



Press Release

7 January 2021



Official statement from the Founder of #ClapForOurCarers and #ClapForHeroes

It is with the deepest regret that, following the announcement less than 24 hours ago that Clap For Our Carers would return as Clap For Heroes, I feel that I have no choice but to distance myself from this evening's national applause at 8pm.

This has always been something I have truly believed in and I was looking forward to joining the nation in showing my appreciation for and acknowledgement of all the people who have helped keep the country going throughout the pandemic, by applauding tonight on my doorstep - wearing a mask and staying safely socially distanced at all times.

Clap For Our Carers has never been a political platform, it was originally established to allow those who wanted to publicly show their support for the NHS and key workers to do so. This time round we changed the name to Clap For Heroes so as to widen who we were recognising with the applause – to acknowledge every hero who has played their part throughout the pandemic, including but not limited to: home-schoolers, neighbours, scientists, volunteers, all those who wear masks when out, those who have stayed at home and socially distanced, shop workers, those in the Arts and hospitality sectors, everyone who has battled or is still battling Covid-19 (or caring for a loved one who is unwell), and also those sorely missed loved ones and friends who have been tragically lost to the virus.

The idea of bringing back the applause was only to bring some optimism and positivity to the country, not to make a political comment about the state of the nation. It has never been the intention of either myself or Clap For Our Carers/Clap For Heroes to lobby government or suggest that clapping is a substitute for anything else. If people want to make a statement about the world we live in or have a desire to instigate change in our systems, there are ways to do it. Indeed I would be delighted if other people talking about the applause opens up dialogue and debate, and gives them a voice and impetus to discuss and engage in positive conversations and actions around wider, related subjects.

I do acknowledge the frustrations and anger felt by some, however vilifying me personally or attempting to destroy the goodwill and positive intentions of the national applause and the millions of people who want to take a few moments on a Thursday evening to think about and acknowledge their pandemic 'heroes', is simply destructive and counter intuitive.

Since announcing the return of the applause yesterday, I have been targeted with personal abuse and threats against myself and my family by a hateful few on social media channels. Irrespective of their views and reasons for believing this is an acceptable way to behave, I did not set out to make a political statement and will not put my loved ones at risk. I have no political agenda, I am not employed by the government, I do not work in PR, I am just an average mum at home trying to cope with the lockdown situation. As a consequence I have opted to distance myself from tonight's planned applause and will no longer seek to raise further awareness of it.

The applause is not cancelled, I don't have that authority or right and nor do I want to dampen the show of positivity and unity of those who recognise what we stand for and why we created Clap For... in the first place (and opted to bring it back). It absolutely can and should still happen at 8pm tonight if you choose and want to clap for your heroes on an individual and personal basis - it's up to each person to decide how relevant or worthwhile they feel it is to participate.

With thanks,

Annemarie Plas

Founder of Clap For Our Carers and Clap For Heroes