WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A mask assembly comprising:

a cushion with a face contacting portion and a non-face contacting portion,

a side wall extending between the face contacting portion and the non-face contacting portion; and

a frame configured to overlay an exterior portion of the side wall of the cushion,

wherein the frame comprises:

a pair of headgear connectors, and

a lateral dimension defined between the pair of headgear connectors;

wherein the frame is configured to be laterally compliant so as to resiliently deform such that the lateral dimension can change when subject to lateral forces;

the mask assembly further comprising:

an inlet connector configured to receive breathable gases from, and be connected to, a gas delivery conduit; the inlet connector being in fluid communication with the cushion; wherein the frame comprises a central connection portion; the inlet connector being mounted on the central connection portion.

2. The mask assembly of claim 1 wherein the frame is configured to be longitudinally non-compliant in a longitudinal direction between the proximal face contacting portion and the distal non-face contacting portion, so as to resist deformation of the mask frame when subject to longitudinal forces.

3. The mask assembly of claim 2 wherein the frame is configured to be relatively laterally compliant and relatively longitudinally non-compliant.

4. The mask assembly of any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the frame comprises a plurality of frame regions, at least one frame region being weakened relative to at least one other frame region.

5. The mask assembly of claim 4 wherein the plurality of frame regions includes at least one frame region which is relatively thin in one dimension to encourage bending of the frame about a first predetermined axis and relatively wide in another dimension to resist bending about a second predetermined axis.

6. The mask assembly of claim 4 or claim 5 wherein the frame comprises an upper portion which extends laterally across a portion of the mask assembly, the upper portion comprising a weakened region configured to allow bending of the upper portion.

7. The mask assembly of claim 6 wherein the upper portion is arcuate, wherein bending of the upper portion increases or decreases the radius of the arc of the upper portion.

8. The mask assembly of claim 4 wherein at least one of the frame regions comprising a living hinge.

9. The mask assembly of claim 4 wherein a weakened frame region is adjacent the inlet connector.

10. The mask assembly of any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame comprises a frame clip configured to be removably mounted on the inlet connector to mount the central connection portion of the frame to the inlet connector.

11. The mask assembly of any one of claims 1 to 9 wherein the frame comprises a frame clip being configured to be removably mounted on a conduit connector cuff of a gas delivery conduit configured to deliver breathable gas into the cushion.

12. The mask assembly of claim 10 or claim 11 wherein the frame clip is removably mounted on both the inlet connector and the conduit connector cuff.

13. The mask assembly of any one of claims 10 to 12 wherein the frame clip is spaced from, and not in contact with, the remainder of the frame, such that forces applied to the remainder of the frame are decoupled from the frame clip.

14. The mask assembly of any one of the preceding claims wherein the central connection portion is relatively rigid and preferably the remainder of the frame is relatively flexible.

15. The mask assembly of claim 14 wherein the frame comprises lateral portions that extend away from the central connection portion, the lateral portions being relatively flexible.

16. The mask assembly of any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame is:
    a. configured to be laterally resiliently deformable; and/or
    b. configured to resist deformation in a direction from front to rear of the mask assembly, or vice versa.

17. The mask assembly of any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame is made from material which is different from the material of the cushion; preferably material which is relatively harder and/or less deformable than the cushion; and most preferably is made from a plastics material.

18. The mask assembly of any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame comprises an inlet opening comprising a central axis, the central axis extending generally downwardly.

19. The mask assembly of claim 6 wherein the upper portion of the frame which extends laterally across a portion of the mask assembly is arcuate.

20. The mask assembly of claim 19 wherein the cushion comprises an apex portion, the upper portion of the frame extending at or adjacent the apex portion.