



Apologies, it's been a while, as you know we ourselves are parent carers, so facing the same ups and downs as you are all in these weird times!

Saying that we've still been involved in meetings via Zoom and Teams with our partners in TfC, Carers Centre, SENDIASS and Sunderland CCG to name a few, so still full of busy!

We were also invited to speak at the council's Children's Education and Skills Scrutiny committee last month, which was a little scary but I think we touched a few people when we shared the lockdown survey we did

We have a new office, which we haven't been able to fully utilise yet due to the lockdowns and restrictions over the last few months, but fingers crossed, we'll have a virtual opening soon, and start to organise physical events again.



### **Christmas Catch-up**

As we can't currently meet up in person, we are having a virtual catch-up! You don't need any fancy equipment, just a device that connects to the internet, and you don't even have to turn the camera on if you don't want you, although we would love to see all your smiling faces :)

It's also Christmas jumper day, so if you fancy it, come along in your Christmas jumper, hat, ear-rings, any Christmas attire you fancy - I've got a rather nice set of Christmas headbands lined up :D Please note - Christmas attire not obligatory, we'd just love to see you! :)

The virtual catch-up will be via Zoom on December 11th, starting at 10.30 to 11:45, the details you need are Meeting ID: 999 5878 6718 Passcode: 319083

Everyone who joins us that day will be entered into a prize draw, which we will do live during the catch-up using a random generator (or at least I will attempt to do it live!); the winner will receive a £25 Sunderland gift card, which can currently be spent in over 70 shops/restaurants in Sunderland, and 2 runners up will each receive a £10 Sunderland gift card, which have been kindly donated by Sunderland BID.

### **Beach Wheelchairs are coming to Sunderland!**

Those that follow our Facebook page/group will have already seen the announcement that beach wheelchairs are coming to Sunderland, a project the Forum has been involved with for quite some time! (you can read our post [HERE](#) on Facebook)

The Forum formed a partnership/steering group with Headway Wearside, St Peter's Cycle and Sports Hub and Steve Wilkinson a local wheelchair user to advance the project. We contacted the charity Beach Access North East (BANE) who very kindly gave us lots of advice and we met with officials from Sunderland Local authority. We are delighted to say the result of all this work is an award of £24,975 from Sunderland City Council Community Fund via the North Area Committee. Work was due to start this month but may be delayed because of lockdown 2 but the partnership steering group is confident that the service will be up and running early next year. Watch this space!



### **Last but not least**

We are in the process of putting together a little something to send out in the post to you in a couple of weeks, a little thank you for sticking with us, and hopefully something to lift your spirits a little. It will all be put together in a very Covid-secure environment, we'll have on PPE, and we also have a fogging machine in the office so all very safe. We've gone for a letterbox size package to minimise any contact with others for you.

The packages are part funded by the DfE grant, and part funded by a grant which we received from West Sunderland Community, part of Sunderland City Council.