

Good Food and a Good Time

Elior improving nutrition, hydration and social engagement for vulnerable residents in care homes

The Project

Elior identified training, equipment and social engagement activities as areas where it could enhance its services to meet the needs of residents and contribute to preventing malnutrition and dehydration.

Training

The Elior Training Academy designed modules to improve the understanding of older people's needs. Experience-based training encouraged our catering staff to empathise with older people and to experience what it actually felt like to be old. Staff are trained to deliver person-centred care rather than just good food. Training is provided both in-house and externally, including supplier advice on textured/modified meals. Training is delivered via Elior's Chefs' Forum, Training Academy and third parties including Age UK and Nutmeg Nutrition.

Equipment

New equipment needed was identified, such as:

- Foodbox (pictured) for residents with dementia who do not adhere to traditional meal times or patterns. A foodbox is a lunchbox filled with the resident's favorite finger foods to allow a grazing or snacking diet 24 hours a day
- Smoothie makers
- Aroma makers which produce pleasant aromas such as baking bread are switched on before mealtimes to stimulate appetite
- Juice dispensers with vitamin-fortified cordials in a number of flavours to provide readily available drinks



- Dignity cutlery

Social Engagement

A new initiative with NAPA (National Association of Providers of Activities) has been set up to reduce resident isolation and loneliness by using mealtimes to improve engagement.

Rather than staying in their bedrooms, residents walk to the dining room, have more of an appetite in a setting conducive to eating, and have the opportunity to socialise with other residents.

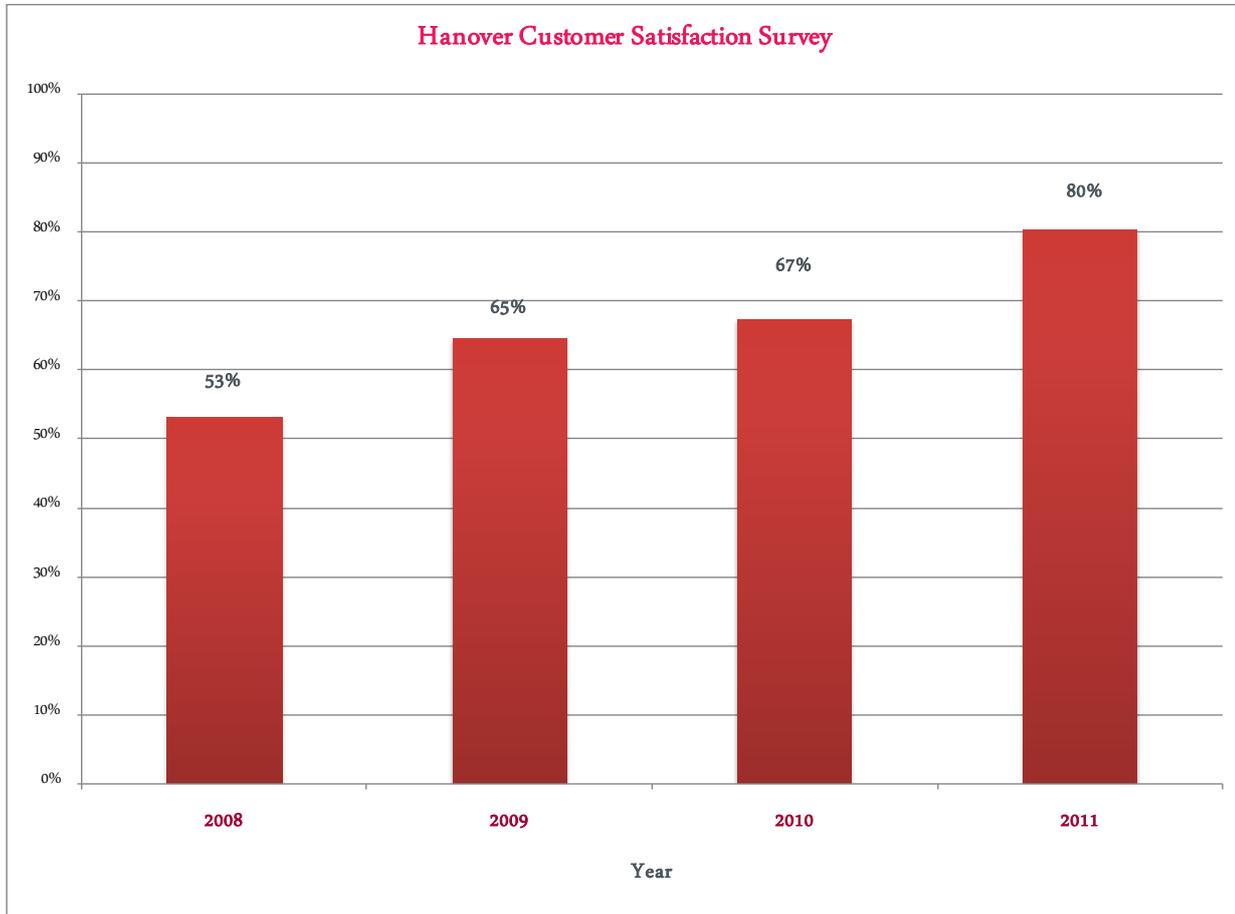
An associated programme of food related activities, Pastimes, has been set up to encourage socialising. The programme includes cake and soup making competitions, herb growing and sunflower growing.

The Benefits

Using resident food profiles and monitoring forms has encouraged more recording of resident weights and further links with the care staff's weighing programmes and MUST food plans. Residents with dementia have been shown to gain weight. In one care home, all 36 residents gained weight, apart from two who have a terminal illness. The improvements in resident weight gain are due to good communication with the kitchen and the care staff. The kitchen now provides varied and nutritious menus and options such as picnic boxes. Residents who constantly wander are able to snack with finger foods throughout the day.

Other benefits include reduction in isolation and falls, less staff interventions, reduced medication, and better staff retention as catering staff enjoy giving good person-centred care.

Relatives' satisfaction is a key area for positive outcomes. Feedback is captured in various ways ranging from comment books to full scale surveys.



For further information please contact:

Robin Comerford, Healthcare Development Director

Tel. 01625 660160 or e-mail: robin.comerford@elior.com

Or visit: <http://www.elior.co.uk/>