

# People at the Centre Update 5

## How has the pandemic impacted women's lives?

Scottish feminist membership organisation Engender are collecting stories of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of women:

"I found it very difficult to fit in self care, even basics like showering (I know gross!). One of the biggest challenges as well was that I am normally very active and run 5k everyday to get to work and 10k at the weekend. Under lockdown restrictions I could not leave my children at all and my activity dropped to almost nil. I have gained weight and lost fitness."

"Being pregnant and re-entering lockdown situations is awful. I relapsed into my eating disorder and lost a stone prior to the pregnancy but the relapse is still active and I've gained very little weight. I have some CPN support from the west of Scotland perinatal mental health service but they can't offer me as much because of face to face restrictions. Husband has been able to attend scans but not emergency appointments or routine ones. What will happen at birth is a mystery and women are being stripped of choice - little to no option for home or water births, births that are highly medical and full of interventions, rushed to when giving birth then rushed out the door. I have very little trust my birth will be a positive experience and believe I will become very unwell afterwards due to trauma."

[Read more stories Engender have collected: Covid-19 and Women's Equality.](#)

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"One way that the virus has really impacted me is the short term distribution of medication - I'm on a few medications for life and these are only issued for two months at a time (generally always and not just COVID-19 related - but there were shortages due to COVID and people panicking). I ended up without one of my main ones for about a month at the start of lockdown as I had been given the wrong brand which I react to badly so had to go without. The health symptoms I suffer without correct medication are fatigue, loss of motivation, brain fog and pain (not great). I couldn't get to speak to my GP as all calls are being triaged by the reception staff, who referred me to the pharmacist, who did manage to get me more meds - but this is really precarious."

The Mental Health Foundation in their Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic study has also highlighted the increased risk to women's mental health resulting from the pandemic:

"Women make up the majority of frontline health and care workers, are more likely to do unpaid work, are overrepresented in low paid and insecure work, and are more likely to have pre-existing difficulties with debt and bills. They are also more likely to shoulder a higher proportion of caring responsibilities. All of the women in these positions were at greater risk of developing a mental health problem before the pandemic and will be at increased risk as the economic ramifications of the pandemic are realised. It is also the case that women are much more likely to be affected by domestic violence and abuse, the risk of which increased during lockdown."

[Findings from the Coronavirus: Mental Health in a Pandemic Study](#)