



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SCOTTISH BEER AND PUB ASSOCIATION (SBPA) RESPOND TO SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE'S "£1.1 BILLION COST OF ALCOHOL MISUSE" RESEARCH

The Scottish Beer and Pub Association (SBPA) has responded to the publication last week (20th January 2005) of a report by the Scottish Executive which suggested that the costs of alcohol misuse in Scotland had risen to £1.1 billion.

Said Patrick Browne, Chief Executive of the Scottish Beer and Pub Association: "Its all very well seeking to quantify the costs of alcohol misuse, but the same attention should be given to quantifying the benefits of responsible consumption. It is established medical fact that moderate alcohol drinking, as practised by the vast majority of the population, has health benefits, preventing many illnesses. A focus only on the costs of alcohol only tells half the story.

"The Scottish Executive's report itself says of its cost estimates that *"those occurring outwith the Health service should be treated with caution. Much of these are based on findings from research papers taken from the 'Alcohol Misuse in Scotland Trends and Costs' report, rather than any robust statistics."* The NHS costs highlighted in the research paper account for less than 10% of the total costs.

"On that basis, using the Executive's own disclaimer, the other 90% plus of the £1.1 billion costs are not "robust" and should be treated with "caution."

"The new Licensing Bill will give us an opportunity to tackle alcohol misuse, as well as putting in place licensing laws that will better reflect modern day life in Scotland. It would be a pity if the biggest change in Scotland's licensing regime were unfairly influenced by statistics which by the Executive's own admission are subjective at best."

**For further information contact Patrick Browne, SBPA on:
0131 225 4681 (Tel); 0791 509 3052 (Mob); patrick.browne@geoghegans.co.uk**

About SBPA

SBPA is a trade association originally formed in 1906 whose members are made up of brewing and large pub companies representing the licensed trade industry in Scotland. The sector is part of the wider Hospitality industry in Scotland which is the country's largest employer with almost 200,000 people working in the sector. The main aim of the Association is to contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of Scotland through employment, investment and training.