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MORNING BRIEFING FOR PUB, RESTAURANT AND FOOD SERVICE OPERATORS

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Disappointing food is number one dining grievance, new survey reveals:

Disappointing food is the number one dining grievance from customers when eating out, a survey from guest experience management experts HospitalityGEM has revealed. This was followed by having to ask for service, and taking too long to bring drinks or food, the report into customers' top ten bugbears showed. The rest of the list was made up of an unclean table from previous occupant, being ignored on arrival, dishes arriving at different times, slowness bringing the bill and taking payment, incorrect order arriving, being ignored at the bar, and slow taking of food order. With the exception of the number one bugbear, all are within the control of the front-of-house team. There were some differing factors that came into account when gender was analysed, with 12% of women being bothered by an unclean table, compared with only 8% of men. Women (11%) were also more likely to dislike being "ignored on arrival" compared with men (8%), and were more troubled by "disappointing food" as their biggest grievance (19%), but only men's second biggest (14%).

Generally, men were far more annoyed by the speed of service. Almost 10% more men than women considered slow service their biggest grievance – 27% picked speed in some capacity, compared with 19% of women. Patience when waiting for the bill increases with age, with the percentage of those citing it their biggest guest grievance steadily dropping from 8% for 18 to 25-year-olds to 0% of those over 66. This is the same when waiting for food, as it bothers 10% of 18 to 25-year-olds but 0% of 66-year-olds. HospitalityGEM managing director Steven Pike said: "Pinpointing the biggest grievances in hospitality has helped us to better identify priorities and provide advice to our clients to optimise the experience of their guests. Each of the top ten can be isolated to a key stage of the guest journey. Having a clear and achievable framework to set standards at each of these stages, and an effective way of measuring performance, will help operators to manage consistency and identify weak points. With disappointing food at the top of the pile, it shows that evaluation

should include the kitchen output. We can help with this by providing dish-specific feedback, with imagery, so operators can easily identify issues with dish specification or consistency.”