



# Executive Summary

## Hanover Catering Survey 2009

Hanover. It's your retirement



## INTRODUCTION

Hanover, is one of the leading providers of Extra Care housing and has considerable experience of providing catering/restaurant facilities within its portfolio of developments across England. Over the last five years, Hanover's Extra Care provision has seen significant growth and we now provide catering services to 50 estates including some which are mixed tenure.

Catering is a key part of the Extra Care model. Not only do residents benefit from receiving a well-balanced and nutritious meal each day with high levels of choice, but they enjoy the opportunity to socialise with their friends and neighbours over lunch.

The majority of the current services are 'Condition of Tenancy' services (COT) and are provided by Avenance Elixior as part of a national contract with Hanover.

Hanover has significant experience in managing catering services nationally. We recognise the importance of constructive, evidence-based feedback on all critical services. In the summer of 2009, Hanover decided to ask its Extra Care residents about what they wanted from a catering service. Twenty focus groups (on 20 different estates) were arranged throughout England, including two of our estates with no current service. Hanover thought carefully about how to engage this largely 'hard-to-reach' group and used a postal survey to supplement the qualitative data we gathered. This resulted in a consultation of 419 extra care residents in total.

## Key Issues

The questions that Hanover sought to address in the research were:

- How important is the restaurant service to Hanover's residents?
- Do residents feel that the existing service offers value for money?
- Is resident engagement on our catering services adequate?
- Residents' views on cheaper, re-heated/microwave meal options as opposed to meals cooked from fresh ingredients.
- How Hanover can improve flexibility and choice for residents to ensure that the key principles of the 'personalisation agenda' are achieved within our catering service.
- Resident demand for Pay As You Go (PAYG) models and the perceived affordability of these; so that Hanover could get a sense of the likely sustainability of this model.

## Key findings

- Residents clearly see the catering service as one that is hugely important to them, not just because of the nutritional benefits of having a healthy meal, but also the social interaction that eating in the restaurant brings.
- Views on value for money were mixed. Where there were high levels of satisfaction amongst residents, generally the view was that the service achieved value for money. Overall, 65% of residents thought that the average daily cost of £6.45 (for a three course meal with tea or coffee) was about right; however 25% thought that it was either expensive or very expensive.
- Generally residents were happy with the level of involvement they had with input into menu choices - however 37% said that they would like to be involved in choosing who their catering provider was. Again, this was closely linked to satisfaction levels – where there were perceived problems with the service, residents wanted more involvement in choosing the provider.
- The evidence is that most residents who receive some form of Housing Benefit would most likely not be able to afford the service on a daily basis if it were offered on a pure PAYG basis. Demand is one of the most crucial aspects of a PAYG service being able to sustain itself.
- There was a near-unanimous view (99%) that the use of fresh ingredients was very important to residents, and 56% considered choice of menu important. On the two estates with kitchens that had re-heating of food facilities, satisfaction with quality and value for money recorded significantly lower scores.

## Next Steps

Looking strategically towards the future, Hanover will continue to investigate ways of offering greater resident involvement in the choices around catering provision and also in developing models which offer residents more flexibility, whilst still maintaining a service which is viable in the long term.

The introduction of estate-based Local Agreements will enable us to engage with residents to determine services locally and provide a mechanism for regular review.

We are piloting a number of catering options on estates and are committed to reviewing services with residents, starting with those estates who have expressed least satisfaction with the current catering service.

The Local Agreement process will give residents more choice in deciding which catering service model they want, which company would provide the service and what they can expect to pay for their service.

### **Further Information**

For a copy of Hanover's full report on catering,  
please contact:

**Sarah Hanson**, Deputy Director – Extra Care and Services:

**[Sarah.hanson@hanover.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.hanson@hanover.org.uk)**

**01274 599686 or 07968 822358**