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CITIES



Besiktas wellbeing service

Supporting older residents

The population of over 75s in Besiktas is more than double the national average. The wellbeing initiative offers a range of services at the touch of a button, so vulnerable residents can live more independently and comfortably.

With 13.24% of its population aged 65-79, in demographic terms Besiktas is more closely aligned to EU member states such as Germany, where the proportion is 15.3%, than the Turkish average of 6%. When it comes to over 75s, the share in Besiktas is 6.31%, more than double the national average of 2.9% (2011 figures). The historic and pleasant neighbourhoods attract families that stay for generations, and higher incomes and easy access to social and health services are attractive for older people.

Identifying the most-needed services

Besiktas launched the 'wellbeing service' in January 2013 on the basis of a survey carried out among older residents. Respondents identified 'cleaning and hygiene services at home' and 'personal care and hairdressing services at home' as some of their primary needs. The research also showed that 28.8% of older residents are either partially or completely unable to perform their daily activities and meet their personal care needs independently, and that on average older Besiktas residents spent only 55 minutes outside their homes each day.

It was time to do something to prevent the isolation of older people and improve their quality of life.

The wellbeing service is divided into four categories. The first, 'services at home' covers everything from hairdressing and nailcare to monthly cleaning and hygiene services, moving furniture and carrying out basic home repairs. It can also involve ensuring that homes are adapted to older residents' needs.



I can reach anyone and be reached at anytime, anywhere.

Besiktas resident



cities in action

July 2015

where: Besiktas, Turkey
what: social affairs
when: 2013+



Providing services at home is of course essential, but ensuring older people have the opportunity to socialise outside the home is also extremely important. The Leisure House offers a space for over 65s to get together for indoor and outdoor activities, such as concerts, seminars, tours and hobbies including gardening and woodwork. The centre also provides psychological services, group therapy and dietician services. At present, there are around 40 people using this facility.

Of the 11,911 people over 75 living in the Besiktas municipality, research shows that nearly 40% are partially or completely dependent on another person's help to cook, even for basic survival. The Friendly Hands Catering Service provides meals to those most in need.

Help at the touch of a button

The social alarm is the final pillar of the wellbeing service, bringing many of the services together. It is a device that can be installed in residents' homes, comprising three buttons: red, yellow and green. The red button connects residents to a call centre in an emergency; operators can then order an ambulance and inform relatives.

Using the yellow button, users can connect to the services above, such as catering, hairdressing, a locksmith and cleaning services. They can also use it to access counselling or nursing, as long as it is not an emergency.

Finally, the green button is for contacting relatives without the need to pick up the phone.

Their details are already pre-programmed into the device.

To obtain a device, residents just need to call the call centre. Providing they are eligible – over 75 and/or disadvantaged or disabled individuals – an appointment will be made to set up the device in their home. New users are required to complete forms detailing any health conditions and giving relatives' contact details. The information is programmed into the system and available to call centre operators. Users are assigned a unique digital identity, and a technician visits residents' homes to install the device.

Reaching out to the vulnerable

So far, 655 households have been reached through the initiative since its launch. This translates to 7,000 services provided to citizens over 75.

The initial financing for project materials including the first 500 social alarm units was provided by a private donor. Since then, the project has been financed by the municipality, with a total annual cost expected of around €405,000.



Life is more pleasant with municipality wellbeing service... With the social alarm we are always with you.

Besiktas city administration

