

For immediate release

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## **Will the healthy lunch ever become King?**

Despite rising obesity and the increasing focus on the importance of a healthy lifestyle, healthy food is still only rated the fourth priority, after taste, good value and convenience according to Sodexo's Lunch at Work Report launched today in conjunction with Allegra Strategies at the Lunch! Exhibition.

Not only is this a concern, but also the report revealed that an increasing number of workers, one in 10, are skipping lunch at least once a week which is having a detrimental impact on companies' productivity as 60% admitted that as a result they are less productive.

The top five main reasons given for skipping lunch are: too busy with work; not hungry, too many personal tasks; to save time and leave early and to save money.

The survey also revealed that the average time spent at lunch is 29 minutes and the average spend is £2.21. Around 50% regularly eat lunch at their desk and the majority of these employees, 87%, prefer a lighter lunch. Despite new initiatives such as calorie labelling, only around a third (33%) look at calorie content when considering healthier options.

The most popular lunch remains the packed lunch with a third of adults bringing their lunch to work three to four times a week. Staff restaurants are the second most popular destination for lunch after supermarkets but 61% of those surveyed do not have access to a staff restaurant, probably as 97% of UK companies have less than 50 employees. .

Good value for money was key for lunch purchasers, with 80% claiming this was very important or important, in their decision making process, yet the survey also revealed that three quarters of employees do not rate meal deals as important when deciding what to eat and drink at lunch. Only a third buy a meal deal regularly.

Claire Morris, Marketing Director at Sodexo, said, "Worker well-being is becoming a greater priority for employers. At Sodexo, we provide information for our staff, clients and customers to help them make more informed decisions about how to live a healthier lifestyle. We were very surprised that the survey revealed that only 18% said they were provided with healthy food in their staff restaurants as we believe this is very important. This survey is important as it helps us understand what is important to employees and to meet those needs. However we believe that it is essential that we provide food that is healthy and sustainable, even if this is not top of their wish list."

Simon Stenning, Foodservice Strategy Director from Allegra, said “we were very pleased to be able to produce this unique and definitive report for Sodexo, providing clear insight into the habits of working adults at lunch. It is no surprise that value is a key driver for workers’ habits which is fuelling the increase in packed lunches. Workers have greater control over expenditure but also over ingredients when preparing their own lunch. For operators providing lunch at work improving affordability and presenting more detailed nutritional information will help convert committed brown-baggers to regular lunch buyers.”

**ENDS**