

## ▲ Hotel restaurants need to improve catering for specific dietary requirements – HGEM research

Hotel restaurants need to up their game when it comes to catering for specific dietary requirements with half of consumers seeing it an area of improvement, according to new research. The findings by guest experience management expert HGEM into diners' views on hotel food and beverage also showed almost half (46%) rated the variety of dishes on menus as "good". The survey, which gathered information from both guests and non-residents, demonstrated an openness from both groups to dine in hotel restaurants, with 42% of non-residents dining in hotels at least quarterly and 74% of hotel guests visiting for more than one meal a day during their stay. Meal preferences varied, with 90% of hotel guests most likely to eat breakfast and just 8% likely to stay in the hotel for dinner. For non-residents, however, more than half (54%) said they would be most likely to visit for dinner and only 4% opted for breakfast. Social media and word-of-mouth emerged as the most popular ways to find out about hotel restaurants, yet 87% said more could be done to advertise to non-residents. A total of 31% of non-residents said they would visit a hotel restaurant to celebrate a special occasion, with others citing reasons including menu quality and hotel reputation. However, cost was deemed to be a factor, with 82% of respondents perceiving hotels to be more expensive than other venues. HGEM founding director Sally Whelan said: "Our survey illustrates real opportunities for hoteliers around product, pricing and experience. Don't operate in isolation – know what is on offer in your area and find a way to differentiate, whether through your menu, service or added value to create memorable experiences. Making it easy for potential guests to find out about your restaurant and book a table is also crucial. Hotels are used to managing food intolerances and allergies, so why not create a campaign promoting the initiatives you are using? A number of high street operators are already winning a loyal following through this and, as 50% of our respondents see it is an area for an improvement, it could mean a better experience for half your guests."