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ECAS VICTORY TO BENEFIT WHEELCHAIR USERS ACROSS THE UK

Edinburgh-based charity Ecas has claimed a major victory in its battle to gain better treatment for wheelchair users on trains.

Ecas launched its campaign earlier this year by revealing that disabled passengers on First ScotRail services were being forced to share space for their wheelchairs with bicycle racks.

Now chief executive David Griffiths has revealed that the issue has been resolved in favour of wheelchair users on a UK-wide basis following top-level talks with First ScotRail, Transport Scotland and the Department for Transport (DfT).

David, whose stance was supported by the Disability Rights Commission, said: "I am pleased that we have achieved what we set out to do, which was to ensure that wheelchair spaces are provided on First ScotRail services.

"The situation as it stood was completely unacceptable, not only for wheelchair users, but also cyclists, as they could have been thrown off trains when the cycle rack was dismantled to accommodate wheelchairs.

"I must thank First ScotRail's external relations manager John Yellowlees for taking the matter seriously. Both he and Alastair Young, rail standards and safety manager at Transport Scotland, have worked hard in co-operation with us to facilitate the change in policy, which has been rubber-stamped by the Department for Transport.

"The DfT will now implement a policy, to be introduced across Britain, whereby the cycle racks in the wheelchair space are orientated for disabled travel by default in the Class 170 fleet of trains.

"This is a major victory for Ecas and will benefit disabled train passengers not only in Edinburgh and the Lothians, but across all of Scotland and, indeed, the UK."

- **David Griffiths is available for interview**

Issued by Beattie Communications (www.beattiegroupp.com) on behalf of ECAS

**For further information contact:
Chris Gilmour / Joanna Quinn**

01698 787878