The BMJ

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2020;370:m3688

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3688>

Published: 23 September 2020

THE BIG PICTURE

Photographs that captured lockdown

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In May the National Portrait Gallery launched Be Still to create a unique collective portrait of the UK during lockdown. The public was invited to submit photographs taken in a six week period that focused on three core themes: Helpers and Heroes, Your New Normal, and Acts of Kindness.

The gallery received more than 31 000 submissions, 100 of which now form an exhibition in the London gallery. These are three of *The BMJ*'s favourites ([figs 1-3](#)).

Fig 1 | *Long-awaited Cuddle* (main image) by Lesley Garven, Auchinleck, East Ayrshire. The photographer made her mother a “cuddle blanket” so she could hug her grandchildren

Fig 2 | *Akuac* by Anastasia Orlando, London. Taken at a Black Lives Matter protest

Fig 3 | *We Always Wear a Smile* by Jill Bowler and Trevor Edwards, Preston. Care workers Beth and Sade reassure their residents that they are still smiling beneath their masks