



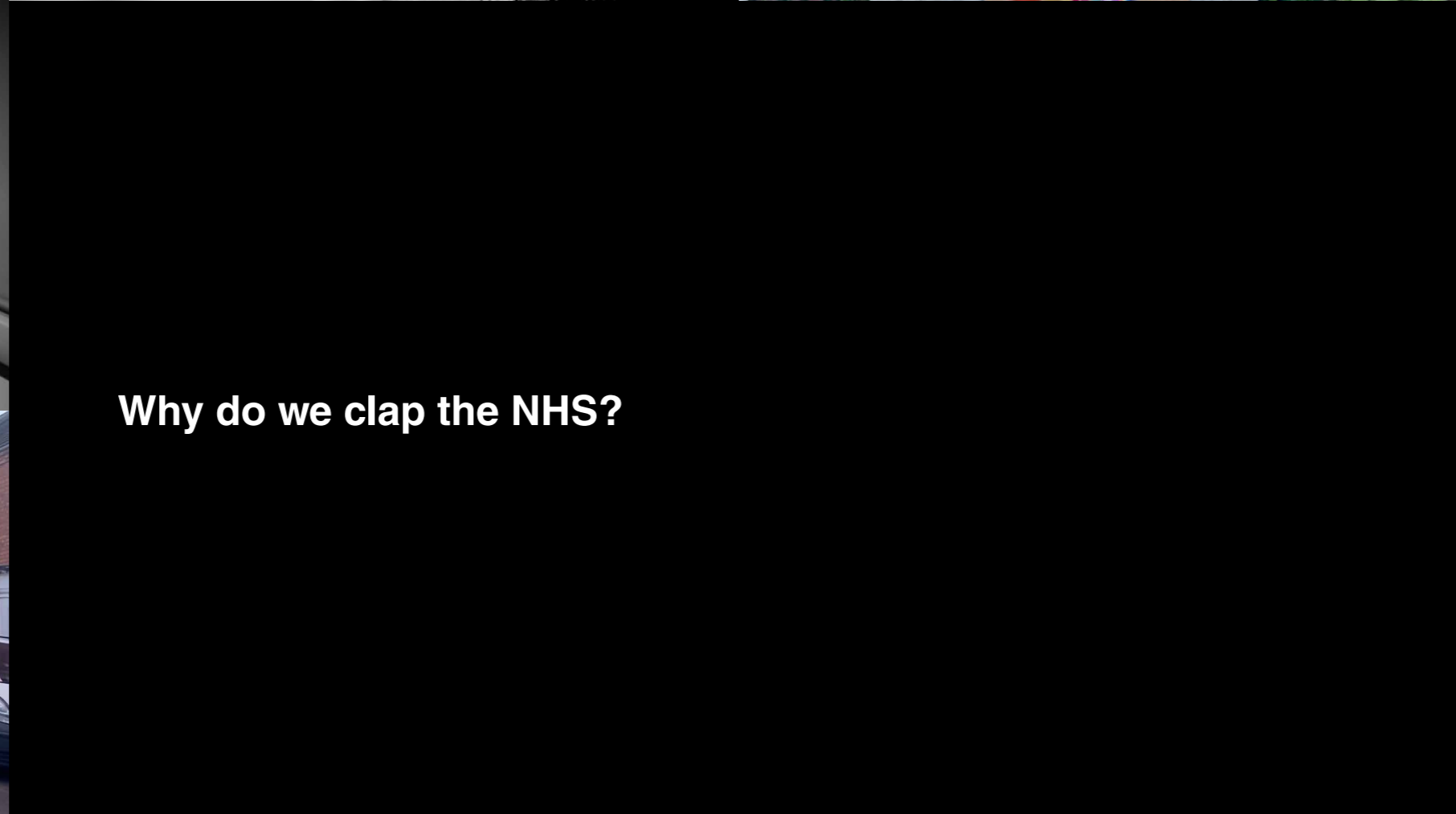
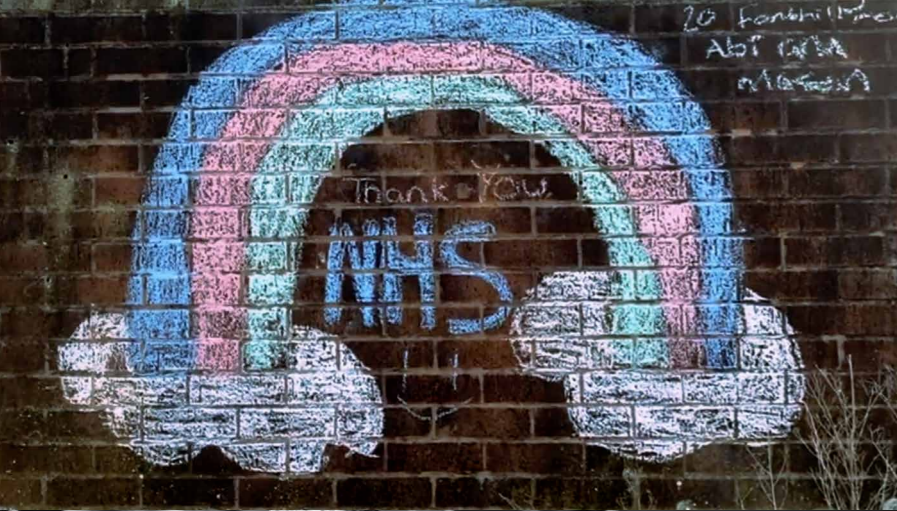
## What happens when the clapping stops?

Finding a better way to say  
'thank you' to the NHS

**BEST COPY**

2020

RECRUITMENT  
**MARKETING  
AWARDS**



## Concept:

What started out as a film to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth, became a passionate call to the nation, voiced by a famous actor and championed on social media by politicians across the spectrum.

2020 was to be the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. That was the starting point of our brief from Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT).

**Then Coronavirus happened.**

The pandemic changed everything, and the value of the entire nursing profession was now in the spotlight.

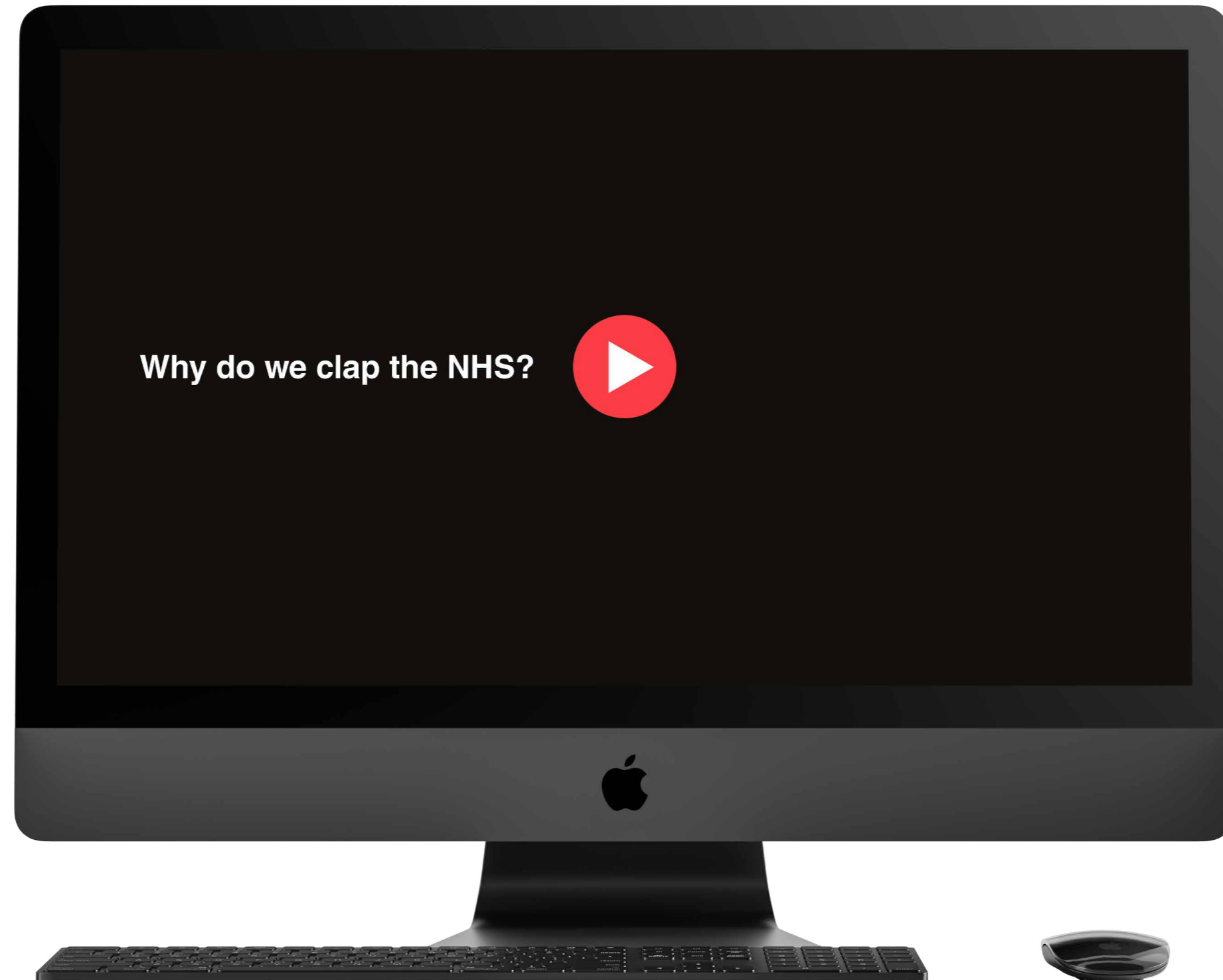
The #clapforourcarers phenomenon took off. Social media saw a deluge of 'thank you NHS' videos. The same themes kept recurring: nurses as heroes and emotive messaging. And, if we're honest, amongst the sincere and heartfelt sentiments, there was a lot of virtue signalling and bandwagonism.

MFT needed more nurses, so our film couldn't afford to get lost in all this noise. A different film – and a different script – was everything.

Our film was inspired by a simple question that no-one else was asking:  
**What happens when the clapping stops?**

Our script had one uncompromising underlying message: 'thank you's are not enough.

[Watch the film](#)



## Execution:

Because of working from home regulations, our scope for filming fresh content was limited. The success of the film therefore hinged on the script.

What's more, we were working to very restricted timescales at the height of the crisis - the longer we delayed the video, the lower its impact would be.

The copy had to tread carefully:  
It had to challenge without being antagonistic.

It had to stir up emotion without falling into the maudlin/saccharine tone of the clichéd 'thank you NHS' films.

It had to remind people that nurses will still need our help after the crisis, without disrespecting well-meaning supporters of the NHS.

And, like any script, it had to be engaging.

We think the script met every single one of its objectives and delicately walked a difficult tightrope.

It engaged the audience in a dramatic yet appropriate way and challenged people to think beyond the clapping without being negative or disdainful. And, crucially, it left our surprising call to action – encouraging people to join the NHS – until the very end.

## **The script:**

The script was brought to life by none other than critically acclaimed actress Maxine Peake (Black Mirror, Shameless, The Theory of Everything, Coronation Street and more), who generously agreed to provide voiceover work for free.

The visuals skilfully combined user-generated footage of clapping, some of which we took ourselves, plus existing video and stills from a previous MFT shoot.

Combined with a powerful, moving soundtrack, the whole project was a testament to what could be achieved in a short timeframe and a very limited budget.

**Why do we clap for the NHS?**

**It's a mark of respect**

**They risk their lives**

**To save ours**

**But when this is over**

**We'll start going back to the way it was**

**And the clapping will stop**

**Chances are, we'll start to forget what they've done for us**

**If there's no clapping**

**Does that mean we stop caring?**

**Remember, once we're through this**

**They'll keep on doing what they've always done**

**And after the crisis**

**The NHS will still need our help**

**So, if you've got it in you**

**Perhaps the best way to say thank you**

**Is to join them.**

## Results:

**NHS tweets earned 43.7k impressions overall, 57 retweets and 84 likes.**

**We also had a further 4,056 video views from Twitter.**

**Over 4,400 views on YouTube.**

The film was launched on 7th May, and although we're still collecting results, the reception was extremely positive.

Commended by Professor Cheryl Lenney, who is Chief Nurse at the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, the film was also retweeted by:

- Emily Thornberry MP
- Justin Madders MP
- Annie Wells MSP
- Chief Inspector Lorna McEwan, British Transport Police

Beyond this, we felt we'd used our skills and resources in the right way, and tried to raise awareness of long-term recruitment problems that were being felt before, during and after the crisis. We'd found a better way to say 'thank you'.