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More than half of restaurant guests believe that the booking cancellation process needs to be made easier, according to a new survey by HGEM, with 56% expecting an option to cancel in any correspondence.

The findings come during a turbulent time of restaurant no-shows.



More than a quarter (27%) would like the option to cancel over text message and 17% through a restaurant app.

A reservation reminder 24 hours in advance would help 61% of guests, with 62% preferring the reminder via text compared to 35% who would prefer email.

When it comes to putting down a deposit, 58% said they would never book a restaurant that required one, with 45% disliking the responsibility of collecting money off members of the party, 33% not wanting to lose their money if they couldn't make the booking and 12% admitting it made them feel like they were spending more.

For those who would pay a deposit for a booking, 47% said they would expect to if it was a large group and 28% would to secure a table for a special occasion.

While customers may not be in favour of deposits, they seem to have the desired effect, with 69% saying they would be more likely to turn up if they had paid in advance.

"Restaurant no-shows is a topic that has been particularly prevalent in our industry in recent months," comments HGEM founding director Sally Whelan. "Our research has revealed that, while diners are more likely to turn up for their tables if they receive direct communication in advance, there is a clear opportunity for operators to offer a smoother cancellation process across a variety of methods. Incorporating these learnings will no doubt have a positive impact on restaurant bookings."