

1 **S1 Appendix: Additional links, and material from SOOCD website used in the analysis**

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3 **Key to Documents in this file**

4 Section A: Links to articles from newspapers.

5 Section B: Links to shorter quotes and comments by board members and supporters

6 Section C: Relevant material from SOOCD website

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8 **Key to names:**

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10 From SOOCD media release: "Full membership of the campaign group includes:

11

12 Fergus Finlay, Chair of SOOCD board.

13 Gavin Duffy (Entrepreneur & TV Presenter),

14 Joanna Fortune (Clinical Psychotherapist),

15 Paul Gilligan (CEO of St Patrick's Mental Health Services), *[Resigned from SOOCD board]*

16 Dr Ciara Kelly (GP & Health Commentator), *[Resigned from SOOCD board]*

17 David Smith (Diageo), *[Resigned from SOOCD board]*

18 Aine Lynch (National Parents Council),

19 Professor Briain MacCraith (President, DCU),

20 Kieran Mulvey (Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Commission),

21 Simon Keogh (IRUPA),

22 Gemma Doorly (Actress, Playwright),

23 Anne Connolly (Director of the Irish Smart Ageing Exchange),

24 Rob Hartnett (Sport for Business) and

25 Krystian Fikert (Psychologist and Founder of MyMind)". *[Resigned from SOOCD board]*

26

27 The action plan includes a three-stage research project led by Professor Kevin Rafter, Dublin City University".

28 Charlie O' Connor (ex-TD) is cited elsewhere as a board member, e.g.:

29 <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/scrap-drinks-campaign-says-students-union-31095499.html>

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33 **SECTION A: Links to newspaper articles by SOOCD board members**

34 **Document code: B2**

35 Newspaper article by Dr. Ciara Kelly

36 Source: Sunday Independent

37 Date: 6 April 2015

38 Title: "Doctor's orders: Forget the controversy and concentrate on the problem"

39 URL:

40 [http://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/mental-health/doctors-orders-forget-the-controversy-](http://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/mental-health/doctors-orders-forget-the-controversy-and-concentrate-on-the-problem-31116978.html)  
41 [and-concentrate-on-the-problem-31116978.html](http://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/mental-health/doctors-orders-forget-the-controversy-and-concentrate-on-the-problem-31116978.html)

42 Reference number in main paper: 35

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45 **Project document code: B3**

46 Newspaper article by SOOCD board Chairman, Fergus Finlay:

47 Source: Irish Examiner

48 Date: 17th Feb 2015

49 Title: "Time to stop papering over 'craics' and tackle corrosive alcohol abuse"

50 URL:

51 [http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/columnists/fergus-finlay/time-to-stop-papering-over-craics-](http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/columnists/fergus-finlay/time-to-stop-papering-over-craics-and-tackle-corrosive-alcohol-abuse-312921.html)  
52 [and-tackle-corrosive-alcohol-abuse-312921.html](http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/columnists/fergus-finlay/time-to-stop-papering-over-craics-and-tackle-corrosive-alcohol-abuse-312921.html)

53 Reference number in main paper: 34

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55 -----

56 **Project document code: B4**

57 Newspaper article by Fergus Finlay

58 Source: Irish Times

59 Date: Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015

60 Title: "Everyone – even drinks companies – needs to challenge our drink culture"

61 URL:

62 [http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/everyone-even-drinks-companies-needs-to-challenge-our-drink-](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/everyone-even-drinks-companies-needs-to-challenge-our-drink-culture-1.2113006)  
63 [culture-1.2113006](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/everyone-even-drinks-companies-needs-to-challenge-our-drink-culture-1.2113006)

64 Reference number in main paper: 49

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**Project document code: B5**

**Newspaper article by board member Gavin Duffy**

**Title: "Something must change in our booze-soaked society"**

**Source: Irish Independent**

**Date: 22nd Feb 2015**

**URL: <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/comment/something-must-change-in-our-boozesoaked-society-31011336.html>**

**Reference number in main paper: 41**

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**Project document code: B6**

**Newspaper article by board member Joanna Fortune**

**Source: Galway Independent**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015**

**Title: "Time to lead by positive example"**

**URL: <http://www.galwayindependent.com/opinion/oped/articles/2015/04/22/4064888-time-to-lead-by-positive-example/>**

**Reference number in main paper: 44**

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**Project document code: B7**

**Source: Article posted on the Sport for Business (SOOCD partner) website**

**Date: February 13, 2015**

**Title: "Alcohol and Sport. Alcohol and Society".**

**URL: <http://sportforbusiness.com/alcohol-and-sport-alcohol-and-society/>**

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97 **Project document code: B8**

98 **Newspaper article by Gemma Doorly, SOOCD board member**

99 **Title: "This much I know"**

100 **Source: Irish Examiner**

101 **Date: March 07, 2015**

102 **URL:**

103 <http://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/features/this-much-i-know-gemma-doorly-actor-and-writer-316340.html>

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107 **Project document code: B9**

108 **Newspaper article by Diageo board member, David Smith**

109 **Title: "Diageo is about more than just selling pints of Guinness: Diageo boss David Smith on why he called**  
110 **time on his role with the alcohol campaign"**

111 **Source: Irish Independent**

112 **Date: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

113 **URL:**

114 <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/comment/diageo-is-about-more-than-just-selling-pints-of-guinness-31102593.html>

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119 **SECTION B: Links to shorter quotes and comments by board members and**  
120 **supporters**

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122 **Project document code: C1**

123 **Student defends 'Donegal Tuesday', telling RTE broadcaster Joe Duffy: 'February is the designated drinking**  
124 **month'**

125 **Source: Irish Independent**

126 **Date: 17th February 2015**

127 URL: [http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/radio/student-defends-donegal-tuesday-telling-rte-](http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/radio/student-defends-donegal-tuesday-telling-rte-broadcaster-joe-duffy-february-is-the-designated-drinking-month-30999272.html)  
128 [broadcaster-joe-duffy-february-is-the-designated-drinking-month-30999272.html](http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/radio/student-defends-donegal-tuesday-telling-rte-broadcaster-joe-duffy-february-is-the-designated-drinking-month-30999272.html)

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131 **Project document code: C2**

132 Title: "Diageo 'really believes' in tackling binge drinking "

133 Source: The Spirits Business

134 Date: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015

135 URL: <http://www.thespiritsbusiness.com/2015/03/diageo-really-believes-in-tackling-binge-drinking/>

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138 **Project document code: C3**

139 Statement from Fergus Finlay on Redfm radio.

140 Date: 25th March 2015

141 Original URL: <http://www.redfm.ie/news/diageo-leaves-stop-control-drinking-campaign/> (note: no longer  
142 available on website)

143 Quote from FF:

144 "While he was on the board he [David Smith] was nothing but supportive and helpful. He never tried to  
145 influence us in any way, shape or form. But he recognised that a campaign was being waged around Diageo's  
146 involvement. And he wanted to kind of, you know, free us, from that., and that's what he's done."

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149 **Project document code: C4**

150 Quote from Maureen Gaffney.

151 Source: Limerick Leader

152 Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015

153 URL: [http://www.limerickleader.ie/news/local-news/limerick-workshop-to-explore-issues-around-binge-](http://www.limerickleader.ie/news/local-news/limerick-workshop-to-explore-issues-around-binge-drinking-1-6641300)  
154 [drinking-1-6641300](http://www.limerickleader.ie/news/local-news/limerick-workshop-to-explore-issues-around-binge-drinking-1-6641300)

155 Reference number in main paper: 46

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158 **Project document code: C5**  
159 **Quote from Eoghan McDermott (backer of SOOCD campaign)**  
160 **Source: Irish Times**  
161 **Date: Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 2015**  
162 [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/stop-out-of-control-drinking-campaign-criticised-over-diageo-](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/stop-out-of-control-drinking-campaign-criticised-over-diageo-link-1.2101755)  
163 [link-1.2101755](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/stop-out-of-control-drinking-campaign-criticised-over-diageo-link-1.2101755)

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165 **Project Document code: C6**  
166 **Title: “Defending Stance on Alcohol and Sport”**  
167 **Source: Sport for Business website (Rob Hartnett, CEO of Sport for Business is a SOOCD board member)**  
168 **Date: March 10 2015**  
169 **URL: <http://sportforbusiness.com/defending-our-stance-on-alcohol-and-sport/>**

170 **Reference number in main paper: 38**

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## 173 **SECTION C**

174 **Project document code: D1**

175 **Workshop materials from SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

### 176 **CORK PUBLIC WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

177 **Please use the permanent markers on the table to write down your ideas and the ideas that are being**  
178 **discussed on the paper tablecloth while the group discussions are happening. You will then have an**  
179 **opportunity to write down your own ideas on the worksheets at the end of each topic discussion. Your ideas**  
180 **will support the development of a five-year action plan to change the culture of drinking for the better.**

181  
182 **Thank you for your contributions to this important discussion.**

183  
184 **Cork Public Workshop Schedule**

185  
186 **Time Activity**  
187 6:30- 6:40 Reception  
188 6:40- 6:45 Welcome from Fergus Finlay  
189 6:45- 7:20 Dr. Maureen Gaffney “How to change culture”  
190 7:20- 7:25 Workshop explanation by Rob Hartnett  
191 7:25- 7:40 Question 1 Discussion: Programmes and experiences  
192 7:40- 7:45 Question 1 Write down ideas  
193 7:45- 8:00 Question 2 Discussion: Individual/ social targets and drivers of change  
194 8:00- 8:05 Question 2 Write down ideas  
195 8:05- 8:20 Question 3 Discussion: Targets and drivers of change in the wider community  
196 8:20- 8:25 Question 3 Write down ideas

197 8:25- 8:30 Survey & opportunity to sign-up  
198 8:30 Thank you and close from Fergus Finlay  
199 !  
200 **CORK PUBLIC WORKSHOP QUESTIONS**  
201 **1: What campaigns, programmes or experiences have changed your attitude or behaviour, or the behaviour**  
202 **of someone you know?**  
203 A) What was it about the campaign, programme or experience that made it successful?  
204 B) What other programmes or ideas would you recommend?  
205  
206 **2: Who are the individual/ social targets and drivers of change?**  
207 A) How can we support young people to make positive choices/ change their behaviour?  
208 B) How can we engage adults to think about or change their behaviour? What would help you?  
209 C) How can families, peers and social network influence other people’s behaviour in their networks? How can  
210 we help them?  
211  
212 **3: Who are the targets and drivers of change in the wider community?**  
213 D) What role can organisations play (voluntary, sporting community etc.) in creating change/ supporting the  
214 above?  
215 E) What role should government agencies and departments play in creating change/ supporting the above?  
216 F) What can businesses do to help create change?  
217 !  
218 **Idea Log**  
219 Please capture one idea per sheet  
220 Ideas do not need to be fully formed  
221  
222 **Idea**  
223 Please capture the essence of your idea  
224  
225 **How it works**  
226 Explain briefly why it will help to stop out-of-control drinking  
227  
228 **Have you seen/heard of this working before?**  
229 Detail any evidence you have for its effectiveness  
230  
231 **Your details**  
232 (leave blank if you’d like to submit anonymously)  
233 Name:.....  
234 Email address:.....  
235 Are you happy for us to follow up with you on your idea?  
236 (please cross out one)  
237 Yes / No  
238  
239 **Campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking Workshop**  
240 **Survey**  
241 Name (optional):  
242 Organisation (optional):  
243 Email (optional):  
244 We appreciate your feedback on the workshop and campaign. If you would like to receive updates about news  
245 and upcoming events please provide your name and email address. You can also submit comments after the  
246 event at [workshops@rolemodels.ie](mailto:workshops@rolemodels.ie) Thank you.  
247  
248 **Q 1: Why did you attend this workshop?**  
249  
250  
251 **Q 2: How interesting did you find this workshop?**  
252  
253 Very interesting

254 Interesting  
255 Somewhat interesting  
256 Not interesting

257  
258 **Q 3: Would you recommend this event to your friends/ family/ colleagues?**

259 Yes  
260 Maybe  
261 No

262  
263  
264 **Q 4: Would you attend another event held by the campaign to Stop Out- of-  
265 Control Drinking?**

266 Yes  
267 Maybe  
268 No

269 !  
270 **Q5: Would you like to be on our mailing list? Please provide your name and email below:**

271  
272  
273 **Q6: Have you/ will you sign-up to support the campaign at [www.rolemodels.ie](http://www.rolemodels.ie)**

274 Yes  
275 Maybe  
276 No

277  
278 **Q 7: Do you have any feedback or recommendations on the workshop and/or suggestions for the campaign?**

279  
280  
281 **Q 8: Are there any ways you think the campaign could include more peoples' opinions or evidence?**

282  
283  
284 **Q 9: Any other comments?**

285 First Name (Print)  
286 Last Name (Print)  
287 City  
288 Email  
289 Phone  
290 Signature

291  
292 **The campaign to Stop Out-of-Control is bringing people together to make a positive change to our drinking  
293 culture. By signing up you are joining a growing movement, one that provides a unique opportunity to break  
294 the tolerance of alcohol misuse in Ireland, which has allowed excessive drinking to become an accepted part  
295 of Irish culture.**

296  
297 Sign up to show your support for a campaign that wants to make a difference. Joining is just one of the ways  
298 you can make your voice heard. Visit [rolemodels.ie](http://rolemodels.ie) to find out about events near you, how to get involved and  
299 campaign competitions. Be part of the solution, join the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking now!

300  
301 Please complete all the details below. Return completed form to [info@rolemodels.ie](mailto:info@rolemodels.ie) or post it to  
302 **Stop Out-of-Control Drinking, 6-9 Trinity St, Dublin 2.**

303  
304 **Stop Out-of-Control Drinking | 6-9 Trinity St | Dublin 2 01 617780 [info@rolemodels.ie](mailto:info@rolemodels.ie)**

305  
306 **[@Irishrolemodels](#)**  
307 **[#irishrolemodels](#)**

308  
309 **I am 18yrs+ and opt in with consent for future campaign updates**

310



311 **I am interested in the following:**

312

313 Providing a vox pop or photo today [If so, consent form required]

314

315 Sharing views at a public meeting in Dublin on the evening of March 5th [If so, give invite]

316

317 **Two final questions:**

318 In the last 6 months have you done something you regret as a result of your drinking?

319 In the last 6 months has your drinking had a negative impact on someone around you?

320 Your name, address, email and any personal information will not be shared with others, including other  
321 members of our campaign, other than for the purpose of listing you as a supporter. You can opt out at any  
322 time via the link provided in all communications.

323

324

325 **The campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking**

326 The campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking is an independent initiative that seeks to change our culture of  
327 drinking for the better. This campaign has brought together public figures from education, public policy,  
328 mental health, children’s services and sport.

329

330 In Ireland we are all too aware of the damage that out-of-control drinking does – economically, socially, and in  
331 terms of our country’s reputation. Our aim is to establish an honest and strong nationwide campaign to break  
332 the cycle of the culture of excessive drinking passing from generation to generation, and to change behaviour  
333 in a sustainable way.

334

335 Part of the reason we came together is a simple one. Despite the best efforts and total commitment of  
336 organisations, individuals, and experts and despite the obvious and transparent damage in families and  
337 communities, none of us have cracked the challenge of cultural change. We need to ask ourselves challenging  
338 questions. Why do we have this relationship with alcohol? Why do we need to drink this way? What motivates  
339 us to do this? What can we do to change this culture that generations of us have accepted? How can we  
340 implement that change?

341

342 I’m delighted to welcome you to our meeting today. We want to hear what you have to say.

343

344 We need your viewpoint and your perspectives on solving this challenge. We want to learn what works and  
345 based on the feedback we receive we will create a five-year plan, which we can build a campaign around, and  
346 one that will be evidence-based and have been informed by experts and the public.

347

348 There are also ways you can stay involved in the campaign after today’s meeting including starting a  
349 conversation with us on facebook ([www.facebook.com/irishrolemodels](http://www.facebook.com/irishrolemodels)) and Twitter @irishrolemodels. You can  
350 also give us more of your thoughts or make a formal submission to the action plan at  
351 [www.rolemodels.ie/haveyoursay](http://www.rolemodels.ie/haveyoursay) and if you haven’t already, sign-up to show your support for change at  
352 [www.rolemodels.ie](http://www.rolemodels.ie).

353

354 Thank you very much for your contributions today. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

355

356 Warm regards,

357

358 Fergus Finlay

359 Chair of the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking!

360

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362 **Project document code: D2**

363 **Memorandum of Understanding from SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

364 **Date: 12/2/15**

365

366 1. Stop Out-of-Control Drinking ('the campaign') is an independent group that wants to make a positive and  
367 lasting change to the misuse of alcohol and its consequences in Ireland, for the individual and society.

368

369 2. We recognise the serious consequences of alcohol misuse in Ireland. The links between alcohol misuse and  
370 ill health are well established, as are the consequences in terms of anti-social behaviour, dangerous driving,  
371 and dysfunctions within families. There is an overwhelming need to break this cycle.

372

373 3. We intend to lead a campaign that will be based on evidence and strong and effective messages that will  
374 influence networks and groups in society. We will challenge motivations and perception of excessive drinking  
375 as a cultural norm, asking the public to become part of a solution that focuses on preventative measures,  
376 bringing about a change in drinking behaviour.

377

378 4. The campaign is made up of a board of founder members acting in a voluntary capacity, led by a chair and  
379 supported by a secretary.

380

381 5. The campaign will work with groups and individuals from across Irish society to find what preventative  
382 approaches can help achieve this goal.

383

384 6. This work will go into an evidence-based action plan that will lay out key steps to address this issue, for both  
385 the individual and society.

386

387 7. The development of the action plan will be led by an external consultant, with the board members taking an  
388 active role in that process and will have final approval.

389

390 8. The chair acts as the spokesperson for the campaign board. The chair may also nominate other members to  
391 act as spokespeople in an official capacity.

392 9. New members of the board can be appointed at the discretion of the board and members may resign from  
393 the board by notifying the secretary. Membership of the campaign is subject to acceptance of this  
394 Memorandum of Understanding and membership can be rescinded at the chair's discretion.

395 10. The campaign and its board will not be a legal entity. Its rules, this MoU and its mission statement will be  
396 placed in the public domain.

397 11. Support for the campaign's activities is being provided by Diageo Ireland.

398 Embargo: 00:01 12 February 2015

399 -----

400 **Project document code: D3**

401 **Website advert for SOOCD public workshops**

402 Sport for Business is supporting a major national campaign to Stop Out of Control Drinking.

403 The first public workshop looking for ideas and thoughts from the broad base of the general public on how we  
404 can face up to our relationship with drink takes place in Dublin on March 5th.

405 Maureen Gaffney, best-selling author and clinical psychologist will lead a discussion on the influence that  
406 cultural perceptions and attitudes can have on our relationship with alcohol. It's then over to you to let us  
407 know what you'd change to create a better drinking culture. A light dinner will be provided.

408 Come and join us and have your say on the debate.

409 -----

410 **Project document code: D4**

411 **Anne Connolly (SOOCD board member), quote from SOOCD Website**

412 Anne Connolly, board member and Director of the Irish Smart Ageing Exchange encouraged individuals and  
413 organisations across the health, social and behavioural science sectors to make their contributions to the  
414 Action Plan.

415 "We need a comprehensive, evidence based, and sustainable approach to changing behaviour. We want to  
416 add to the current and past conversations and really encourage people from across sectors to share their  
417 knowledge and expertise. We need to develop a policy that will impact behaviour, as well as attitudes, to  
418 create lasting change," Ms Connolly said.

419 -----

420 **Project document code: D5**

421 **Text from SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

422 What does drinking mean in Ireland? The stereotype of the Irish drinker is well known – but what truth is  
423 behind it, and how do you see our relationship with alcohol? We want to dig deeper and have a real  
424 conversation about drinking and its influence in Ireland. The evening will begin with a short talk from a leading  
425 social commentator about how cultural perceptions and attitudes of drinking might influence our relationship  
426 with alcohol. It's then over to you to let us know what you'd change. The discussion on the night will help build  
427 a five-year Action Plan that we're writing to change Ireland's relationship with alcohol for the better. This  
428 workshop is open to everyone, 18+. A light dinner will also be provided – RSVP with your full name and the  
429 workshop you wish to attend to [workshops@rolemodels.ie](mailto:workshops@rolemodels.ie) to hold your place.

430 From the website:

431 The campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking has today called for policy experts, academics, behavioural  
432 psychologists, health and charity professionals to put forward their evidence, research and recommendations  
433 for a five-year Action Plan.

434 The Action Plan will draw from secondary research, new evidence collected through an extensive public  
435 consultation and international best-practice, to deliver a strategy that addresses the motivations and  
436 influences of out-of-control drinking in Ireland.

437 The Chair of the campaign, Fergus Finlay, said it was important that as many people got involved in the  
438 consultation process as possible.

439 "We want this to be an open, inclusive and thorough process. We want to give as many people as possible the  
440 chance to contribute. It will be a truly national plan that ensures that everyone's opinions, experiences and  
441 attitudes towards alcohol, as well as the evidence put forward by professionals working in the field are

442 included. For change to be realised, we need to have the public on board and sharing their views on how best  
443 to approach this challenge,” Mr Finlay said.

444 Workshops, will now be held across Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Cork during March 2015. The workshops will  
445 provide the opportunity for people to share their views, for new evidence to be collected and for organisations  
446 to highlight areas of practice that have been effective in creating sustainable behaviour change.

447 Anne Connolly, board member and Director of the Irish Smart Ageing Exchange encouraged individuals and  
448 organisations across the health, social and behavioural science sectors to make their contributions to the  
449 Action Plan.

450 “We need a comprehensive, evidence based, and sustainable approach to changing behaviour. We want to  
451 add to the current and past conversations and really encourage people from across sectors to share their  
452 knowledge and expertise. We need to develop a policy that will impact behaviour, as well as attitudes, to  
453 create lasting change,” Ms Connolly said.

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455 **Project document code: D6**

456 **Text from SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

457 **D6 SOOCD Events**

458 **Our country-wide consultation will create a five-year action plan to change our culture of drinking for the**  
459 **better.**

460 **For more information or to hold your place email [workshops@rolemodels.ie](mailto:workshops@rolemodels.ie)**

461 **Please see a list of event dates and details for Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Cork below.**

462 **Public Workshop:** Maureen Gaffney, best-selling author and clinical psychologist will lead a discussion on the  
463 influence that cultural perceptions and attitudes can have on our relationship with alcohol. It’s then over to  
464 you to let us know what you’d change to create a better drinking culture. A light dinner will be provided.

465 **Policy Workshop:** This workshop will collect research, evidence and experience from professionals and  
466 organisations. It will be hosted by Fergus Finlay, CEO of Barnardos and Chair of the campaign to Stop Out-of-  
467 Control Drinking. Refreshments will be provided.

468 Don’t miss your chance to impact the debate.

469

470 **UPCOMING**

471 **Cork Policy Workshop**

472 Date: 26th March 2015

473 Time: 2:30pm – 5:00pm

474 Venue: Morgan & Plunkett Suite, Imperial Hotel, South Mall, Cork

475 RSVP by: 24th March 2015

476

477 **Cork Public Workshop**

478 Date: 26th March 2015

479 Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

480 Venue: Corcaigh Suite, Cork County Hall, Carrigrohane Rd, Cork

481 RSVP by: 25th March 2015

482

483 **PAST**

484 **Dublin Policy Workshop:** 4th March 2015

485 **Dublin Public Workshop:** 5th March 2015

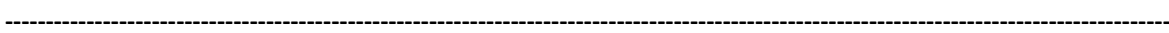
486 **Galway Policy Workshop:** 12th March 2015

487 **Galway Public Workshop:** 12th March 2015

488 **Limerick Policy Workshop:** 19th March 2015

489 **Limerick Public Workshop:** 19th March 2015

490



491 **Project document code: D7**

492 **Text from SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

493 **Campaign Aims**

494 We're saying enough is enough and we need to stop out-of-control drinking being considered an acceptable  
495 part of life. We want to break the cycle of passing a cultural acceptance of excessive drinking from one  
496 generation to the next.

497 We cannot address this problem by working alone. We must work together as individuals, organisations, and  
498 society to find a lasting solution to out-of-control drinking.

499 Our three-part campaign is built on sound evidence and thorough research, and aims to provide a permanent  
500 change in our drinking behaviour.

501 **Raising Awareness**

502 Our campaign will raise awareness of the consequences of drinking to excess, the damage it can do to the  
503 individual and the impact it can have on others. The campaign will challenge society to think about what is and  
504 isn't socially acceptable. It's unbelievable to us now, but drink driving was socially acceptable not so long ago,  
505 with the right motivations, positive cultural change can happen.

506 See the adverts [here](#).

507 **Engagement**

508 Evidence suggests that to make the lasting difference needed, we must alter the attitudes and motivations  
509 that lie behind our drinking behaviour – our campaign seeks to understand those motivating factors.

510 What is really clear from all the evidence is that each cultural attitude towards alcohol will require a different  
511 response if we are to achieve long-term behaviour change. What works in one country may not work in  
512 another, we need a tailored Irish response.

513 In the next stage of our campaign we will travel across the country to find out what will really make a  
514 difference – by discussing the issues with local people and groups of acknowledged experts in alcohol policy  
515 and behaviour change.

516 **Building the long-term solution**

517 Following our consultation with international and Irish experts, and considering the views of the Irish public on  
518 what factors would influence their behaviour, we will then draw up a five-year plan to change our drinking  
519 culture for good. It will set out a concrete set of actions that we as individuals, organisations, and society can  
520 take, to help eliminate out-of-control drinking.

521 [Have your say](#) now and help shape the plan here.

522 -----

523 **Project document code: D8**

524 **Fergus Finlay, text on SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

525 **“Today we launch our campaign”**

526 I’m delighted to welcome you to the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking. Our campaign is aimed at  
527 changing Ireland’s culture of drinking for the better. We want to change attitudes and behaviours forever. We  
528 want you involved. This is your chance to join, shape and lead a campaign aimed at one of our most pressing  
529 social issues.

530 Throughout my professional life, I’ve seen the damage that alcohol abuse can do. It damages families and it  
531 damages children. It causes economic damage and of course it helps to define our reputation in all sorts of  
532 damaging ways.

533 So. Out-of-control drinking is a serious issue, with enormous consequences. To stop it we need to work  
534 together as a nation. We need to make a collective decision that enough is enough, that we want things to be  
535 better, that instead of being part of the problem we can be part of the solution. Working together we can  
536 make it better for ourselves, for our families, for our society both today and for the generations that will follow  
537 us.

538 This will be an honest and strong campaign that will hold a mirror up to something that is unacceptable to Irish  
539 society. We are starting a process that will take a number of years and we’re determined that it will play a  
540 serious part in achieving that goal together, by creating a well-considered plan for getting to grips with  
541 something that is deeply ingrained in our culture.

542 We want to create the kind of lasting impact on attitudes to excessive drinking that has been achieved with  
543 drink driving.

544 At the same time as asking people to consider their own drinking habits, this campaign will develop a long-  
545 term plan to bring about that cultural and behavioural change. We will be seeking out best practice, both at  
546 home and abroad, to find out what will work best for Ireland. We will be hearing from experts and  
547 professionals what changes we need to make to achieve our aims. Out-of-control drinking isn't just an issue for  
548 the government, of course, it's a problem that affects all of us, and a problem for society needs a solution that  
549 involves everyone. So our campaign will be throwing this open to the public.

550 We want to hear your views on what you think is the best way to tackle out-of-control drinking. Tell us your  
551 story. Help us to understand the impact out-of-control drinking has had on you. Tell us what's made you  
552 consider your own drinking? Who should we be talking to? How do we stop this attitude towards alcohol  
553 passing from generation to generation. What type of education, information, public awareness will have the  
554 most impact. To have the kind of impact we want and to make that positive change, we need your help, and  
555 there are so many ways to contribute for a better future for all of us. Show your support for a better culture of  
556 drinking by joining the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking today. [Get involved and have your say.](#)

557 - *Fergus Finlay, Chair, Stop Out-of-Control Drinking*

558 -----

559 **Project document code: D9**

560 **Text from SOOCD website (no longer available).**

561 The campaign to Stop Out-of-Control is bringing people together to make a positive change to our drinking  
562 culture. By signing up you are joining a growing movement, one that provides a unique opportunity to break  
563 the tolerance of alcohol misuse in Ireland, which has allowed excessive drinking to become an accepted part of  
564 Irish culture.

565 Sign up to show your support for a campaign that wants to make a difference. Joining is just one of the ways  
566 you can make your voice heard. Visit [rolemodels.ie](http://rolemodels.ie) to find out about events near you, how to get involved and  
567 campaign competitions. Be part of the solution, join the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking now!

568 Please complete all the details below. Return completed form to [info@rolemodels.ie](mailto:info@rolemodels.ie) or post it to Stop Out-of-  
569 Control Drinking, 6-9 Trinity St, Dublin 2.

570 -----

571 **Project document code: D10**

572 **Media release**

573

574 New Campaign Launched to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking

575 -Children's groups, parents, medics and the education community join celebrities and sportspeople to stop  
576 out-of-control drinking.

577

578 -Board members include Fergus Finlay (Chair) , Dr Ciara Kelly and Gavin Duffy. Campaign supporters include  
579 Kian Egan, Eoghan McDermott & Una Foden.

580

581 -Irish public urged to join campaign and help create an unprecedented national plan to improve Irish drinking  
582 culture.

583

584 12 February 2015: A new independent campaign to change Ireland's drinking culture and behavior was  
585 launched today. Chaired by Fergus Finlay, the campaign to *Stop Out-of-Control Drinking* challenges the public  
586 to get involved in a new movement aimed at tackling excessive drinking culture in Irish society, and changing  
587 behavior in a sustainable way.

588 The campaign is funded by Diageo but led by an independent campaign board of figures as diverse as Dr Ciara  
589 Kelly (GP & Health Commentator), Paul Gilligan (CEO of St Patrick's Mental Health Services), Gavin Duffy

590 (Entrepreneur & TV Presenter), David Smith (Diageo), Áine Lynch (National Parents Council) and Kieran Mulvey  
591 (Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Commission).

592

593 It is also has the backing of celebrities such as Kian Egan, Una Foden, Ardal O’Hanlon and Eoghan McDermott.  
594 The campaign aims to achieve the same shift in attitudes towards excessive drinking culture as there has been  
595 towards drink driving within the last 20 years. The campaign will call on the public, organisations and experts  
596 to join online and at public meetings across the country, to generate an unprecedented national response to  
597 this issue. That response will form the heart of a “people’s campaign” and will shape the creation of a society-  
598 led action plan to make out-of-control drinking an unacceptable part of Irish culture by 2021. The plan will be  
599 published in Summer 2015.

600

601 Fergus Finlay, the campaign’s chair said:

602 “Out-of-control drinking is a serious issue in our society, with enormous consequences. To stop it we need to  
603 work together as a nation. We need to make a collective decision that enough is enough, that we want things  
604 to be better, that instead of being part of the problem we can be part of the solution. Working together we  
605 can make it better for ourselves, for our families, for our society both today and for the generations that will  
606 follow us. This will be an honest and strong campaign that will hold a mirror up to something that is  
607 unacceptable to Irish society. We are starting a process that will take a number of years and we’re determined  
608 that it will play a serious part in achieving that goal together, by creating a well-considered plan for getting to  
609 grips with something that is deeply ingrained in our culture.”

610

611 Dr Ciara Kelly, GP and Health Commentator, said:

612 “Every day I see the impact that excessive drinking has on the wellbeing of the nation. But there is a deeper  
613 cultural issue here that needs to be addressed. If we can find a way to change our attitude towards drinking,  
614 we can prevent the health impacts before they happen. That is why this campaign is so important.”

615

616 David Smith, Director of Diageo Ireland and campaign board member said:

617 “This is a campaign that we at Diageo really believe in. We have always sought to work in partnership with  
618 others on the issue of alcohol misuse. Real cultural change can only happen with collaboration.”

619

620 Una Foden, musician and coach on The Voice of Ireland, said:

621 “With a young family, I have a keen eye for what the future holds for my children. It would be great to make a  
622 positive difference to Ireland’s future health by getting a grip on our drinking culture today. This campaign  
623 presents us with that chance. Join the campaign and let’s take it together.”

624

625 ENDS

626 About the campaign to Stop Out -of-Control Dr inking:

627 For more information contact Conor Dempsey, M: 086-247 9892, E: [media@rolemodels.ie](mailto:media@rolemodels.ie)

628 Notes to Editors:

629

630 More information on the campaign and the action plan can be found at [www.rolemodels.ie](http://www.rolemodels.ie)

631

632 Full membership of the campaign group includes: Gavin Duffy (Entrepreneur & TV Presenter), Joanna Fortune  
633 (Clinical Psychotherapist), Paul Gilligan (CEO of St Patrick’s Mental Health Services), Dr Ciara Kelly (GP & Health  
634 Commentator), David Smith (Diageo), Aine Lynch (National Parents Council), Professor Briain MacCraith  
635 (President, DCU), Kieran Mulvey (Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Commission), Simon Keogh (IRUPA),  
636 Gemma Doorly (Actress, Playwright), Anne Connolly (Director of the Irish Smart Ageing Exchange), Rob  
637 Hartnett (Sport for Business) and Krystian Fikert (Psychologist and Founder of MyMind).

638

639 The action plan includes a three-stage research project led by Professor Kevin Rafter, Dublin City University.  
640 The campaign will hold eight workshops/public meetings in Cork, Dublin, Galway and Limerick during March.  
641 More information and dates available on request or via the website.

642 The campaign will include an online, broadcast and outdoor awareness raising campaign – visuals

643

644 Eoghan McDermott, radio DJ and presenter of The Voice of Ireland, said:



645 “We have a strange attitude towards drinking. We think it is normal to lose control of ourselves. Even stranger,  
646 we tolerate people who lose control of themselves when drinking, no matter what the consequences. We  
647 don’t need to change altogether but we do need to cop on. This campaign might help us do that.”  
648

649 Ardal O’Hanlon, actor and comedian, said:

650 “When I’m abroad, I hate the way people immediately identify the Irish with drink, and out-of-control drinking  
651 at that. It’s tedious and embarrassing and far from the full picture. (We’re quite good at tunneling and poetry  
652 as well!) One way we could improve our image would be to curb our excesses and this campaign might well be  
653 a step in the right direction.”  
654

655 Kian Egan, musician and coach on The Voice of Ireland, said:

656 “I have been lucky enough to have travelled the world in my career and I can see that we are out of line in our  
657 approach to drinking. I would prefer my children to feel less pressure and more in control about drinking  
658 alcohol, so I am getting involved for them as well as for myself.”

659 Other supporters include: Dr Eamonn Brazil and Shane Byrne among others.

660 -----

661 **Project document code: D11**

662 **The Campaign to Stop Out-of-Control**

663 **Drinking Action Plan: Call for Evidence**

664 **Launched: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

665 **Contact: [actionplan@rolemodels.ie](mailto:actionplan@rolemodels.ie)**

666

667 **1. Introduction**

668 While consumption of alcohol continues to decrease in Ireland, consequences arising from alcohol misuse  
669 remain a significant concern. The campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking was launched on February 12th  
670 2015 to bring together a wide range of people, opinions and expertise from across Ireland to reduce the  
671 prevalence of excessive drinking behaviour and change Ireland’s relationship with alcohol for the better.

672 Over 5 months, the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking will work with the Irish community to develop  
673 and deliver a five-year, community-wide action plan that can begin to reduce excessive behaviour. Once  
674 finalised, the plan will be presented to the government and community stakeholders for adoption and  
675 implementation over the coming five years.

676 The call for evidence invites everyone with an interest in changing the culture of alcohol consumption in  
677 Ireland to share their views, knowledge, evidence and expertise.

678 We are interested in hearing about specific strategies, programmes and methods of delivery that have been  
679 effective in changing behaviour related to alcohol consumption, including preventative tactics and  
680 programmes that may also be applied to broader sections of society. We are also interested to hear about  
681 evidence-informed but currently untested methods for change: your recommendations on how best to a)  
682 engage people who view excessive alcohol consumption as ‘the norm’ to think about their personal drinking  
683 choices b) how to engage people to consider the impact their drinking behaviour has on others, and c)  
684 suggestions on how to ensure consistency across Ireland in the delivery of education based and awareness  
685 raising initiatives.

686 The intention of this action plan is not to replicate the work of other organisations in this field, but to collate  
687 the breadth of information and experiences drawn from the Irish population and deliver a strategy that builds  
688 upon previous conversations; notably, there has been no cross-sector, community-wide strategy that offers a  
689 sustainable, long-term and comprehensive solution that addresses the social and cultural challenges faced in  
690 Ireland. Therefore, the plan will draw from a range of primary and secondary research, international best  
691 practice and untapped domestic evidence, then collate and present this to deliver a comprehensive, cross-

692 sector and multi-track strategy targeting the causes and motivations of excessive drinking across society as a  
693 whole. Most importantly, we are seeking input from the wider Irish population –people with professional  
694 expertise, but also anyone with personal experience of the drinking culture, in order to shape a policy that will  
695 work for all the people of Ireland.

696

## 697 **2. The Action Plan**

### 698 **2.1 Overview**

#### 699 **The purpose of the action plan is to:**

700 Provide a comprehensive, cross-sector, population-wide and long-term approach to changing behaviour  
701 related to heavy episodic alcohol consumption, starting with an initial five-year period.

702

703  Identify and recommend evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies to reduce the prevalence of  
704 excessive and heavy episodic drinking behaviour and to engage broad and often overlooked, sections of  
705 society.

706 Identify and recommend strategies and programs that may be adopted, developed and/or *extended* by  
707 governments or community organisations.

708 Develop an effective community led, policy response that focuses on influencing the social and cultural  
709 motivations behind alcohol misuse.

710

#### 711 **As part of the evidence gathering stage the campaign to Stop Out-of-Control Drinking group will:**

712 Undertake an extensive research phase and literature review.

713 Collate and analyse formal submissions received.

714 Collate, analyse and weight informal submissions received.

715 Undertake a consultative workshop phase with workshops in Dublin,

716 Galway, Limerick and Cork consisting of a) a professional workshop b) a public workshop to collect feedback  
717 and evidence, and generate ideas.

718 Refine the report by conducting a secondary submission stage through public responses to four specific  
719 questions to be defined at a later date.

720

#### 721 **What we are looking for in the submissions:**

722 Evidence and case studies of successful strategies and programmes that have reduced or prevented excessive  
723 alcohol consumption.

724 Evidence-based and evidence-informed recommendations for behavioural, social and cultural change including  
725 methods to engage individuals across all age groups who:

726 o drink heavily on single-occasions

727 o consider excessive consumption of alcohol ‘normal’ drinking behaviour

728

729 Integrated strategies that work across a number of mediums

730 Education, prevention and awareness raising strategies and recommendations including efficacy building  
731 programmes and population-wide advertising campaigns, workshops and programmes.

732 Strategies from other sectors/ fields that can be applied to changing social and cultural behaviour related to  
733 alcohol.

734 Strategies to enable consistency of delivery and sustainability of programs to ensure long-term success as well  
735 as short-term.

736 We encourage you to think beyond current parameters and limitations when providing recommendations for  
737 future strategies.

738

### 739 **2.3 How to respond**

740 Please send your formal submissions electronically to [actionplan@rolemodels.ie](mailto:actionplan@rolemodels.ie). Please do not feel that you  
741 need to complete all the questions; responses to any of the questions or submissions that address some of the  
742 questions outlined below are also encouraged.

743 For any queries please email [actionplan@rolemodels.ie](mailto:actionplan@rolemodels.ie). We will respond to your query as soon as possible.

744

### 745 **3. Each submission should include**

746 Name of organisation, contact person and title.

747 Details about your organisation, it's function and experience dealing with behaviour change, alcohol policy,  
748 and/or delivering interventions or programmes that influence individual decisions or cultural change.

749 What is your interest in contributing to the action plan?

750 Information on current/ past programmes, campaigns, services and research, outlining, where possible:

751 o The purpose, key aims, target groups and KPIs.

752 o Length of programme.

753 o Results and key lessons.

754 o Any challenges in impacting attitudes/ behaviours.

755 o Recommendations as to whether, why and how the programme could be rolled out:

756 o To a different target group

757 o Wider audience

758 o In Ireland, regionally or nationally.

759 o Please provide any evidence, evaluations, key statistics or case studies you think would be relevant.

760 o Where possible, please provide an online link to any programme referred to. Please give the title of any  
761 reports or studies undertaken on this specific programme.

762

### 763 **4. Questions, evidence and recommendations**

#### 764 **4.1 Motivations and influences**

765 In your professional experience:

766 o What are the motivations for heavy episodic drinking in the people that you work with (please specify age  
767 groups, nature of interactions etc.)?

- 768 o What are the influences that impact these individuals' decisions to a) drink moderately, heavily or choose
- 769 not to drink and b) their attitudes and perceptions of drinking and/or excessive drinking?
- 770 o Why?
- 771 Aside from those mentioned in section 3, what programmes, strategies, services etc. are you aware of
- 772 (including international programmes) that have had a positive impact on behaviour change regarding alcohol
- 773 consumption or another behaviour (if another behaviour, how could it be applied to alcohol consumption?)
- 774 o What are the key components, design elements, limitations, lessons and recommendations arising out of
- 775 these programmes and studies?
- 776 o Please identify, if/ where/ how they could be applied to other target groups, applied population-wide, or
- 777 rolled out regionally and/or nationally.
- 778 What specific tools, programmes, campaigns, or services would you recommend to create a population-wide
- 779 change in attitudes and behaviours around excessive drinking and anti-social behaviour.
- 780 Please outline your recommendations, explain why and what impact they would have and provide any
- 781 relevant evidence.

782

783 **4.2 Role of individuals, organisations and the government**

- 784 How can organisations support individuals to make positive decisions regarding alcohol use?
- 785 What local provisions, programmes, campaigns, services, activities could engage people, including adults, and
- 786 those who do not currently use government services to think about or change their drinking behaviour?
- 787 What measures could change the culture around drinking in the wider adult community?
- 788 How could people be engaged to think about their drinking behaviour who:
- 789 o do not recognise the government drinking guidelines as realistic
- 790 o do not view their drinking as a problem?
- 791 Do you think that the government has a role to play in changing the culture of drinking?
- 792 o What are the most effective roles for government to play?
- 793 o What policies are currently operating that are effective?
- 794 o What more could the government provide?
- 795 o Where are community, charity and private sector organisations better able to provide services or create
- 796 change, with the right support?
- 797 o What are the responsibilities of the private sector and the drinks industry in influencing behavior change?
- 798 o Are there any other individuals/organisations that should play role in changing culture?

799

800 **4.3 Partnerships and local solutions**

- 801 Where are there gaps in community, organisational, local authority provision to support organisations and
- 802 individuals to change attitudes, to raise awareness, to adopt safe and responsible drinking behaviour, to
- 803 reduce alcohol harms, to provide alternatives to drinking and effectively deliver education and preventative
- 804 measures?
- 805 How can different sectors work more effectively together to develop local and national approaches to
- 806 supporting change?

807 What would assist organisations and individuals in delivering multitrack services, extending services to offer to  
808 the wider community, or to link up to the work of other organisations to create a more comprehensive  
809 approach to changing drinking culture in the community?

810

#### 811 **4.4 Social and cultural influences**

812 How could attitude and perceptions that encourage the perception of excessive drinking as 'normal' be  
813 changed? What methods, programmes or outreach would enable this?

814 Who are the biggest influencers on individual drinking choices and behaviours?

815 o How could initiatives/ organisations/ campaigns etc. ensure that influencers are supporting positive rather  
816 than negative behaviour and individual decision-making?

817 o What campaigns, programmes, strategies, initiatives would enable this?

818 o What programmes are already running and what evidence of effectiveness exists?

819 What are the responsibilities of parents and peers and how can they be encouraged to think about the  
820 consequences and impacts of their behaviour?

821 How can schools/university-based education programmes that are offered to young people and to adults to  
822 prevent negative drinking behaviours be improved?

823 Consider:

824 o What approaches have been taken?

825 o Where have they been successful, where have they been less effective? Why?

826 o How to ensure consistency across schools, counties etc.

827 o How to ensure long-term impact on behaviour, once access to the education ends.

828 Is there a correct age at which parents and/ or educators should start involving young people in a discussion  
829 around alcohol?

830

#### 831 **4.5 Identifying evidence gaps and developing sustainable solutions**

832 What do you see as the gaps in evidence around alcohol consumption, behavioural change and effective  
833 alcohol policies? How could these gaps be addressed?

834 Alternatively, what information or evidence would you like to see? What research do you think would be  
835 helpful to progress alcohol policy?

836 How can governments/ organisations ensure that appropriate data is developed and collected at regular  
837 intervals?

838 What are the key measurements and processes needed to accurately measure:

839 o a) alcohol related harm

840 o b) frequency of drinking and binge- drinking

841 o c) attitudes and perceptions towards alcohol

842 o d) changes and trends in consumption.

843 How could policies and strategies that ensure positive cultural and social norms around safe drinking  
844 behaviours be developed and maintained, irrespective of changes in government/ government policy?

845

846 **5. Any other information or supporting evidence**

847 Through this call for evidence, the campaign seeks to collect evidence from a wide range of sources that can  
848 help in the development of a strategy that addresses the core motivations and influences behind excessive  
849 alcohol consumption. Please provide any additional research or information that you feel should be  
850 considered. All input is welcome.

851

852 **6. Publication of submissions**

853 Most submissions will be used to inform the report, rather than the content being published. However, where  
854 case studies or data are of relevance, the information submitted to us for the purpose of the report may be  
855 used in part or in full in the final report. Unless otherwise clearly stated when making the submission, you  
856 legally agree to have your information published.

857 If you wish for the information to remain confidential, or attributed anonymously please make this known at  
858 the time of the submission.

859 The final report will be published on the campaign to Stop Out-Of-Control Drinking website.

860

861

862 **Project document code: D12**

863 **Aine Lynch from SOOCD website**

864 <http://www.rolemodels.ie/calls-for-change-to-culture-of-out-of-control-drinking/>

865 Chief Executive of the National Parents Council, Áine Lynch, has called for a coordinated approach to changing  
866 the culture of drinking in Ireland. Speaking at the launch of the campaign to Stop Out-Of-Control Drinking, Ms  
867 Lynch called parents across the country to give their views on how to they can better support alcohol  
868 education at home.

869 “The current attitude in Ireland towards out-of-control drinking is not healthy and it is time it is challenged. We  
870 know from decades of research that parents’ involvement in their child’s education plays a crucial role in  
871 successful outcomes for children at school. So if excessive drinking is an issue for one or both parents in a  
872 family, it can significantly impact on their ability to engage with their children’s education, having the potential  
873 to have a lasting impact on their child’s life.” Ms Lynch said.

874 “This is why a campaign like this is so important. We must all do more to challenge our attitudes towards  
875 alcohol and how that impacts on those around us. We must also have a joined up approach. Education at  
876 home must be complemented elsewhere and each sector of society; government, education, industry, parents  
877 and local communities must look at their role and how they can play their part.”

878 Aine Lynch (Board Member):

879 We must all do more to challenge our attitudes towards alcohol and how that impacts on those around us  
880 Áine Lynch: <http://twtrland.com/profile/Irishrolemodels>

881

882 **Project document code: B1**

883 **“Challenging the norm” by Megan Tissington**

884 **Source: Blog on SOOCD website (no longer available online)**

885 **Date: Undated**

886 **Reference number in main paper: 70**

887 As a student in Ireland who doesn't drink, I get an awful lot of "ah go on, have a lush" from my drinking  
888 friends, but it doesn't really phase me. I have my reasons for not drinking – two years ago my mother passed  
889 away as a direct result of being an alcoholic, but that isn't even my main reason; the best reason I could give  
890 for not drinking is that it simply doesn't suit me. So about a year ago I made a conscious decision to give up the  
891 drink and I feel that I'm much better off for it. That's not to say that I don't have a drink the odd time, but only  
892 when I feel like it, not when others pressure me to drink, and I would never get absolutely blinded anymore, I  
893 just don't see the point.

894 I think the main problem is that drinking as an activity is far too acceptable in this country, and that's very clear  
895 in the attitude towards the non-drinkers like myself. If you're a non-drinker then you're considered not normal  
896 or weird. I have friends who, like me, know that drink doesn't really work for them but they continue to  
897 participate because that's the socially accepted thing to do. This is the attitude that we need to change, people  
898 need to start realising the influence that social pressure has on their decision to drink and begin to make  
899 decisions based not on 'what the lads are doing', but on what they themselves truly feel is right.

900 I don't think people truly realise the influence that their peers have on their own decisions, on the surface they  
901 probably feel like the choices they make are fully their own but I'm almost certain that if they had to drink on  
902 by themselves because nobody else was doing it, the experience would suddenly become somewhat less  
903 enjoyable. It's a difficult thing to change this mind-set, particularly when it's almost a national phenomenon,  
904 only through educating our youth can we really bring about any form of change. At the moment there is little  
905 or no form of education about alcohol and its dangers in our schools, and it's not something that the majority  
906 of parents are willing to discuss with their children, even teenagers. Educating our youth at an early age will  
907 not only lead to them having an awareness of the dangers of alcohol but allow them to make an informed  
908 decision about their own drinking habits if and when they decide to partake.

909 I'm not an advocate for cutting out drinking all together, it can after all be quite an enjoyable social  
910 experience, but I do believe that we need more education so that people can enjoy alcohol in moderation. This  
911 needs to be done through multiple platforms to reach people of all ages, but most importantly, it needs to be  
912 done over a larger period of time than typical campaigns in order to make sure the message reaches  
913 everybody.

914 This is an issue very close to my heart and it's high time we got the whole country thinking and acting on the  
915 influence alcohol is having on our nation.

916 – Megan Tissington