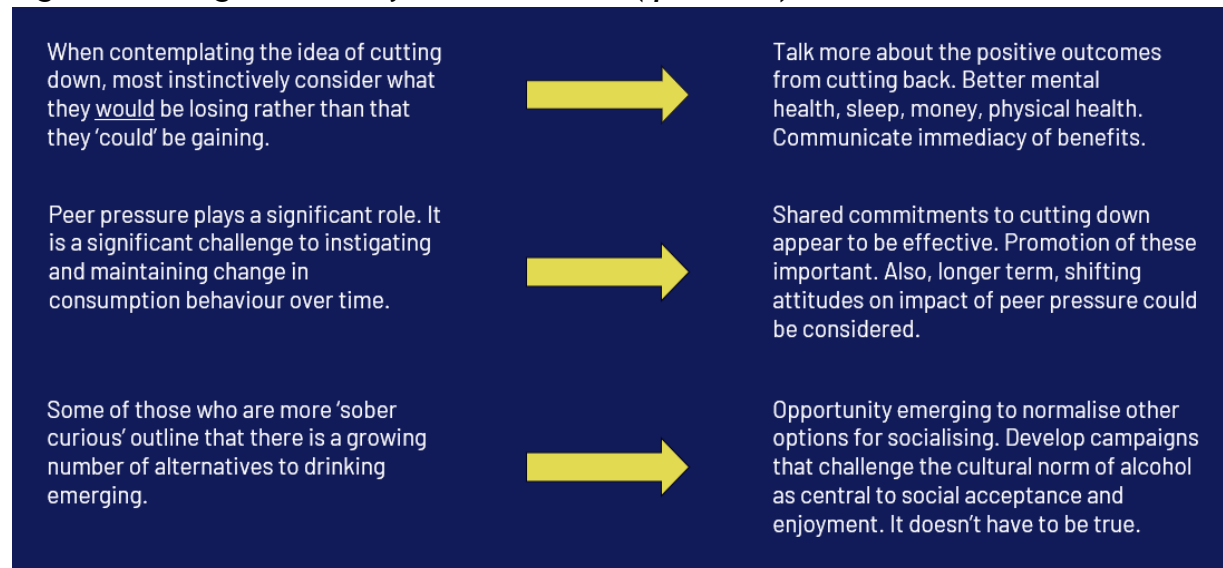
Drawing on the insights gained, Drinkaware will prioritise the following actions:

- Normalising choice by challenging the expectation that alcohol is needed for social inclusion, especially among younger adults.
- Focus on the positives of cutting down as opposed to only using fear of negative outcomes.
- Highlighting the mental health impact of alcohol and promoting the wellbeing benefits of cutting down or taking breaks.
- Promoting practical, relatable guidance on safer drinking.
- Amplifying the sober curious trend and expanding the visibility and appeal of non-alcoholic options.

Ultimately, evidence gathered as part of this innovative project provides insight into how preventative interventions need to be based on a greater understanding of actual experiences and in a way that is relatable to how young adults live their lives. In this case, it encompasses carefully listening to and capturing young adults' own voices, with young adults lived experiences at the cornerstone. We look forward to bringing these insights to life through future campaigns, shaped with and by young adults, that inspire change, spark conversations, and help shift the culture around alcohol in Ireland. Through this work, we will continue to drive Drinkaware's core purpose: to actively contribute to reducing alcohol harm, creating a future where young adults feel empowered to make healthier choices and where non-drinking or low-risk drinking is fully accepted and supported.



**Figure 8: Thought Starters for Interventions (Ipsos B&A):**



## References

Central Statistics Office (2025) *Growing Up in Ireland: Cohort '98 at age 25 Main Results*. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/pguic98/growingupinirelandcohort98atage25mainresults>

Department of Health (2024) *Healthy Ireland 2024 Summary Report*. Dublin: Government of Ireland. <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/healthy-ireland-survey-summary-report-2024.pdf>

Drinkaware (2025a) *Here's to Change: an overview of positive shifts in drinking behaviours and attitudes among adults in Ireland*. <https://drinkaware.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Heres-to-Change-An-overview-of-positive-shifts-in-drinking-behaviours-and-attitudes-among-adults-in-Ireland.pdf>

Drinkaware (2025b) *The growing trend of home-based drinking among adults in Ireland: evidence from the Barometer*. <https://drinkaware.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/The-growing-trend-of-home-based-drinking-among-adults-in-Ireland-evidence-from-the-Barometer-.pdf>

Drinkaware (2024) *A detailed overview of the Drinkaware Barometer 2023 Findings: Barometer Research Paper Series*

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Topic Guide following pilot focus group - Tasklist across 5 days

#### Tasklist – Drinkaware

##### Day 1 – Understanding the Lives of Young Adults

**Thematic Focus: Explore the broader context of young adults' lives, including their interests, work, social life, and stressors.**

*Questions/Prompts:*

1. Tell us about you? Your life and your living circumstances?
2. What are your main hobbies and interests? How often do you engage in these activities?
3. Describe your typical work or study routine?
4. Tell me about your social life? What do you tend to do on a weekly basis? What is less frequent but something you enjoy to do when you can?
5. What activities do you enjoy most in your free time, and why do they bring you joy?
6. Is there anything in your life that you find particularly stressful? Any moments during the week? On the flipside, what is your favourite part of the week? What do you look forward to most?
7. If you were to ask a friend to describe you as a person, what do you think they would say about you?

##### Day 2 – Occasion Deep Dive: Drinking Occasions

**Thematic Focus: Understand the contexts and dynamics of drinking occasions in young adults' lives.**

*Questions/Prompts:*

1. I want you think back to your typical behaviour over the last year...tell us about the types of occasions in your life when you tend to drink? Mention all the drinking occasions you can think of!
2. During these occasions, what are your 'go to' drinks? Is it particular brands? Or particular types of drink (e.g. beer, wine, spirits)? What do you like about these drinks?
3. How many drinks would you typically have for each occasion that you drink? Why this many?
4. Do you drink in the pub or out of home? Tell us about these drinking occasions and the role that alcohol plays in these occasions? What does it add to the occasion for you? Could you tell us about alcohol at these occasions and their behaviour?

5. Do you drink at home? Tell us about these drinking occasions and the role that alcohol plays in these occasions? What does it add to the occasion for you?
6. What's the difference between drinking during the week and during the weekend for you? Do you take a different approach to each of these occasions or not?
7. Do you have any 'rules' for yourself when drinking in these occasions? Either in terms of what you drink, how you drink, how much you drink (limits) etc. Why do you make these rules?

### **Day 3 – Drinking Motivations and Triggers**

**Thematic Focus: Explore the motivations and triggers for alcohol consumption among young adults.**

*Questions/Prompts:*

1. What do you perceive as the benefits of drinking? What do you like most about drinking?
2. Are the occasions in which you drink planned or somewhat spontaneous? Give me examples of each of these?
3. What or who tends to influence you for planned and for spontaneous drinking occasions?
4. What words would you use to describe how alcohol makes you feel;
  - Before you drink
  - During drinking
  - After you drink
5. Imagine an occasion where you usually drink. It is now/was not possible to drink during this occasion for some reason, what would be different or missing from this occasion?
6. Have you ever felt pressure to drink or drink more? Tell us a story of when you felt pressured to drink or drink more. What do you tend to do when this happens? Have you ever felt the pressure to drink less?
7. Tell me what you think about low or no alcohol drinks. Do you ever have them and when?

### **Day 4 – Role of Alcohol in Young Adults' Lives**

**Thematic Focus: Examine the personal role and significance of alcohol in the lives of young adults.**

*Questions/Prompts:*

1. What words would you use to describe the role alcohol plays in your life. Why do you pick these words? Describes the role that alcohol plays in your life.
2. If you had to give yourself a nickname for the type of drinker you are what nickname would you give yourself and why?
3. Are you satisfied with the role alcohol plays in your life? What does it add to your life?
4. Is there anything you wish you could change about your drinking or your relationship with alcohol? If so what would you like to change? More x , or less y.

5. Reflect on how your drinking has changed in recent years (impact of Covid, if any). Tell us about the story of when you first drank to what your drinking is like now.

### **Day 5 – Attitudes Towards Drinking**

**Thematic Focus: Investigate young adults' attitudes towards their own drinking habits and potential changes.**

Questions/Prompts:

1. Overall, what are your attitudes towards your alcohol consumption?
2. In what ways (if at all) do you think alcohol affects your health or wellbeing? Is this something you ever consider?
3. Do you foresee any changes in your drinking habits in the future? If so, what and why?
4. What are your thoughts on binge drinking and guidelines defining it (i.e. 6 or more standard drinks)? Do you find these guidelines helpful and do you ever use them?
5. Have you ever attempted to change your drinking habits? What motivated these changes, and what challenges did you face? If not, is there anything that would motivate you to reduce your alcohol consumption?
6. What role, if any, do you think education or awareness campaigns could play in altering your drinking behaviour?
7. To summarise, tell us what you feel your generations attitude is towards alcohol. In what way (if at all) is it different to the attitudes of other generations?