

uberASSIST aids riders with special access needs

In an aim to make getting from A to B less challenging for those individuals with special needs, Uber has launched a new pilot in Cape Town called uberASSIST.



This new option caters specifically for senior riders and riders with access needs. uberASSIST aims to offer a safe and reliable option for these underserved riders that are not as mobile and able to move around their city as others.

“At Uber, we strive to provide convenient options that fit everyone’s needs. uberASSIST is currently piloting in Cape Town for us to gather necessary data, understand how best it can work and understand who the service is adequately able to cater for,” says Alon Lits, general manager for Uber sub-Saharan Africa.

Affordable alternative

Transport for someone with access needs can be expensive, often requiring paid-for help such as caregivers to assist. Uber hopes uberASSIST will be an affordable alternative for those with access challenges.



Uber partnered with DGMT, a private foundation which supports initiatives that aim to bring about dynamic and fundamental impact to the lives of people in South Africa. In order to provide the best service to riders with special needs, the company invited only the top rated driver-partners to be part of the pilot - drivers interested then opted-in. All drivers on the uberASSIST view completed a disability equality course, reviewed and supported by DGMT's Inclusive and Innovative Society portfolio. This course provided the necessary knowledge and safety requirements driver-partners need when assisting people with different accessibility needs.

Renisha Patel, innovation manager at DGMT, adds, "Our hope is that this partnership with Uber, will expand options for riders with special access needs, facilitating greater social inclusion for South Africans."

When requesting a ride, special needs riders can contact the uberASSIST driver-partner ahead of time to inform them of any unique requirements. Like all ride options Uber offers, riders will also be asked to rate every trip, this is an important tool to ensure drivers receive valuable feedback about their involvement in the programme to better the business offering.

Riders will need to be able to navigate a smartphone in order to request a vehicle or have someone close by to help. The vehicles do not have wheelchair accessible ramps, therefore, unfortunately, cannot accommodate motorised wheelchairs at this stage, but it can cater for fold up wheelchairs.

uberASSIST riders are welcome to bring along service animals; the company says it recognises the need for service animals and driver-partners know that these animals serve a very important role.

How to access uberASSIST in Cape Town?

1. Riders will need to open the Uber app
2. Enter in the destination required
3. Swipe left on the app and select uberASSIST
4. Confirm pick-up location and request a ride

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