

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO REFILL IRELAND



change **X**

WELCOME

“Welcome to the ChangeX Refill Ireland guide! We’re delighted you’re thinking about addressing the issue of plastic waste in your community.

Here you’ll find all the information and practical tips you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so don’t be afraid to get in touch!”

Barry & Katie, Refill Ireland



Introduction to the Idea

What is it all about?

Refill Ireland is a campaign to reduce plastic bottle waste by encouraging people to bring their own water bottles and refill on the go instead of buying bottled water. By finding and mapping public water fountains and also encouraging as many businesses as possible to sign up to the Refill campaign - to offer quibble-free tap water refills - they are building a movement to address the growing problem of single-use plastic.

What’s involved?

You can become a Refill Champion in your town or village by encouraging businesses to join the Refill campaign to offer free refills while also building awareness of the problems of single-use plastic and encouraging people in your community to avail of the free refills. Refill Ireland provides you with stickers that businesses can proudly share on their window to show they are participating. People can also find their nearest refill point on the national ‘Tap Map’ which shows all public water fountains and participating businesses.

Why is this important?

Plastic bottles are the most common form of litter on Irish coastlines. Last year, approximately 2.5 million plastic bottles were disposed of every single day, and less than 40% of these made it into the recycling system. Plastic bottles are a massive part of the pollution in our streets, countrysides, waterways and beaches.

The Background

The project was founded by Barry O’Connor in Dublin in 2017, out of frustration and despair at the numbers of plastic bottles ending up in our countrysides, on our streets, and in our rivers and oceans. He started approaching businesses to see if they would offer free tap water refills to members of the public, in lieu of accessible public water dispensers. Any business which signs up receives an info pack and a window sticker, to let people know they are part of the project. The Refill Ireland Tap Map has over 250 locations listed online and the number is growing everyday.

STARTING A REFILL IRELAND CAMPAIGN

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

TIME



A couple of hours a week is all you'll need to get started.

PEOPLE



You'll need a team of 3-5 people to help you talk to as many businesses as possible.

FUNDING



Good news! You don't need any funding to do this in your local community.

Who typically does this?

Someone who:

- Is passionate about resolving the massive issue of plastic waste.
- Wants to take a simple but tangible step to contribute to the problem.
- Sometimes undertaken by existing community groups e.g. Tidy Towns groups

5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete your 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge
- 2 Make a Personal Commitment & Share
- 3 Map Out & Talk to Local Businesses
- 4 Update the Tap Map
- 5 Continue to Build Awareness Locally

Support and Additional Resources

Contact Information for Refill Ireland. Email: info@refill.ie

Support from ChangeX. Call us on (086) 468 5361. Email: hello@changex.org

STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month.

Understand the challenge

Watch the short welcome video on your ChangeX page and read this page.

Learn more about the idea you're starting

This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.

Find 3-5 interested people

You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use it to share the project with others and recruit your first supporters.

Set up a casual kick-off meeting

Host a meeting at your home, in a pub or in a café and come up with an action plan along with your team. You can use your ChangeX page to set up an event and invite people.

Give us a heads up that you're up and running

At your event, take a team picture and agree the first step you'll take as a group to get started.

STEP 2: MAKE A PERSONAL COMMITMENT AND SHARE IT!

When starting any community project, the first step always starts with you! Will you commit to not buying plastic water bottles anymore? Maybe you've already done this and now you want to spread the word to everyone? Not only are you helping the environment and reducing the amount of single use plastic that ends up on our beaches but you also save yourself quite a lot of money so it really is a win win!

There are lots of options when it comes to sourcing more environmentally friendly ways to drink water, if you need a long-lasting plastic free bottle check out the Refill Ireland website (www.refill.ie) where you can buy a bottle and they're all sold at cost price!

Don't be afraid to share your commitment with family and friends, let them know why you've decided to stop buying plastic water bottles and let them know of all the benefits, both environmental and the difference it can make to your pocket! Spread the word on social media and inspire others to join you in moving towards plastic free communities.

TIPS



Once you start carrying a water bottle, you'll never need to buy plastic ones again and you'll be amazed at the money you can save :)



TALK



Don't be afraid to tell people why you've made the decision to no longer buy plastic water bottles - remember enthusiasm is contagious!

STEP 3: MAP OUT AND TALK TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

Make a plan to speak to as many local businesses as possible. You might want to start with the ones you know will be an easy sell, the ones you know well or go to all the time. It doesn't have to be just cafés and restaurants, although they are probably the natural place to start!

In Tramore, the first town in Ireland to become a Refill town, Ann went to the dry cleaner, the library, the barber, the pharmacy. They recognised that everyone who has a water tap can become a Refiller and part of the local movement that reduces single-use plastic.

Depending on the size of your town or village, you might want to split the businesses between different members of your team or get started on one street / in one area of the town. It's always good to set yourself a goal, so maybe start with getting the first ten businesses on board and go from there. Once you begin to build momentum, it'll keep getting easier as businesses will really want to be involved when they see that all the other local businesses are already involved.

Once you have a plan and you've set a goal, it's time to start having conversations with local business owners.

For Ann in Tramore, this wasn't a hard pitch at all. For most businesses, they were happy to be part of a positive local initiative and proud to show the sticker in their window and let their customers know that they care about the environment and were willing to take this simple step to help address the growing problem of single-use plastic.

ANN'S EXPERIENCE

“When talking to local businesses, I have to say most people had a great attitude and interest in the environment and they are ready for change. The damage plastic is causing to our seas, wildlife and environment is on the news and in the papers most days so people are very aware of what's happening and they want to do their bit. The response overall was really positive.”



STEP 3: MAP OUT AND TALK TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

In terms of the concerns that businesses might have, obviously cost is always the big one. The cost of water varies slightly across the country, but in Dublin (which would be a little higher than a lot of other places in Ireland), the cost is €1.16 per 1,000 litres of water meaning that the cost to a business of providing refills would be really really low. By having a Refill sticker in their window, it's also very likely that more people will come into their business and buy other things while getting their bottle refilled so it's a win win!

Another concern that businesses might have is that they will be inundated with people queuing up to get their water bottles filled. Depending on the population and the number of businesses, this is pretty unlikely and something that can be tackled if it arises.

Here's Ann's take on it:

“The math for a community is simple here. The more businesses sign up, the more the service of refilling bottles will be shared and hopefully, no one needs to worry about queues of people waiting to fill their water bottles. In any case, this would be a dream scenario in some ways, demonstrating that people are changing their behaviours on a big scale, and would put pressure on local authorities to provide more public refill taps!”

The final thing raised by businesses was their concern about the water quality running through their old pipes - was it safe and of high enough quality to give out to people. In general, the water quality of Irish tap water is one of the best in the world but if a business has any concerns they can check out the really helpful tool from Irish Water on www.water.ie/water-supply/water-quality that allows you to check the exact quality of the drinking water in your area and confirm that it's safe for consumption.



TIPS



Remember, it's all about momentum. Once you have a few businesses signed up, many others will jump straight on board.

STEP 4: UPDATE THE TAP MAP

Once you have businesses on board and you've given them their sticker to display on their window, it's important to make sure they appear on the **National Tap Map** so that people know they are participating and they can call in to get their bottle refilled.

To add a business to the map, just send the name and address of the business to info@refill.ie and the Refill Ireland team will add it to the ever-expanding national map. There are currently over 125 business on the map and the goal is to get to 500 this year!



STEP 5: CONTINUE TO BUILD AWARENESS LOCALLY

When you have businesses on board and they are displaying their stickers, it's important to continue to build awareness locally so that people avail of the free refills. You can do this in a number of ways. Social media is a really effective way of spreading the word. Ann in Tramore takes a photo of every business with their sticker once they sign up. They then share this on social media too so that all their customers and followers know that they're part of the Refill movement. Refill Ireland will also give every new business that signs up a shout out on social media and of course they'll be featured on the national map.

Continuing to build awareness around the importance of cutting down on plastic waste is also important so that people understand that every time they get their bottle refilled instead of buying a plastic one they are making a difference. There is a lot in the media, both in Ireland and internationally, about this issue and plastic water bottles are a big culprit in the pollution of our beaches and waterways. Share the stories and the facts to remind people why this is such an important issue and how their actions every day can have a meaningful impact.



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