

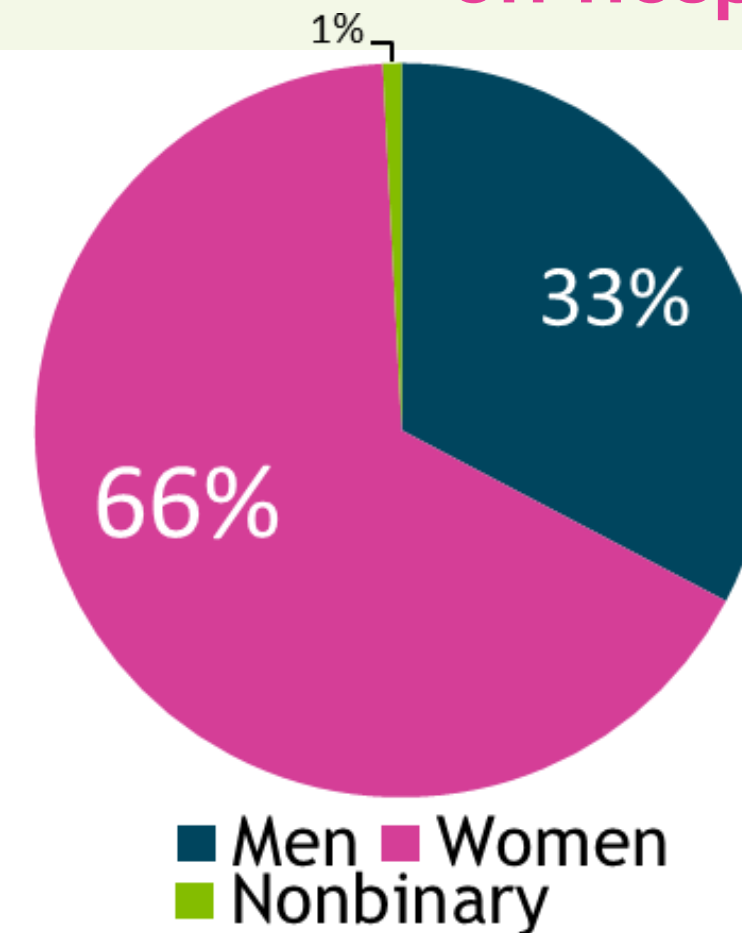
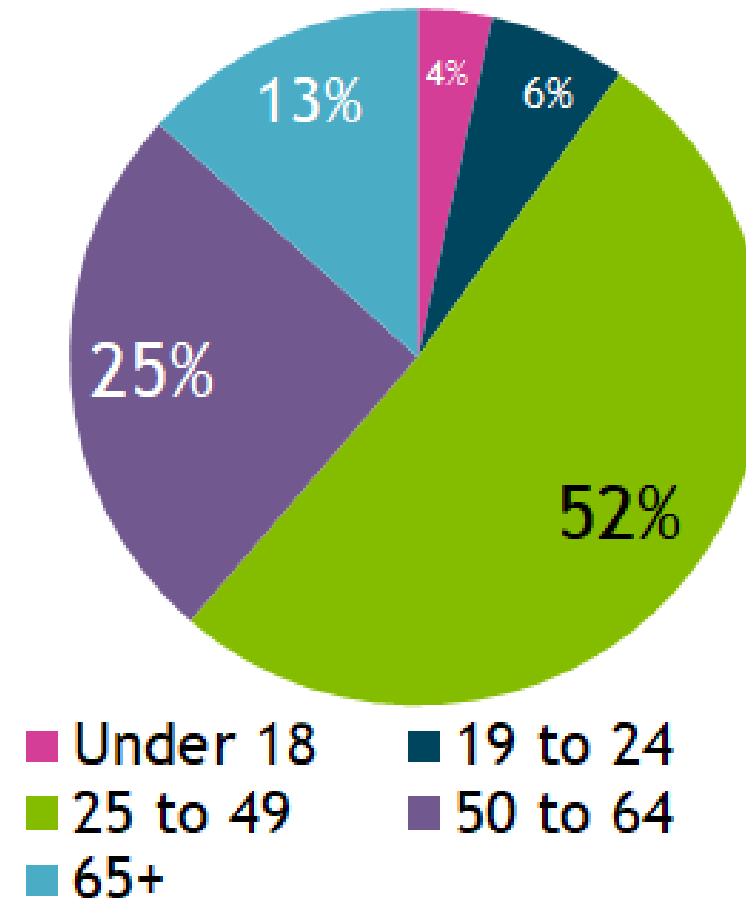
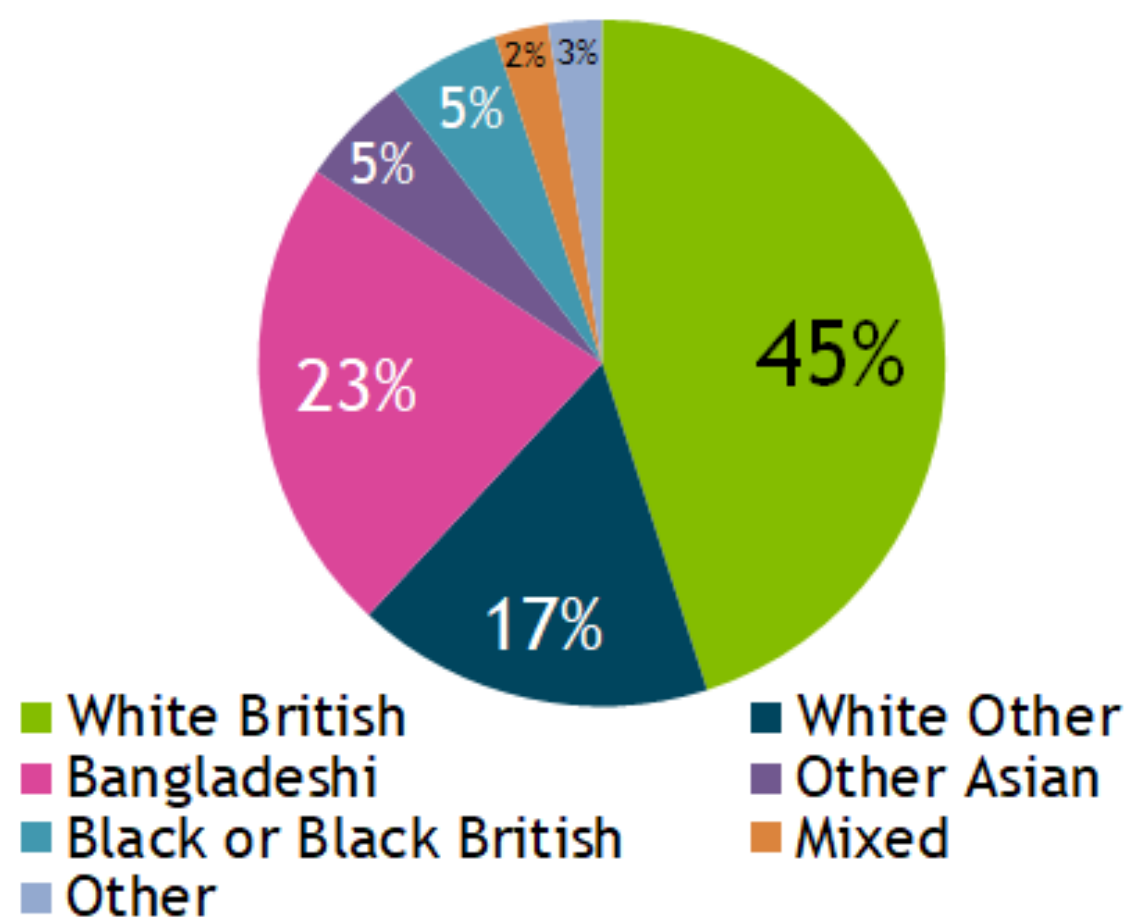
# Your health and wellbeing in the COVID-19 pandemic

We are in the process of carrying out a survey online and via phone.

**354**  
respondents to date

We have also analysed comments received from local people via telephone and email, NHS Choices, patient opinion and social media.

**12**  
further comments on hospital services

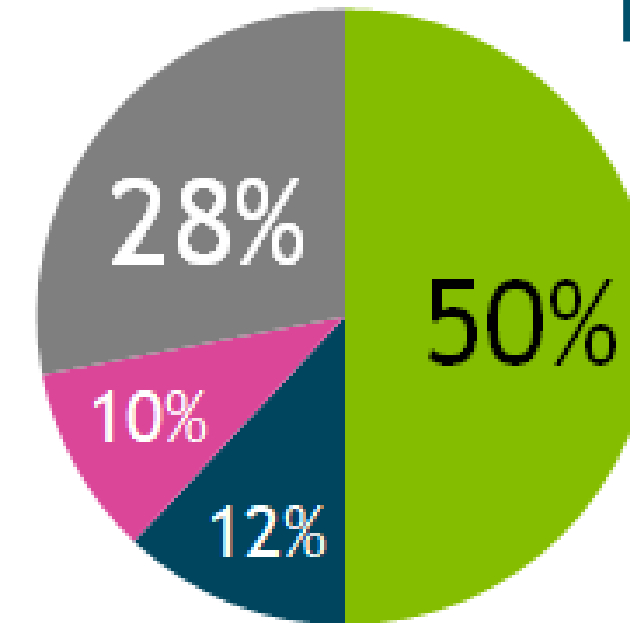


**22%**  
had children aged under 18

**5%**  
were carers for an adult

# Using hospital services during the pandemic

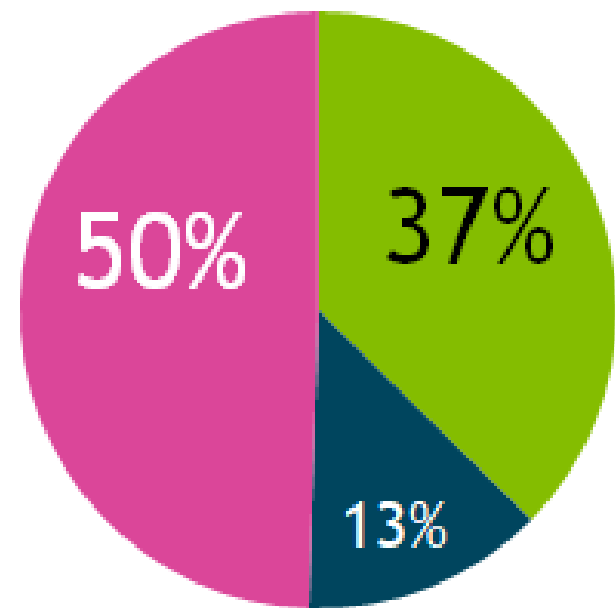
Hospital inpatients feel generally well looked after; while the experience of those using urgent care is mixed. Routine outpatient treatment is disrupted; but telephone and online consultations are helpful.



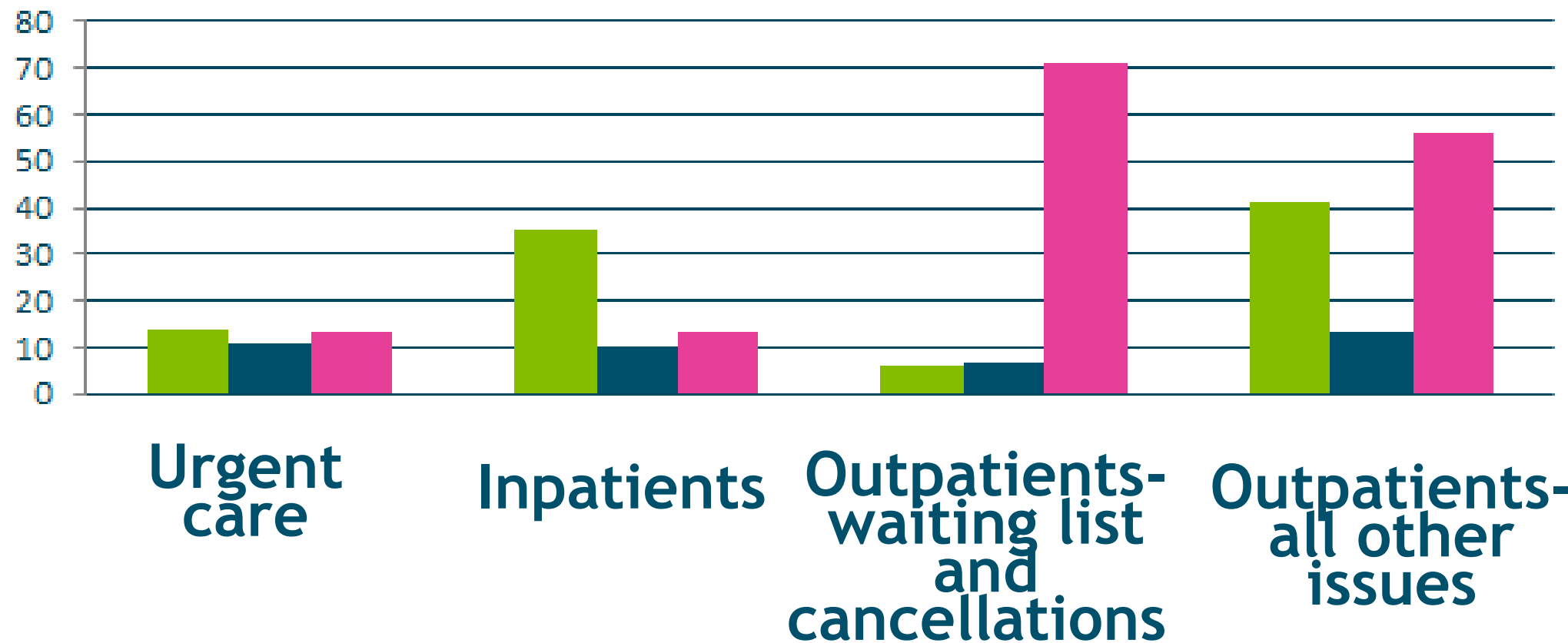
Hospitals mentioned

- Royal London
- St Barts
- Mile End
- Other

Opinion of hospitals



- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative



# Urgent care and ambulance services



At the beginning of lockdown, there was some uncertainty around whether hospital A&E's are still operational and the extent to which they are under pressure. People also felt somewhat reluctant to call 999 if needed, knowing services are likely to be overstretched.

My neighbour is on day 13 of Covid 19 and I'm worried about her breathing. She is reluctant to call her doctor again. We tried calling the ambulance on Sunday and they said if she can talk she's OK. I've just spoken to her and she said she doesn't feel quite as bad as she did. She is reluctant to call 999.

I'm glad to hear from Barts Health that the A&E's are still open, recently it's been hard getting appointments or even being seen by a GP.

[I'm an ER nurse and can confirm] A&E is still open and have worked very hard at having separate areas for infection control. No one wants anyone suffering unnecessarily [so if you experience shortness of breath please call 999].

The ambulance service can take over an hour to reach patients with Covid-19 symptoms.

[My wife had Covid-19 and her cough kept getting worse. On Thursday, as her cough was not getting better, we called 999. It took about 15 minutes until we were transferred to the paramedics, and then the ambulance arrived in about an hour- an hour and a half. They did the finger test for oxygen on her and it was at 79- so they told her "You need to go to the hospital" and she has been in the Royal London since.

In some cases, ambulance crews help people in their own home, with no hospital admission.

[It was quite a bad night, I couldn't sleep due to the coughing and breathlessness. We called the ambulance at 3am in the morning. They took my oxygen and blood. My oxygen was normal but I had a high blood sugar level (24), my diabetes meds were arriving the next day. I also had a temperature. The paramedics decided to leave me at home because there was nothing they could do for the cough.

# Hospital inpatients



Patients hospitalised with Covid-19 report that their care has been good. Their families praise hospital staff for allowing them to maintain contact remotely, deliver essentials to their loved-ones and stay involved in their care.

*My mum was in hospital for nearly 4-and-a half weeks. She was really happy with the doctors and nurses! Communication was a slight barrier, but she somehow overcame it. The nurses allowed us to communicate with her via Facetime which really helped us and her as well. They were really kind to allow us to cook and deliver food to her whilst she was in ICU. This was a special requirement because of having a really bad mouth sore and ulcer. This was super helpful as it helped her carry on eating a very tiny amount which she had actually stopped doing. This gave her the energy and boost she really needed.*

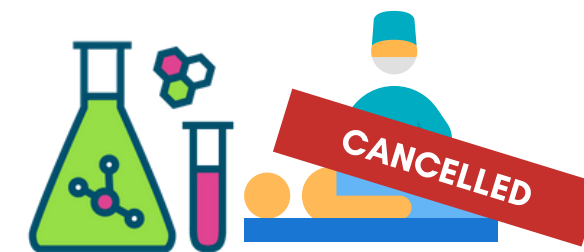
*Having Covid-19 & pneumonia was frightening for me but the care I received was heartwarming. I also had a personal issue & a Nurse supported me with her own personal supplies, which was so generous & thoughtful.*

*My wife is in the ICU with Covid-19 and pneumonia. This morning she is better, we had a video call. She couldn't hear me because of the oxygen tank over her head, but I could hear her. She was smiling, she looked much better and her appetite is coming back. She said the care she receives in hospital is very good, she couldn't fault it in any way.*



There were reports that patients with issues other than Covid-19 were discharged from hospital earlier than they should have been, to make room for Covid-19 patients.

*I'm just upset that everyone is praising the NHS at a time I felt they let my mother of 72 down in her last days. Mum passed away, not COVID but she was released from hospital early to free up beds, without an adequate care package in place; and she passed away within 48 hours.*



Planned admissions for investigations or elective procedures are cancelled, leaving patients uncertain.

*Ironically, the hospital admission I was going to have was going to assess whether I had a condition that would make me high risk. This [cancellation because of Covid-19] is now leaving me in an uncomfortable place with regards to the virus because I don't know what level of risk I'm really at and can't proceed.*

# Hospital outpatients

14%

spoke on the phone to a consultant or another professional

7%

spoke on the phone to a consultant or another professional

12%

experienced disruptions to their long-term hospital-based treatment



Patients who had appointments with medical professionals over the phone or online were happy with their experience.

*I suffer from fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalomyelitis. Online conversation with hospital consultant was most helpful as part of an online appointment instead of face to face appointment. He was able to give advice tailored to my medical conditions, which largely supported government advice, but also covered issues such as whether it was safe for me to take or continue certain drugs.*

*Speedy, excellent phone contact with St Stephen's Health Centre receptionist and RLH Gynae Cancer consultant's nurse [also by telephone], ensuring speedy first appointment cleared me of cancer symptom*

*Sadly many hospital appointments cancelled. Rest replaced with virtual appointments which I hope continues long term. There is no need to travel to go somewhere when you can do a task from home*



There are limits to how much can be achieved via online or telephone consultation.

*I am sight impaired; I suffer from diabetes and high blood pressure. I had been referred to Barts nurse specialist; the nurse rang on the phone 40 mins, said they couldn't do anything at present- that I should just continue with my medication and ring 999 if in crisis.*



Essential appointments continue as scheduled; while other patients wait to start or resume treatment after the end of lockdown.

*My son had a broken arm and he needed to have his cast removed a few weeks ago- he could still do it, despite lockdown being instituted.*

*After extensive testing, the specialist at Guy's Hospital offered me a treatment plan for my arthritis. I was going to have hand physio, foot treatment, but because I have chronic heart and lung issues, for the time being I was advised not to go in hospitals at all- have to be very careful. Will start having treatment after the pandemic subsides. Guy's Hospital wants to keep all patients safe.*

# Hospital outpatients



Hospitals did not communicate clearly or sufficiently about the COVID-19 pandemic and their changes to service provision in response to it.

*I received a text message at 5.30pm from gov UK telling me I need to shield for 12 weeks. I had to wait until the next morning to speak to my GP who told me it was most likely a false alarm because they saw my cancer diagnosis from 18 years ago, but I should double-check with my late effects clinic who are tracking my heart and lung symptoms. I can't get a response out of them so I still don't know what I should be doing.*

*I suffer from lupus. I emailed my rheumatologist (RLH) about the antibody test for COVID19- he didn't answer*



**For some, Covid-19 related cancellations come after they had already waited for a long time for their procedures.**

*My son now has to wait for bone marrow transplant due to covid19. My parents too- all their treatments have been rescheduled after months of waiting for appointment.*

*I am not sure I'll ever be able to have a child. After one miscarriage and one failed IVF, my next was due in May and is cancelled. I turn 44 in June.*



Cancellations to planned procedures and consultations leave patients feeling in limbo and worried about their health.

*Due to have a heart scan due to suspected heart condition, now cancelled. Leaves me uncertain but also unsure if I am vulnerable.*

*I was due for blood tests. I have no idea whether to ask for them or not, under the circumstances.*

*Gyno appointment cancelled and blood tests not followed up. This was not a routine checkup.*

*Daughter had kneed operation cancelled and is afraid of dislocating or straining it further. Worry if someone gets seriously ill, I won't be able to do anything.*

*I have lupus and fibromyalgia. Pain management appointment got cancelled, I'm still in pain.*

*I suffer from a chronic lung condition. For my Lung treatment I was all ways visited by specialist and they gave me thoroughly check up. For this situation all appointment has been canceled. I'm little worried and concerned about my health.*

# Maternity and neonatal services



There were reported disruptions to antenatal and postnatal services during lockdown; this results in uncertainty and stress.

6 *My partner can't attend the scans or any appointments, i have experienced a previous loss ,so this is stressful for me.*

*I am 10 weeks pregnant, I have endometriosis and haven't heard from midwifery services despite chasing. The Royal London antenatal team simply do not answer the phone.*

*I have a 6 weeks old baby who has not been seen by a health care professional since he was 5 days old.*

*I am pregnant. I am worried that I might find it hard to get help if there is an emergency.*

*Support with midwife and health visitors have been unclear and also very brief. Quite disappointed with the lack of support. I don't get regular check up calls I have to contact them if I have any questions and wait for a call back.*

*I am pregnant. I cannot see a doctor for any other pregnancy related issues as my gp surgery has closed due to shortages of doctors*

*Mum to a newborn of 3 weeks so pregnant during the start of social distancing rules. As I have not registered the birth of my child due to Covid the baby is also not registered at the GP.*



As little is currently known about the impact of Covid-19 on pregnancies and neonates, medical professionals struggle to provide reassurance.

6 *The GP was very understanding but there is not much known about pregnancy and Covid-19; the same was with a midwife.*

*I'm pregnant and my husband is sickly, we don't know what it is. I called NHS 111, they said all he need to do is stay at home, but I'm mainly worried for my baby. We don't know anything about this virus and the effect it can have on the baby. I just pray to God that this goes soon and it all calms down.*



Expecting parents are careful about social distancing and isolating, which can pose difficulties in everyday life.

6 *As I am 39 weeks pregnant, I am looking for face masks, preferably reusable ones. I have ordered some online but haven't been delivered after 2 weeks.*

*I just gave birth; my mother lives next door but she cannot come meet her grandchild and help me around the house, because of lockdown rules.*