

Posti launches Befriending service to support outdoor activities among the elderly

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Sometimes, an elderly person can spend days indoors, because going out unescorted feels difficult or unsafe. Posti will launch its new Befriending service in January 2017. Orders for the new service can be placed starting November 25, 2016.

Customer sets the pace

Posti's befriender visits the customer at the agreed time, either once or twice per week. The duration of each visit is one hour or 30 minutes. The customer sets the terms of the outdoor activities, along with the route and pace. Posti will select the employees for the role of befriender and provide them with training, which was planned together with specialists. During the first visit, the customer gets to know their own, dedicated befriender, and the first visit also includes an analysis of the customer's needs and wishes for the service.

- - Our aim is to make the everyday lives of our elderly customers more active and social. Befrienders help customers to maintain their physical capability. Posti has a nation-wide network and extensive experience in delivering meals and providing confidential support to elderly customers. This expertise is a natural foundation for daily home services, says **Petri Kokkonen**, Head of Posti's Home Services.

Juha Torvinen thinks the new home services are important for Posti's personnel.

- - The decrease in the volumes of traditional letters means that work needs to be found elsewhere. It is important to explore other possibilities beyond mail delivery. We already have a lot of competence in different areas at Posti. The new service allows our personnel to use their skills and knowledge in varied ways and to learn new skills. I have interviewed employees who perform various care duties and work in home services, and the majority of these employees are satisfied with their new tasks, Torvinen says.

Population ageing creates new service needs

According to Statistics Finland, the number of persons aged 65 or over will exceed one million by 2020. **Jaakko Valvanne**, Professor of Geriatrics, says that senior citizens should, in general, be physically more active.

- - We are born to move, not to sit down or lie down. Often, senior citizens need some help going out and about, and this new service by Posti allows them to be physically more active. The Finnish population is ageing at a rapid pace, and supporting independence among senior citizens is more important than ever. We must renew our services and procedures if we want to achieve better health, Valvanne says.

According to Jaakko Valvanne, elderly people need more physical activity, but also someone to keep them company.

- - Loneliness is a frequent worry among the elderly. Meeting the befriender adds a social element to the day and feels uplifting. If the weather is bad or the customer is not feeling well, they can stay indoors, have a conversation, play board games, whatever the customer wishes. These kinds of social encounters are equally important for well-being, Valvanne points out.

Prices of the Befriending service

The Befriending service is intended for the

elderly and other customers with reduced physical capability. The service helps customers maintain their overall capability and makes their everyday lives more active. The service does not include rehabilitation or the treatment of physical complaints.

Orders for the Befriending service can already be placed at Posti's online shop and Posti shops. The first visits will take place on Tuesday January 10, 2017. More information on the service: www.posti.fi/ulkoilukaveri

Source: [Posti](#)