

Homebirth Australia survey of women's and midwives experiences of homebirth transfer



We asked women on our social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) to share their experiences of homebirth transfer. We define a homebirth transfer as a planned homebirth with an endorsed midwife, when transfer to hospital occurs during pregnancy, birth or in the immediate period after birth.

We opened the survey to all women in Australia and put no time frame on when their experiences occurred.

Women decide to transfer to hospital for a variety of reasons, mostly:

- Non-emergent (pain relief, to check on the position of the baby)
- Emergency (midwife's recommendations due to concerns about mother or baby's physical wellbeing)

The word cloud above lists the most commonly used words women used to describe their experiences. The full descriptions sent to us have been edited to remove any identifying names, any spelling or grammatical errors have been corrected and some of the acronyms explained. Otherwise, they are in the women's own words.

1. In 2021 I experienced a supported homebirth labour and transferred after a 24 hour long labour - non emergency due to exhaustion. I felt the energy from staff in the hospital was hostile and invasive towards my body. My PPM (privately practising midwife) was supporting my wishes and being an advocate for me and what my preferences were and was kicked out of the hospital leaving me and my partner alone with the nurses all taking turns to convince me of certain interventions. Leading to an unnecessary elective caesarean as I just felt I couldn't birth my baby naturally with all of their badgering and interruptions.

2. I felt and still feel traumatised by my transfer and never wish to give birth in a hospital again. I am now considered high risk for my current second pregnancy & cannot afford a private midwife and feel my only option to feel safe and have my body left alone & respected is the route of a freebirth.

3. I had a homebirth transfer in May last year during my son's birth. I had a very mixed experience with the staff. My PPM (privately practising midwife) was wonderfully supportive throughout (although I could tell she was very cautious in her interactions with hospital staff). Most of the midwifery care I received in hospital was compassionate and respectful. However during the birth itself, the consultant and midwifery TL (team leader) who attended were deeply disrespectful. The consultant had ZERO idea about consent and bodily autonomy. I had to explain to him in between contractions/pushes that I had the right to decline. The midwifery TL (team leader) attempted on multiple occasions to coerce me into interventions to expedite labour, claiming it was for our safety. At one stage my husband overheard her at the desk saying they actually needed me to hurry up and deliver because they needed my room. As a midwife myself, I am very aware of my healthcare rights and felt able to advocate myself. But a) I shouldn't have had to and b) I'm concerned for other families who may not know their rights or feel able to speak up.

I wrote a complaint to the hospital a few months postpartum. I will give the hospital credit and say they dealt with the complaint very professionally. However I know that it's going to take a LOT to change the culture in hospitals around Australia.

4. I decided to go into the hospital for some monitoring at 41+4 just to make sure everything was all good and it was okay to keep waiting for the baby, particularly considering I had GD (gestational diabetes). CTG was perfect, and ultrasound showed good blood flow to and from the placenta.

The doctor who did the ultrasound was awful. He was confrontational and tried to scare me into induction, saying things like my baby was huge and I'd end up with a c-section if I tried to birth at home, that my fluid levels were low and if I ran out of fluid the placenta and my baby would die. He said that me being overdue (not even over 42 weeks!!) was "downright dangerous". I told him as long as monitoring was fine I was happy to continue waiting for now. I also refused a growth scan and he was clearly unhappy with that.

I booked some more monitoring privately through an ultrasound place for 42w. Again everything was fine with blood flow, though interestingly my fluid levels were high, not low like the hospital doctor said.

At my 42w appointment with my midwife, we did a stretch and sweep to try to get things moving. Unfortunately at this appointment my blood pressure was a little high and there was protein in my urine, so I went into hospital for further assessment.

I had another awful encounter with the doctor from Saturday who again tried to pressure me into induction before the blood test results were even back. He was incredulous that I wouldn't make a decision around induction until the blood test results came in. He was also incredibly aggressive on a phone call with my midwife, accusing her of "supporting an overdue, diabetic, hypertensive (even though my blood pressure readings in hospital were normal) person to give birth at home". It was clear that wasn't what was happening, considering that I'd willingly gone to hospital to confirm the diagnosis and for further assessment. I was so shaky and dysregulated after this interaction with him and I asked for him to be removed from anything regarding my care. His demeanour was almost enough to scare me off of any further interaction with the hospital system, and if I'd encountered him earlier in pregnancy, I would have been incredibly reluctant to engage in any further care with the hospital, even if it was strongly recommended.

Ultimately the hospital confirmed diagnosis of pre-eclampsia and I had to come to terms with no longer being safe to birth at home. They weren't able to induce me that night, so I checked out of the hospital AMA and returned the following afternoon. My private midwife met us at the hospital and helped to brief them on my pregnancy and situation.

The midwife on shift accidentally broke my water while attempting to insert the balloon catheter. Contractions started fairly quickly after that. Water was completely clear with no meconium, which was a bit of a surprise considering how overdue I was and that I'd had some castor oil to try to induce labour.

I was able to get about 3 hours of sleep before the contractions got too intense to sleep through. Once I was awake, the night shift midwife had a chat with me about putting a cannula in just in case I needed medication to manage the blood pressure. I wasn't keen on a cannula unless I needed the pitocin, but agreed to this rationale. I wish I hadn't...it took three different people 5 attempts to try to put one in and it was unsuccessful. I have very difficult veins and I had to point blank tell a doctor I'm not having any more attempts unless an anaesthetist comes and tries. Even with an ultrasound machine the anaesthetist wasn't able to. At this point my contractions had disappeared and I told everyone to leave me alone so I could try to reestablish labour. I decided to try to rest again and see if that would help.

Woke up in the morning to no contractions at all. Tried walking, pumping, everything I could think of to get it started again with no luck. I asked my midwife to come in to help and together we decided that pitocin was the next thing to try.

This was a big change to my birth plan and it meant that a lot of the interventions I didn't originally want, I did decide to consent to. However, I didn't feel pressured into it at all and genuinely felt like I'd exhausted all other options to help my body labour naturally. Maybe my only regret was agreeing to the cannula in the middle of the night, because maybe labour would've kept ramping up, but there's no way to know. It may have worked if they'd listened to me when I said I had difficult veins and got the anaesthetist straight away, instead of trying so many times. It also might not have.

I met the doctor and the midwife team before starting the pitocin and was immediately reassured. The doctor was so respectful and said straight up that she thought my birth plan was completely reasonable. She asked about my previous birth experiences and talked about her birth philosophy and I was happy to hear it aligned with mine. I didn't get the sense that she was motivated by fear or risk aversion and that made it so much easier for me to trust her.

Overall the labour went very well. It was incredibly intense and at some point I was having back to back contractions and involuntarily pushing. The team gave me medication to slow contractions and turned off the pitocin completely.

Everything while I was pushing was a blur and I vaguely remember thinking that it was taking far too long. I heard the doctor say she was very keen for the baby to be born soon. Doctor explained that she'd like to try to stretch my perineum a little around the baby's head to help it move through. When that was unsuccessful, she explained that she thought it was necessary to cut a small episiotomy to give the baby's head some room.

From speaking with my midwife afterwards, they were all quite worried about the baby's heart rate and that he didn't seem to be coming out as easily as they had hoped. Despite this, there was no sense of fear, panic, or pressure in the room and the doctor was so incredibly respectful and calm when speaking to me.

Ultimately my baby was born vaginally, 42+2 weeks gestation, and 5.7kg with a 38cm head. He came out slowly once the episiotomy was cut, but there was no shoulder dystocia.

Even though the whole experience didn't go to plan, it was an incredibly positive experience and in a way, how intense the birth was made it easier to manage the disappointment of not being able to birth physiologically at home. The way I was treated by the obstetrician on shift during my labour made a huge difference...I hate to think what would have happened if the awful doctor was around.

I'm so so grateful for the individualised prenatal care I got and the ability to work with my private midwife to manage my risk factors in a way that I felt comfortable with. Her presence during the hospital stuff meant that she was able to speak midwife to midwife about what was going on, advocate for me if it was needed, and brief the new shifts on my situation without me having to think about it. The only thing I can imagine being better is if she had admitting rights and could have been the midwife in charge of my hospital experience too.

5. I had a homebirth transfer with my first baby for meconium liquor in labour (I was 41 weeks) My PPM (privately practising midwife) couldn't come due to COVID. I was restricted from using the bath in labour, was constantly bossed around to change positions due to the loss of contact on the CTG and was forced to move out of the shower and onto the bed when I was pushing to birth my baby as they wouldn't provide me with a cushion or mat to kneel on.

My baby came out 3.8kg and screaming but was taken from me at birth for a "quick suction" .. but then I didn't get to hold him for another 3 hours as they took him to the special care nursery. He should have been put back on me skin to skin. I could hear him crying from the next room as they pricked his heel for blood sugar monitoring and gases, as I lay there, defeated, trying to birth my placenta. I beat myself up for not advocating for him more during this time. My partner was amazing and advocated against him having a cannula, IV fluids and "prophylactic antibiotics" which he didn't need. I had over 200 ml of expressed colostrum! He was given my milk via a tube and when I delivered the placenta, got up and showered I went straight into the nursery and breast fed him. He was completely fine. I discharged him from the nursery against medical advice and went home. I

just feel completely robbed of what should have been a really calm experience and don't understand the huge over-reaction.

6. I had a complex homebirth, birth complications, a baby born at home, in a critical state, ended in transfer and he died at hospital that night.

My trauma comes before and after this experience sadly.

hospital didn't entertain birthing in water or use of water tubs in birth, so I then chose a homebirth. The trauma of judgement made me scared of communicating my pains a day before my labour. I laboured heavy and fast at home, however he was footling breech and got stuck coming out.

The transfer nurses were ridiculous..... the comments in the evening as my baby was being assessed - no privacy even though they knew he was in a bad way. One lady even stated "that's why women come to hospital". The post death care was tremendously poor. The ambulance paramedic told a lie, so that opened a whole big coroner inquiry..... and my baby was taken off me a little after he passed... for coroner court. I was treated like a criminal and had to deal with the police... all because they reported something out of line. Tremendous birth trauma, but only due to the lack of humanity.

7. First time mum

Transferred in after 3 days of on/off labour for pain relief.

My PPM (privately practising midwife) did not have practising rights however came in with me as a support person along with my partner and my mother. My midwife has a prior relationship with this hospital and this is why we booked in there initially.

Overall I had an ok experience because I had these people there to support and advocate for me, as I declined a number of interventions. As a midwife myself I feel that my choices were more easily accepted because I was perceived to have "inside knowledge" and stated things like "I take full responsibility for the outcome of choosing to decline continuous monitoring"

Even in this circumstance I was still interrupted and told about risks etc. from the obstetric staff and some midwives a number of times. My baby was unnecessarily taken away from me to the nursery before I'd birthed my placenta and I believe this led to me not being able to birth my placenta naturally (ending up in theatre).

8. My third son is nearly 12 weeks old. I was lucky enough to qualify to have a publicly funded homebirth through hospital. I jumped through every hoop to qualify for the tightly protected program. I went into labour at 40+5. We spoke to my midwives throughout the night and kept them updated. No one felt any imminent need to attend as I had a history of long labours with my first 2. I continued to labour happily on my own until about midday the following day. Something shifted in my body and I knew the baby would be born soon. I was still dealing fine but in retrospect should have articulated to my partner to call the midwives. At 12:49pm, my waters broke on my bathroom floor and I immediately noticed meconium. I knew this meant I had to transfer. I worked through the instant disappointment quickly and accepted my reality.

My husband called my midwife who confirmed the transfer. I got up to get ready and nearly at the same time fell back down to the ground as another powerful contraction washed over me - but this time with an overwhelming urge to push. I could not go. This baby was being born at home. My

midwife continued to try and reason with me to come into the hospital but it was not going to happen. She told us to call an ambulance. She was policy bound not to come. I somehow made it into the birthing pool and continued to push. I find it hard to articulate my emotions at this point. I mostly felt fear because I knew my birth was more high risk but I now did not have any midwives attending. No one to check my baby was okay. I felt panicked and quite frankly abandoned by my midwives. 4 paramedics ultimately arrived and watched on as I pushed my 4 kg son out in my dining room. Despite involuntarily pushing it took me about an hour for him to be born.

The paramedics were supportive and hands off - no one touched me once. But I craved that womanly support - that unwavering eye contact and soft hand on my back reminding me that I was safe, that my baby was safe. It was the most powerful experience of my life and I am so proud of how brave I was. We were transferred to the hospital about 20 minutes after he was born. His colour was not great and it was policy that he be monitored for 24 h due to the mec. We ended up spending 5 nights in total in the hospital. 3 in special care. My baby had suspected meconium aspiration syndrome. He had a heightened respiratory rate and received 5 days of IV antibiotics. Unfortunately I was met with judgement and criticism from some of the special care nurses. I received comments such as "it's always the home birthers" and "there is always a problem with a Homebirth".

This was especially difficult to hear as I was harbouring a lot of guilt around my inability to transfer and wondered if it had contributed to my baby's outcome.

9. My daughter was born in June 2023

I originally had shared care with a local Hospital, (who would not allow me to be a part of their homebirth program because of my BMI and RISK of GDM) and MAMA birth, the private midwifery, service

My plan was always to have a home birth. I just didn't let the Hospital in on that particular plan, because I was already being pushed towards 39 week induction (they couldn't advise me of the clinical indicators and when I asked what the NICE guidelines said they dropped the conversation all together) and a lot of other interventions that I wasn't interested in. I basically used them for Free scans and OB assessment in the end and felt should I have to transfer they would have my records

I went into labour at 40 weeks and six days

I had contractions inconsistently for two days (sometimes eight minutes apart, sometimes 12 minutes apart). I was assessed at home by midwives to check my dilation twice. I was in constant contact with them over the phone at no point did anyone feel her Heart rate was concerning, or she was showing any signs of distress so we kept going

On Friday evening, a midwife suggested I get in the pool as my waters were bulging and she thought that would help to break them. It did almost immediately from then, and my contractions were consistent and intense, but I wasn't progressing. I eventually got out of the pool attempted to labour with just the tens machine but At about 6 am in the morning after 2.5 days of this and minimal sleep, we agreed that bub was most likely in the OP position, and I needed to transfer to Hospital for an epidural to see if we could get it to turn

We called a ambulance (000 was honestly pretty rude to my midwife, demanding to speak to me in between contractions highness exhausting) the ambulance officers that arrived were great, they

were supportive and agreed that labouring at home this long gave me the best chance of avoiding Caesarean section

Once at the hospital

Hospital midwives were immediately insinuating "this was taking too long"

"I wouldn't have been allowed to labour this long in hospital" etc even though neither me or baby were in distress, my BP was great and she was tolerating contractions well. They told me my waters being broken so long meant I had to have antibiotics I said no and my midwives explained my position

I repeatedly told them I was there for an epidural & a catheter as we believed, emptying my bladder and relaxing, might help baby they got me those things but basically told me they felt I was wasting my time

Once the epidural was in, I had a nap for an hour. Then we utilise the peanut bowl and some hip, massaging to hopefully help the baby. In the next hour we let the epidural down, and I noted that the baby felt different. There was more pressure in my bum.

At this point, our head Midwife from the private midwifery service arrived. She told them that we would like our trial of labour (they declined to give me 2 and said I could have one hour.)

With her guidance, I was able to feel in control, but also like I had a plan. She guided me to follow my own natural instincts by allowing the epidural to wear down. I had enough feeling to know when I was contracting, and I was able to push efficiently. 29 minutes later, I delivered my baby vaginally and she was on my chest.

My midwives were selective about who was in the room. They placed my husband at one foot of the bed, a student Midwife who I was comfortable with at the other foot and I had the two of them on either side of my arms this made it difficult for Hospital staff to come in contact with me as per my wishes

The surprise from the Hospital midwives was evident when they returned at the last moment before she was born, I required two stitches and was able to the maternity suite 3 1/2 hours later

What I realised after my labour was that, even though I had been under their care until 31 weeks, they had been unable to find my records while I was in labour, and Instead had created an entire new profile for me in the system, which meant they had none of my medical records.

My overall feelings about transferring to Hospital are extremely positive, only because of the private midwifery service that came with me. I know that without those women I wouldn't have achieved a natural delivery and I would have had extremely negative feelings towards my treatment because everything I didn't want was what the Hospital was pushing me to do.

Nothing about my labour and delivery was dangerous, unhealthy or out of control. I can't understand why more women aren't allowed to do what I did without having to essentially employ private midwives as bodyguards.

10. I transferred to hospital after suffering a 3rd degree tear.

Ambulance staff, into emergency and then waiting in the birthing unit were all very positive. The Dr who was performing my surgery was very lovely and went through all of my options in terms of anaesthetic and getting back to bub ASAP. I went into surgery at 4am and he assured me I would be discharged by the afternoon/early evening. After surgery I was admitted into the maternity ward and everything went downhill from there. My catheter which I was told would be removed by lunchtime

was left in for a further 36 hours. The midwife kept telling me I needed drs clearance and no one was available, and it was only that my mum (an operating theatre nurse of 38 years) asked for a syringe to remove it herself. Did the midwife then came back to do it. (Funny enough, didn't wait for "drs clearance") there was only one midwife there who seemed genuinely interested and positive about my homebirth. All others made snide comments like "why would you put yourself and baby at risk" "gosh how dangerous" "oh you actually PLANNED the homebirth". I was kept in because due to being a first time mum my minimum stay was 3 nights, NO ONE would listen to me when I tried to explain that I was under the care of a private midwife and I only came in for a tear repair. One midwife at the hospital even went as far as saying "well obviously private care didn't work because if you had proper care at hospital you wouldn't have torn." They wouldn't get my discharge paperwork sorted for me so I could leave and it was only after 2 nights in there I started packing my bags and said I was discharging myself. at 8pm that night the midwife finally had my paperwork organised and the paediatrician came around to do all of the bus checks. It was at this point he was diagnosed with bad jaundice and was admitted to the NICU to go under the lights. The NICU staff were incredibly supportive and bub ended up in there for about 30 hrs and was discharged. Back on the maternity ward I informed the midwife that bub was discharged and we were free to go home, she took another 5 hours to give my discharge paperwork back to me (which I had already been given prior to bub being diagnosed jaundice, then taken back off me) I then sat at the reception area with my suitcase and bub in his pram to which the midwife screamed abuse at me and another admin worker there "here take her effing paperwork, you can give it to her, I told her It would take me some time to get her paperwork organised, Im effing busy, I don't want to deal with her anymore".

During my stay the midwives told me I wasn't allowed to use nipple shields to breastfeed until day 3 of "trying to do it naturally", even though my Private Midwife is an IBCLC and advised me I would need them. Then in the NICU when I was allowed to try and feed bub myself the NICU nurse said "are we breastfeeding" and I said yes not having much success" she said "do you mind if I take a look at bubs latch", and I said sure, she took one look and said "oh you need shields let me get some for you"

The midwives were coming in overnight and checking my blood pressure and temperature hourly even though at no point were these elevated, so sleep for an exhausted emotional first time mum was not given to me as a priority even though I asked multiple times if I could just be given a few hours of rest.

We then ended up testing positive to covid 2 days later (after discharge) and my Private Midwife was unable to come over and do her daily prenatal checks on us.

I'm currently pregnant with number 2 and I am terrified of having to transfer. This was never a fear with my first pregnancy, I always thought that if I needed extra care, help or whatever then I would be happy to go along with whatever my midwife recommends and if that's hospital then great, but now the thought of having to go back there makes me so anxious and fearful.

In hindsight I wish I had officially reported the 3 horrible midwives at the hospital for professional misconduct.

11. I transferred to the hospital during my homebirth almost two years ago. I was having a vbaac at home after enduring abusive treatment resulting in PTSD at my local hospital through MGP with my first.

I had laboured at home completely fine but we eventually discovered that my baby was face presenting. After another hour we decided to transfer.

My first issue is that they told us over the phone that I would have to have a c section, that they "didn't deliver face presentations vaginally" there. I think it is irresponsible to diagnose and offer major surgery over the phone. My midwife was also given the third degree over the phone about it being a vbac.

It was still sort of covid and so I was transferred to a Covid positive room even though we all had negative RATs. This room was under-resourced.

My midwife wasn't allowed to come with me until paperwork was filled out, which seemed unfair at the time given how advanced my labour was. She had to wait about an hour.

We met with the head of obstetrics who said I could choose tricky vaginal birth or a c section, I chose vaginal of course.

The birth itself was great. Very supported. Lots of stupid hospital things like coached pushing but I ended up finding myself again and ignoring much of the bad advice.

Unfortunately I was coerced and badgered into a managed third stage which was really upsetting.

The real issue was with the paediatrician. She was really obvious about her disdain for homebirth. We knew that my baby would have noisy breathing because of the position she had been born in. She used that as a reason to take her away from me - but then never gave her any oxygen or otherwise treated her. She went down to the special care nursery with my partner and announced to the other staff that she had a homebirth transfer "and so the mum didn't receive any prenatal care so let's treat the baby as if mum had gestational diabetes." My wife argued that I had received prenatal care including testing negative for gestational diabetes, and the paediatrician turned to her and said "sorry who are you in all of this?" She refused to refer to my wife as our baby's mother.

As a result our baby was kept from me and put on a glucose drip (of course she had low blood sugar, they hadn't even allowed me to breastfeed her or do more than a few minutes of skin to skin.)

It was a horrific two nights in the special care nursery, with no support, not even access to a glass of water while I sat in a public area trying to breastfeed my very bruised one day old baby. The same paediatrician refused to speak to me for the rest of the time, would only speak via colleagues, and I would hear her from the other side of the room talking about me and blaming me for things. For example the blood sample to find out my baby's blood type was lost, and when someone asked her about it she said it was my fault because I was trying to advocate for delayed cord clamping.

She also told us our baby might have a condition with her skull that would require surgery, because her head hadn't moulded during birth. (Given she came out face first this is unsurprising!)

It was just an overall horrible experience. There were also things done to my baby without my consent, such as bathing her and feeding her glucogel when I was trying to breastfeed her. It was exhausting feeling like I couldn't trust them to go and get any sleep.

I had some really lovely experiences with the postnatal midwives. One in particular was great, brought me the complaint form, and talked through the transfer in a really beautiful and caring way. She made me feel like I was respected and that I had made great choices.

We had a meeting in response to our complaint and one of the things the head of obstetrics (I emphasise this because I think it's so telling) said to me about the lack of consent about my third stage was "we are trained to interpret non-verbal consent. I saw you give your midwife a look, and interpreted that as consent. I'm sorry if I got that wrong."

And I think it's so messed up that she would consider that consent. The notes document that I didn't want the cord cut and that I had to be convinced. It's all so...brazen and out in the open.

12. I had a homebirth transfer into the hospital I work at as an MGP midwife for meconium liquor and fetal distress and subsequently had an emergency CS. I still carry lots of pain and grief around my birth but I could have definitely come out of it much more traumatised if it weren't for the care I received from both my home and hospital teams.

I was very fortunate to have a home team that knew my transfer hospital, and a hospital team who knew me not only as a clinician but as a birthing woman. Both teams had trust in each other and I had trust in everyone.

The hospital team, midwives and obstetricians both knew and recognised how far I had deviated from my dream birth and acknowledged this and allowed me to make my own informed decisions. Despite this I still had multiple panic attacks in hospital (which I have never experienced before). Even though the consultant obstetrician that was on that day didn't agree with homebirth, she respected me and my feelings and even cried with me when I agreed to a CS.

My PPM commented on how I was treated like a queen when we transferred and that all women should be treated that way.

I recognise how blessed I am to have been able to have had a positive experience with the hospital team despite still having sadness and grief around my birth.

13. I had a private homebirth with my 2nd baby in 2016, was half way through my BMid at the time. Had a beautiful birth then transferred for retained placenta and big PPH. Managed well at home but had horrific ambulance transfer (judgement, punishment, delays, withholding of care). My trauma from that birth is 100% the transfer. Luckily I was welcomed at my local hospital with open arms and a beautiful OB who offered manual removal in the room to save me going to theatre and being separated from baby.

14. I felt very blessed to have the option of a home birth after being treated horribly by the midwifery practice group and hospital doctors in my town of Alice Springs.

The homebirth was everything I wanted and definitely the right decision for us, but due to some complications after birth an ambulance was called and we went into hospital just to be 'checked'. I feel like that is where everything went wrong for us and with hindsight I desperately wished we hadn't gone.

I hadn't birthed my placenta by the time we arrived at the hospital and so when I was being checked the midwife grabbed hold of the small piece of cord she could feel and despite the incredible pain refused to let go. Let me say that again...a woman had her hand in my vagina, pulling on an organ and when I cried and told her to stop and get off me she said no! I was given gas and air and coached through by my homebirth midwife but I will never forget that moment of realising that I definitely had no choices once I was in the hospital.

My baby and I were left alone on the ward as it was the middle of the night, my mum and husband went home because it was only meant to be a few hours until I could go home too, it was the middle of the night and we were just in for observation. I was exhausted after 30 hours in labour and a rough pregnancy leading up to it so my brain was fried and I wasn't thinking straight. I'd had no real skin to skin time with my baby and wasn't encouraged to, hadn't managed a breastfeed and it was at least a day until someone helped us to do that... I believe this time left alone with no encouragement of what to do was really detrimental.

The next morning I was asked so many questions by a doctor who acted like I had given birth alone in a car park rather than in my home with two very well trained midwives. The questions felt intrusive and like she had no idea what homebirthing was or why someone would do it. It felt like she was questioning my sanity and certainly the safety of my baby. Even a hospital midwife who heard some of the questions came to comfort me and apologised about how inappropriate the doctor was in her line of questioning.

My troponin(?) levels had been tested as high and I was told I had to go to ICU, I agreed IF I could bring my baby. I was then told that the baby was breathing too fast and needed to be in the special care unit and so couldn't come. I wanted to stay with my baby but was told I wasn't allowed in special care because I had to be in ICU, so they wouldn't let me stay with my baby. My husband was told that there was a very serious risk of me having a heart attack or stroke in the next 24 hours so he then convinced me I needed to do as I was told. (We later found out my levels were nowhere near this level of risk). I spent the next night apart from my baby but surprisingly this just led to my blood pressure going through the roof every-time I thought about my baby which made me look sick, but actually I was just really stressed at the separation. There seemed to be no care or provision in the ICU for a woman who had just given birth and was bleeding heavily and needed to be able to get up and have some privacy to change pads etc. I also wasn't helped to express milk nor was I allowed to see my baby. The doctor the next morning agreed that I was at a much higher medical risk being separated from my baby than being with him, so allowed me to return to maternity where my blood pressure went back to normal.

Back in the maternity ward it was still made very clear that my new baby was theirs, not mine. I wasn't allowed to take him out or feed him until I was told. A nurse brought him out in a crib all swaddled up for my mum and in-laws to see but told me no one was allowed to pick him up until she got back as 'we don't play pass the baby here'!

A kind midwife had to fight the special care nurse to come and get me at night when he needed a feed rather than give formula.

My husband and I were coerced into signing to say he could be given formula by being told he would go hungry otherwise, even though I had brought in frozen colostrum and was expressing by this point.

I was explicitly told I was not allowed to hold my baby during any heel prick because then he would associate me with pain and that our relationship was already fragile enough.

I was treated like a danger whenever I questioned what was happening and why, so I stopped. I got genuinely scared that they would not let us keep our baby and got very anxious whenever my husband asked questions. He was often treated by the staff as if he was aggressive or controlling, when he would literally just ask what a test they were doing was for. He never tried to stop them, just asked for information!

They said the baby had an infection and needed antibiotics, later we were told there was no actual infection. We were told he had jaundice and needed light treatment, but later told he didn't 'need' the lights, just close to the line of needing them. No information was clear or reliable. Neither the baby, nor myself had actually been seriously unwell; it had all been precautionary.

I was given injections (heparin I think?) everyday and no one would tell me what they were. They left massive bruises and really hurt! Eventually I begged a midwife to tell me why I was getting them as

she said that it was because I was overweight, they were for clotting...but that I didn't need them because I wasn't in bed, I was walking up and down the ward all the time to my baby. So I asked if she could put in my notes that I was politely declining all further injections of this. The head doctor, Dr [redacted] who I had seen during pregnancy and who had been rude, condescending and dismissive during my pregnancy, continued to be an extreme level of unprofessional every time I saw her during my stay in hospital. I am a pretty amenable person, such a stereotypical 'good girl' that it is a fault of mine and don't often take a dislike to people, but Dr [redacted] is someone who I will take a long time to forgive for the way she treated me at my most vulnerable.

It was 5 days of hell! And I honestly believe that if we had stayed at home rather than being 'checked out in the hospital' we would have had skin to skin, initiated breastfeeding and been fine. There were a couple of angels while we were there, to whom I will be forever grateful, but nearly 17 months later I still want to cry writing this. I don't have birth trauma...I have hospital trauma. I have regular nightmares and even have to remind myself during the day sometimes that we are safe, he is mine and no one is going to take him away. I don't trust medical staff at all and am so careful how and when I engage with this system. I am also very sure that transferring in from a home birth made a difference to how we were treated. Most midwives understand but the doctors seem to take it as a personal insult or treat us as dangerous. There was even a weird situation where the doctor insisted my husband be on the phone on speaker when she spoke to me as I would be allowed to talk to her without him! I felt like this was a direct assumption about our lifestyle because I had chosen a home birth. I think we would have been cared for far more, especially in those first few hours, if we had chosen to birth in hospital. I was told my private midwife would not be allowed to come into the ward, only into the café...which I later found out wasn't true. And her (my PPM) hesitance about her scope when in the hospital made it seem impossible to ask for her to come in and see us (something we had had to discuss before the birth), and I was desperate for her to be there as a medical professional whose wisdom and judgement I could trust. Maybe if it was easier for them to work together we wouldn't have been in as long and it wouldn't have been so awful! I would like to make a complaint. Maybe writing this is the first step to getting some of it clear enough in my head to do so, but I also don't want to dredge it all up for myself if I won't make a difference. Thank you for standing up for women like me who have experienced such heartbreaking and hurt at a time that should be so joyful!

15. I had my daughter at home with a private midwife in SA on June 20th. I'm a G4P3 and had previously 2 NVB in hospital.

I was 41+4 when I went into labour and the hospital close by was aware of a woman in the community (myself) who was planning a home birth with a private midwife who was post-dates. I had planned with my midwife to meet with the hospital when I got to 41+6 to discuss my options of a IOL as my local hospital wouldn't take women past 42 weeks and if I was to be induced I wanted it done at that hospital so I could still have a water birth and birth in a familiar hospital instead of getting transferred to a major hospital in the city an hour away from home.

I SR0Md at 41+4 and birthed my daughter at home at 41+5 everything went well, intact, placenta appeared intact and EBL approx 700mls managed with IM oxytocin. Day 2 I felt rather awful and couldn't walk due to dizzy and out of breath I got up crawled to the bathroom to have a shower and I had a 2.5L PPH my midwife was already in talks with the doctor who was in collaboration with my care and signed off my paperwork at the start of my pregnancy to be eligible to have midwifery care/home birth. Once in the hospital I had excellent care, the midwives were hyping me up saying how fantastic my birth was and how amazing I am. I received 2 units of blood, iron and had an ultrasound scan. I had a retained 2cm by 2cm product and 3x rounds of misoprostil. My husband

came in with my older daughters and the hospital encouraged me to breastfeed my toddler and that helped expel the product.

I saw multiple Drs and all were fantastic and encouraging. I did experience some negativity from one Dr but I feel that was due to myself questioning her decisions and the medications she wanted me to take. I am also a registered nurse and midwife myself.

I questioned the need for antibiotics and the type of antibiotics prescribed while I was not symptomatic.

Not sure if the reason I was so well looked after was because they knew I was a RN/RM. I however did find the hospital to be extremely restrictive when I was pregnant

16. I had a planned homebirth with a private midwife in December. After 12 hours of hard labouring I agreed for the midwife to check my dilation and it was only 2cm, the check was excruciatingly painful for some reason and I decided to transfer.

When we got to the hospital I was desperate for an epidural, however they would not provide me with one until they did a dilation check, even though my midwife was with me they would not listen to her and her notes they said they had to do their own checks, after a lot of back and forth I was allowed gas to help with the pain and to undergo the check to which was then able to get an epidural.

Once I was told the risks involved with the epidural but advised of how rare they were it was administered and then I was told it was pushed too far in but that it should be fine.

It wasn't, only one side of my body took to the epidural and I was still getting extremely painful contractions on my left side so they rolled me over and hoped it would come through.

Again it didn't, so they had to take it out and re-administer, and then I was given as much as was allowed to catch up.

In the meantime, bub wasn't taking well to the contractions and heart rate was dipping at each contraction, then his heart rate dipped and took a couple of minutes to come back to baseline which meant I was advised I needed a c-section as any other options posed a higher risk.

In the time it took for them to prep me for a c-section, bubs heart rate dropped again and I was upgraded to a cat 1 emergency and was pushed through into immediate surgery.

I was extremely nauseous and was starting to shake from the amount of epidural I was given, I had no idea what was happening, why I was being rushed through, why it turned into an emergency, I felt like I was going in and out of consciousness almost and my husband was extremely worried as no one was telling him anything either.

I had made my requests very clear to everyone that I wanted to delay cord clamping until the cord turned white, I wanted no use of vacuum or forceps, and I wanted immediate skin to skin.

Bub came out with the use of forceps even though they were not necessary, he wasn't engaged at all in my pelvis so this was used out of convenience without my consent, I wasn't allowed immediate skin to skin as they claimed he came out required assistance with mucus and was a little floppy, however his apgar score was 9, and because they claimed he needed assistance but none was actually required they cut the cord without my consent also.

I then wasn't even able to have him on me aside from the 30 seconds or so I got to see him before they took him to the nursery as they claimed he needed oxygen but then none was provided as he didn't require it.

Meanwhile I was taken to recovery and was there for almost 3 hours as they gave me that much epidural that I was shaking uncontrollably and the numbness rose up to my neck and they were worried about my breathing due to this. They then brought bub into recovery so I could be with him and feed him/do skin to skin.

I was then made to get up and shower several hours later which I did not want to do but was made to, this ended up in me almost screaming the ward down as my scar was searing with pain from the pressure of standing and I was made to feel as though I was overreacting by the pain management nurse saying it's normal when the midwives on duty said they hadn't seen this kind of pain before.

Then I had a lot of latching issues, each midwife told me a different technique saying the previous one I was told wasn't right so I ended up with extremely damaged nipples.

I was never told I had to monitor bubs nappies and mark off wet/dirty nappies and feeds on the chart.

3 days later I requested to go home and they discharged me with no information on c-section recovery at all, I was only provided with basic wound care information to keep it dry and take the dressing off at 7 days.

It was the most horrible and traumatic experience

17. I had a transfer in 2020 for a retained placenta and PPH. On arrival at the hospital my private midwife gave a handover about the birth and steps she took to manage the bleeding. (I am a nurse at the hospital so I knew the staff well and had considered some of them friends at the time). they kept asking me questions about my baby and congratulating me and stood around as I laid shaking and bleeding. My midwife had to step up with my partner and ask them to hurry up and get things moving for me.

The obstetrician then tried to do a manual removal of my placenta by shoving his hand inside of me and tugging as hard as he could. He did not ask me if he could do this, he didn't even tell me he was going to do it. My body was shaking uncontrollably from the injections I'd had before my transfer to expel the placenta so when the obstetrician had his hand inside of me my legs tensed up and closed and he just looked at me and told me very matter of fact that I 'need to relax'. it's all a bit of a blur, after that I was being moved for surgery and I passed out.

I ended up losing 3L of blood in total. when I came to after surgery my midwife and partner explained part of what had happened but no Dr ever came and spoke with me. My partner said he couldn't make sense of what they told him because it all sounded very medical. We were in a covid lockdown so only my partner could be with me and our midwife had to leave. She stayed in contact over the phone during my 2 day stay and called the ward daily to speak with the staff about my care. Initially the midwives at the hospital failed to start my antibiotics post surgery despite me mentioning it 3 times. I ended up asking to speak with the dr to get her to resite my IVC so I could breastfeed without the machine alarming and mentioned it to her who got it sorted straight away.

I had 1 iron infusion during surgery and 1 blood transfusion afterwards. My HB the week of my child's birth was 130 and after surgery it was 74. I couldn't breathe lying down at night and couldn't hold my baby to feed or wash my hair from the lack of oxygen. I was discoloured and struggled to walk but on my second day the hospital discharged me. I asked to speak with a dr and explained that I did not feel safe to go, my partner spoke up and said he knew me well enough to know that I was really not okay and he didn't think I should go either. The doctor told me the iron infusion would

kick in slowly and I would start to feel better in a few days. We left and returned under the care of our private midwife who spent 10 days with us and organised follow up at a specialist haematologist who took one look at me and said the hospital should not have sent me home. He did an extra iron infusion and gave an injection of vitamins and monitored my blood work for a few weeks until my blood work had improved and felt happy to discharge me home.

As a nurse I felt really upset about the lack of consent and communication from the staff I'd worked alongside. It was sad to see how the midwives looking after me would alter the way they behaved or spoke after they would learn that I was a nurse in the hospital.

18. I planned a homebirth for my second baby in 2023. I did this after experiencing birth trauma with my first baby (born in a private hospital in 2021). I knew having a homebirth with a PPM was my best chance of achieving a VBAC (which I did). Unfortunately my son required breathing assistance after his birth, at home, so we transferred to the hospital where my midwives had visiting rights. I had Covid at the time of birth so was transferred to birth suites, and eventually an isolation room on the maternity ward, and my son was transferred straight to NICU. At this stage I had maybe 3 seconds maximum of skin to skin, only because my midwife told the paramedics to give him to me before transporting him. We weren't reunited until the afternoon of the third day in hospital. I had mixed care from the hospital midwives. Some were amazing, they sat and spoke to me, some confided that they had home births themselves or were planning them. Some midwives literally left my food at the door to go cold and threw things to me through the small gap in the door (understandably I had Covid but still..). One NICU nurse in particular had a reputation on the ward for being "anti homebirth" and refused to give me updates on my son while he was in her care. The NICU staff promised me videos, photos, FaceTime and regular updates on him which I had to constantly request when they demanded more milk from me. I started a constant cycle of pump, sterilise, repeat - determined to increase my supply and continue to refuse formula (I had to do this four times). It was only on the third day when my husband (also Covid positive and unable to visit us in hospital) told the NICU staff we would discharge if we could not be reunited that they managed to bring him to my room and have NICU staff come to check on him there. Quite honestly the care was ridiculous, mostly from the NICU staff, who seemed to not understand how breast milk is produced. I was eventually sent photos of my son but he could have been any baby. I was watching videos of my older son trying to get the oxytocin flowing to get my milk in. I asked every day if my parents could visit my son in NICU so I knew he had someone there who loved him, would hold him and comfort him when he cried. The response I always got was only the parents could visit and that we would have to wait until TEN DAYS post Covid to go onto the NICU ward. How unreasonable is that. I have no idea how my son spent his first three days earthside, if someone held him when he cried, held his hand or spoke to him. I will never know and that still haunts me every day.

During my hospital stay my private midwives visited me on the ward everyday. They were in constant contact with me, checking in regularly and also giving me updates on my son. They would visit him in NICU before coming to see me and bring photos. There was an obvious power struggle between them and the midwives on the ward. It seemed like they were intimidated by the private midwives who had to throw their weight around a bit to get things done. I chose to do collaborative care with an obstetrician who was disgusted that my stitches, due to a tear, weren't checked daily by the hospital midwives. They didn't seem to know who was boss.

I am beyond grateful that I had my private midwives support throughout this experience. I honestly believe that I would have experienced major PPD/PPA/PTSD if I didn't have them there. They helped me advocate for myself and my son in a hospital system we know is not set up to support mothers and babies. They checked in constantly so I knew I had support and someone to talk to

while I was isolated from my baby, my family and the other mothers on the ward. I am also grateful that it was my second birth so I had confidence to stand up for what I wanted and didn't turn into a yes girl like I did during my first birth.

19. I had a hospital transfer with my first but was incredibly lucky that my PM was highly respected at the hospital, and her colleagues that supported me once we were there respected my wishes, and were unwavering in their support for me. Despite it being everything I didn't want, and a recipe for trauma, I came away feeling heard, strong, triumphant, high on oxytocin, and on top of the world. A forceps birth with an intact peri, I was wanting to drive us all home after 78 hrs of contractions. I am fully aware that this is incredibly rare and it's something I appreciate immensely.

20. I planned a home birth in 2020 because my local hospital wouldn't permit a VBAC. We transferred knowing it probably meant a c-section. The hospital midwives were very positive about home birth and very supportive. The attending OB was patronising. PPM was told she couldn't stay (due to COVID restrictions) but pushed to stay for a hand over. The paediatrician who attended postpartum tried to have PPM reported/ deregistered even though I laboured longer at hospital waiting for c-section than I did at home.

I stayed 5 days in hospital and the midwives and paed nurses were supportive. The paediatrician and his registrar asked lots of questions about why we planned a homebirth. They were not hostile toward me in fact the registrar seemed genuinely interested. He asked why I hadn't had the glucose test for GDM and seemed surprised that there are other indicators you could look for and then choose to do the test if it seemed necessary.

21. I had a hb transfer after pushing for a long-time and trying everything but the baby's head was deflexed and asynclitic. When at hospital we asked to try vacuum or forceps before theatre. One Dr said "you know we'll probably pull the skin off your baby's head"... and "do you want a dead baby?", this is despite the baby coping very well the entire time. Then after having a cs, a mw came and said that I shouldn't feed my baby until she checked the latch and to call before I feed. This is despite saying I had breastfed 2 other children for 5.5yrs between them. I also heard the midwives refer to me as the homebirther who pushed for 4 hrs, how stupid. Another Dr in recovery told me I should have more babies and to never try a vaginally birth. There was one good Dr who did try to get vacuum on baby but just couldn't get him turned. He came and said that I have a big roomy pelvis and even though baby was 10lb, if he was positioned well I could easily give birth to him. I was out on day 2...home, sweet home 🏠

22. I was transferred about 3/4 hrs after giving birth due to retained placenta and the worry of pph. My midwives at home made me feel very informed and relaxed about the transfer. Ambo staff were also great. The midwives were kind and welcoming when we arrived despite one commenting "gosh she really doesn't want to be here" (you don't say a home birth mum doesn't want to be in hospital!?) The midwives tried however couldn't get the placenta out so the obstetric reg came in to remove my placenta. She was rude, abrasive and downright unemotional. Both my private midwife and husband

said something to her during the whole ordeal. She was able to remove my placenta and dealt with the pph that followed it. At the end of the day being a registered nurse who has assisted with retained placenta and pph cases I am happy with how they treated me medically. But I did complain to qld health about how she treated me emotionally and that was followed up by them.

Once I was in the ward I had a lovely midwife who let my husband stay longer than visiting hours while I was getting a blood transfusion.

I wouldn't say I felt traumatised but more annoyed at how rude she was. I didn't want to be there and was in a lot of pain so wasn't exactly a delight myself but geez if you're going to be in obstetrics you need to have some people skills.

I will also add that the paediatrician respected my decision to not give the baby the hepatitis b injection. He gave me a pamphlet so I could be "fully informed" but I didn't feel like he was rude about it.

23. I had a hospital transfer 6 hours postpartum. My baby was fine, I however could not stop fainting. Unable to care for my baby or get up to go to the toilet. My midwife could not get an IV drip into me for my blood pressure because I was dehydrated and I have very shallow veins. I was treated poorly by the hospital staff. They insisted to the point of begging me to allow my 6 hour old baby to be given antibiotics. Trying to convince me she desperately needed it and that I was not putting her needs first (even though no tests showed anything wrong with her or any reason for antibiotics) While my partner went to re-park the car they kept touching her and wanting to take measurements even though they did not ask my permission and I barely had the strength to stop them. She was not meant to be the patient. I was. I felt very vulnerable and unheard. I had to sign a waiver stating I declined antibodies for her. I felt like I had done it, I was so proud of myself but they made me feel so much like I failed.

24. I had an emergency transfer last year, after a very long labour at home realised Bub was stuck (brow malpresentation). The transfer itself was awful; was forced to lay down when this was excruciating due to having 'back labour'. If I had been allowed to sit up that would have been better. In the hospital however I found most staff to be kind, helpful and respectful. My PM was there with me and also my Doula. The OB and the anaesthesiologist were especially kind, I didn't feel forced but it was explained to me that we essentially had no other option other than a C-section. We tried EVERYTHING to facilitate a natural birth. There was one nurse who was awful, but for the most part I felt supported. My PM was not able to be there for the surgery, but she was there afterwards and all hospital staff were great with her (she had previously worked there). My requests for care of my baby were mostly respected however I did have to advocate for myself & Bub several times during the two days we stayed in hospital.

25. I had a long labour back in 2020 that ended up in hospital transfer. As the contractions slowed down and baby was already engaged, I pushed and pushed with no luck. My bladder was full and baby was unable to pass, ended up begging the hospital staff to leave me to birth naturally. One of the midwives was lovely, but the doctor I had assigned was despicable. Kept examining me during contractions, she was rude and made comments about me. Eventually I just couldn't push baby out and they used forceps to help. It was a quick slide as he was already crowing for so long. Also I had a bi-lobed placenta and velamentous cord insertion, but the doctor kept pushing me to get the placenta out or she would "wheel me into theatre and cut it out of me". Her exact words. Most awful

experience after dreading the idea of a hospital birth. So grateful I had my PM and doula there but still felt uneasy and refused to stay any longer than I needed to. I was home within 4 hours of birth.

26. I transferred after a very long posterior labour. We transferred to the hospital where our midwives had admitting rights. For the actual labour and birth I felt fully supported, however my baby required some resuscitation and ended up admitted to NICU for a couple of days. Here, there were digs about private midwifery, her gestation (born at 42+3) and me not allowing bottle feeds (despite a healthy milk supply). I was made to feel they wouldn't discharge her until we met their criteria for breastfeeds (an assessment, which I was not privy to). This was during covid so I was not even allowed to be with my baby with my husband, everything was all alone. I went on to have another beautiful birth, at home which was so healing.

27. I tried to have a home birth with my now 8 month old. I'm very grateful that I got to labour at home for around 22 hours (why me!?) but it got to the point where I couldn't stop vomiting, I couldn't eat or drink, bub was still sitting very high and I felt within myself that something was wrong and that we weren't progressing or working together. I felt him trying to get through my pelvis and not getting anywhere. I chose to head to the hospital and when we got there I said this isn't working and I need a c section. The OB suggested an epidural and to keep trying as I had been trying to have bub at home, but due to previous trauma about not requesting an epidural and being given one I definitely didn't want that and I knew something was wrong and that I needed a c section. They popped a cannula in, gave me meds to stop the vomiting, did a bedside ultrasound that showed Bub was high (like I said) and then put on ctg monitoring. Bub wasn't doing well at all, so I had a cat 1 c section under GA. Bub was not alive when he was born, was resuscitated, intubated and in special care for 5 days where he was on CPAP which he took off himself and IV antibiotics. Because he pulled his CPAP off and did well he wasn't transferred to a NICU. I wonder if it would have gotten to that stage if they just listened to me when I said I needed a c section to begin with? My private midwife came with me and had a fight with the hospital midwife so it was pretty frosty in our room. She had also left by the time I woke up and didn't even text me to ask how I was. I feel really let down by her especially for this. I had to contact her to organise postnatal visits and we didn't do all of the routine ones due to this. It all went really badly and I feel that the support I had paid for wasn't there. I know and understand that this absolutely wouldn't be the case with everyone, but I wouldn't use a private midwife again because of this experience. I don't think we'll have more kids and I would love one

28. I had a home birth transfer on 22/02, so not even two weeks ago. I transferred for a breech presentation, but with his bottom sitting in my hip. He moved to breech days before I went into labour. The midwife we had on transfer to the hospital was fantastic and listened to my private midwife, who voiced my fears, wishes and concerns. I ended up having a c section. The obstetric team and midwifery team were happy for my husband and private midwife to be with me, but the theatre nurses refused to let my private midwife in. My private midwife was with myself or my baby until we were on the ward together. She advocated for me every step of the way and prevented what could have been an extremely traumatic experience to only slightly traumatic. Overall, there weren't many comments that appeared to be negative about having planned a home birth, though I did get a lot of 'but you and baby are safe and that's all that matters', which wasn't helpful.

29. I planned a Homebirth for 2022 (first baby) But when I was 41 + 5 we found out that bub was breech. There were no Sydney doctors trained in breech that we could become connected with.

Transferred to the hospital the same day that we found out he was breech & had a C- section. Majority of my care I can't complain about. However the OB that I first spoke to, to discuss my options with, basically told me I was an incompetent mother & that my baby could die. Thankfully as a Birth Doula I knew I would hear these things. But still as a first time mum particularly it was very upsetting & made me seriously doubt all my decisions.

No one said it to my face, but many of the comments definitely gave me the feeling they were all thinking "this is what happens when you plan a Homebirth"

Happy with some of my care at the hospital (mainly midwives - some not so good, but most were lovely). Just very unhappy with the OB that I had to deal with

30. I had a planned homebirth last year. I laboured for 18 hours at home, even got into the pool with what we thought was a transition. With minimal change in my labour progress, my private midwife advised we go into hospital and she wanted to break my waters. I said no again and again, eventually I agreed to go into the hospital as it had been so long and in case I felt like I needed pain relief options as baby was posterior and I was having no break in contractions. It was a gruelling 50 minute drive to hospital with a police escort in traffic. My midwife took me into a ward room and I cried and cried saying this is not what I wanted and felt like a failure. I felt so unsafe and like I no longer trusted my midwife. I was told we were going to the family birth centre not the labour ward. I refused to stay and she took us to the birth centre. She then swapped with her back midwife, who made me feel so empowered and safe. I believe this is why my baby would not come any earlier.

With lots of movement and exercises, we successfully got baby to turn and I still had my successful water birth, 28 hours later, with no intervention. Although all the elements of my birth were how I wanted, I was not in the place I had hoped and prepared for and this was so heartbreaking

31. My membranes ruptured at 36+4 so we (me, husband, midwife) made the decision to attend hospital for assessment, labour progressed naturally & babe was born a couple hours later. It was a fantastic birth, with the only intervention being a dose of IV antibiotics during my labour. At the time, I felt like hospital was the safest place for us to be, however our labour & birth went so smoothly that I know it could have been done at home and that saddens me. I still look upon this birth as a good experience though 😊

32. I had a home birth in WA with a beautiful private midwife. labour and birth went amazingly, then I started bleeding when starting to deliver the placenta. I made the call to transfer as no medications seemed to be stemming the blood and I wasn't feeling good. My midwife came with me in the ambulance, and held my hand while I had multiple people poking things into me from all sides. My bleeding had responded to the medication the ambulance had given me, so this was no longer an emergency case, and yet they still continued to pump me full of medications to keep my uterus contracting despite finding nothing in there on examination, an exam which felt incredibly forceful and unkind, delivered by a doctor who had told me when I asked about the end of the bed being removed that 'we remove it so you can't squirm away from me'. I still had doctors on all sides

of me when a paediatrician came in and asked if my baby had a vit K injection, and continued pushing when I declined the shot.

My hospital admission ended with my baby on a 5 day stay for antibiotics, multiple doctors telling me that having a home birth and a water birth was the reason that my baby was now unwell. they wouldn't take him off the glucose drip because he wouldn't drink his top up after a breastfeed, even though it was obvious he was getting milk and was satisfied..

33. I was meant to have my second planned homebirth until I had a diagnosis at 34 weeks and became "high risk" due to my baby having achondroplasia - dwarfism.

I still had her via spontaneous labour and a vaginal birth in hospital. against - 20 specialists "recommendation for a planned c section". I was told my baby would get stuck and I would most likely end up cut hip to hip, haemorrhage, and potentially need a hysterectomy.

And when I said I didn't want a caesar he (the head of maternity) said well would you rather have a c-section or give your baby a spinal injury.

Nothing he said would happen, happened. She was born crying and healthy. As was I. 9 apgar scores from birth.


I was also offered a 34 week abortion from a social worker 10 minutes after we found out about our bubs condition.

I know it's not a transfer during labour but wondered if this was considered a homebirth transfer of care as well? My story is rare but I feel like its significant



34. I had an attempted HBAC and subsequent transfer to hospital and an 'unplanned' c section. I laboured at home for 2 days and 2 nights before chances in the baby's heart rate meant we transferred. I always knew in my heart there was a chance it would happen but it was a positive experience in that myself and my birth team and private midwife were very respected by the hospital, and it was night and day to my first birth experience. I laboured for another 12 hours in hospital before we as a group made a decision to section. It was discovered in theatre that I was actually rupturing so I'm grateful I was in the right place in the end.

I think about my birth almost daily. There is a part of me that will always always be sad I didn't get to experience a vaginal birth and I still think I have a bit to work through around that. I find it hard to believe it happened the way it did when I did so much prep to have a VBAC. But I am grateful for the support I had this time around and I think that team is such a vital part of a birth experience.

Grateful that this post says I can still be called a homebirther 

35. We had a homebirth transfer yesterday and our woman was made to feel safe and supported with her choices respected. Unfortunately, when different obstetric staff came on in the evening, one felt they could come in unannounced (also someone they had never met before) and stand at the end of the bed watching the women birth her baby - this was not respectful to the

woman, her partner and her birthing space. In addition, paediatric staff advised the woman and her partner that if they did not consent to prophylactic antibiotics for the baby they would be reported to child services! It was bullying and coercive.

36. I had a long labour and a big (4.3kg, 58cm long, 37.5cm head) baby at home in 2010.

Laboured for 36h at 40+5, active labour for 15h,

2h 2nd stage, syntocin 3rd stage, intact placenta. PPH so ambo called. Baby 9/10 and 10/10 but I couldn't stand without dizziness and weakness.

Ambos arrived and immediately elevated my head despite being told by 2 very very experienced public midwives (community midwifery program, WA) not too. I passed out 30secs. Attempted intubation, spat out, came too and was coherent, answering questions correctly

("do you remember what happened today?!"

"yeah I just had a giant baby, check him out over there!")

Tachy and with it in ambo.

Arrived [redacted] emergency and was just treated like dirt. There was some note in my file from 40w check up about homebirth being ill advised by a new and junior Dr. They went absolutely ballistic at my poor MW who came in with me (CMP were never issued any orders from [redacted] re HB, this was confirmed that day and after the fact)

They examined me roughly physically and offered no "bedside manner", wouldn't allow me to hold the baby despite being separated 45 mins already, and insisted there was some retained placenta. MWs assured there wasn't. They insisted there was and said we needed a uterine ablation etc. So much pressure and fear was applied we said yes.

I asked if hubs and baby could come, they said no. This ended up being a 4h separation, I was left waiting alone and crying for an hour with a spinal block (I watched the clock because they told me it'd last 45 mins so then I was panicking)

I lay in stirrups in OR with a million people around me sobbing. Noone spoke to me or offered any comfort or words of support. (the absolute horror for me, the legs in stirrups with strangers everywhere was one of the main reasons I wanted to hb, they couldn't have known this obvs but maybe if someone asked me anything at all??)

Post procedure, I was told there was no retained placenta (no shit!) but there was a small internal wall tear which is what bled.

I finally got upstairs and to a room to see baby and hubs. Hubs was practically catatonic with fear and stress. He'd been alone with the baby that whole time having no idea. No comms or check ins for him

I obviously held baby and then at 11pm was checked on, I now have my notes (can provide them!!) it's says

"mother refused to put baby down"

Um lol no shit, I'd barely held him?

Then my next check in from the nurse was after 5am! Almost 6h I was left alone to try to bf while having trouble moving and so on and so forth.

The next day Dr [redacted] head of hb home program came in and said there was no reason I shouldn't have homebirthed and wrote this in notes (can provide they're a riot!) I said my midwife needed an apology, I think that happened in a very roundabout way etc.

Anyway, they wouldn't let us leave. Wanted to do all these paed things to baby and of course I was fully freaked out and anxious and just wanted to go home and they kept us all day trying to force us to do things. My MWs were traumatised so I was trying to leave them alone and I didn't know I could just DAMA 🙏 anyway, we finally left at 6pm and we were a mess. It was horrific. There was one nice morning nurse, and Dr [redacted] is a good sort, every other staff member contributed to extensive and long reaching trauma. Baby is about to turn 14, I will never forget the separation and stress ❤️❤️❤️

I forgot to add, hubs send home at 9pm so I was literally alone until he returned at 7am)

37. I transferred after a home birth. My birth was straight forward. It was beautiful with no complications. However, after birthing, my baby's SATS kept dropping too low (and her body temperature). The midwives (through MGP) were amazing. They used the oxygen tank and ensured baby was on my chest and then covered in a blanket for warmth whilst waiting for the paramedics. They were so calm and reassuring. They requested no lights or sirens on the ambulance transfer, and they came in the back with me. Baby spent 2 nights in special care nursery. At the hospital, I got the sense that there seemed to be a diverse range of midwife opinions on home birth (however nobody outwardly treated us differently). Most of the midwives were very reassuring and supportive of home birth. However, the gist I got from the midwives was that the paediatricians were uninformed and unsupportive of home birth. And therefore, some of the midwives seemed to advocate for birthing women.

38. I had a hospital transfer post birth due to my son aspirating meconium. I had a really positive experience (as far as you can having a hospital transfer!) for the most part bar one nurse. Bub was in NICU for 7 days during covid lock down in [redacted] 2021 and they lodged me nearby so I could feed regularly and be with him. I'm not sure if you're after something like this but happy to contribute. I was part of the community midwifery program so my midwives were known to the hospital.

39. I had a planned homebirth turned hospital transfer. My poor experience was actually with the MGP midwife I had for the homebirth. Abuse of power, manipulation, coercion, I'd ask her to leave me alone or not to touch me and she'd lift up my blanket while I was trying to rest and put a doppler on me anyway.

Paramedics were lovely, hospital staff were extremely gentle with us - I felt like they were extra kind BECAUSE we transferred. The next day they did suggest elective c-section with no valid reasons so I was miffed about that but our treatment on arrival was amazing.

40. We were transferred as bub became tachy, transferred via personal car and the midwives at the hospital had been pre-briefed by my private midwives and were ready for us so we went straight in. They encouraged me to make the space my own and ensure I was comfortable and were very empathetic and understanding.

Monitored for a little while and found everything was perfect so after a respectful chat with the night OB, hospital midwife and my secondary midwife we all agreed it would be safe for us to transfer back home. Whilst waiting for discharge paperwork we unfortunately had meconium in our waters and from then, as I also had prolonged ruptured membranes of almost 48 hours at this point, decided to stay at the hospital and try and get some rest and decide on a course of action in the morning.

The hospital team made sure I was able to utilise wireless monitoring and the shower for pain relief (bub was also posterior and brow presentation), the next morning my contractions had slowed right down and I was extremely exhausted coming into my 3rd day of no sleep or food, so we decided to augment labour, and within a few hours I wasn't getting by a break from the back labour, we trialed sterile water injections and gas and different labour positions to try and move bub with great support from the hospital staff, however it got to a point where I was so exhausted I couldn't stand and I decided to get an epi to both give me a break and possibly help relax and see if bub would turn. The day OB's were definitely much more stand-offish and very quick to discuss c-section and were also quite relentless with pushing antibiotics as I had initially declined.

I continued to labour through the day with slow progress, the hospital midwives I had trialed different positions with me, however bub's didn't like them. The day OB put me on the clock and again pushed for a c section however when the night OB started she was happy to give me more time.

Eventually we did end up getting a c section the following morning, however I wasn't pressured into it by the night OB, she left the decision in my hands and all the staff were extremely understanding and considerate of my decision.

Again everyone in theatre was so understanding and kind and ensured that my wishes were met, skin to skin, us finding out the gender ourselves etc.

The next morning the night OB visited for a debrief and also offered one at 6 weeks postpartum if I wished and in general she was so lovely and made what was ultimately everything I didn't want, a much better experience.

The worst part of the transfer was by far the postnatal care, I found many of the midwives quite judgemental and forceful, particularly when it came to breastfeeding, there was very little support in this area and I also found I was given so much direction and information whilst on heavy pain killers and none of it was written down, so I've mostly forgotten it all 😊

I also had a horrible experience with a home care midwife post discharge who stormed into our house, didn't introduce herself or acknowledge my partner, completely focused on weight loss and formula top ups, didn't ask how I was going or check my bleeding or incision, gave my daughter a bottle without asking and honestly was just horrible. I called first thing Monday to discharge myself from the program so I didn't need to see her again.

I should also add that although my midwives did not have a collaborative agreement with my transfer hospital, they were still able to be with me in the birth suite and at every stage the hospital staff were respectful of their place and understanding that they were my team and supported me with consulting them and in most cases left the room to give us space to discuss decisions.

41. My pregnancy was normal and healthy when I went into spontaneous labour at 42+5 weeks gestation. My labour started overnight and by around 8am I was very much in active labour. My midwife offered to check my dilation at around midday, where she found I was 10cm. I felt happy and calm, knowing that I would soon meet my baby. For me that's where things started to go south. After a few hours, my contractions started to slow down, lose intensity and became further apart. My private midwife seemed very uncomfortable about this. She did not speak to me directly about her concerns, she only whispered to her second midwife and spent some time on the phone. At around 3pm, she suggested the baby be born within an hour otherwise we would be transferring to the hospital. Naturally, I felt very stressed being put on the clock. The second midwife tried to "help" me with some coached pushing. There was lots of looking at the clock. Physically, I felt fine. Mentally, I was feeling quite defeated. Knowing that transfer was inevitable at that point, we got in the car and drove to the hospital. Midwives welcomed me kindly and with respect. The OB on duty did not. She was not interested in hearing any kind of handover from my midwife. She was disgusted that my labour had gone on for "far too long", and kept bringing up my "high BMI" as a reason why I shouldn't have been attempting a homebirth. This was all happening while I was still contracting, my baby had not even been born yet and I was being insulted and abused by this professional. She did a vaginal exam without consent and broke my waters. She told me I was not tolerating the vaginal exam well and that we should get an epidural and attempt a forceps birth. By this point, my private midwife was standing on the edge of the room, offering me no support whatsoever. I was stressed. I felt alone and unsupported, and completely uninformed of my options (if I even had any). The OB was speaking very loudly to her colleagues about how she didn't want to attempt forceps, she only wanted to do a c-section. I continually told (asked) if we could try forceps first because it was my intention to have a vaginal birth. She agreed, and I signed the consent form. Once we went to the operating theatre, the OB started harassing my husband in the hallway to consent to a c-section. She was saying things such as "your wife probably has gestational diabetes, and her baby is likely over 5kg, so if we attempt forceps we will have to break the baby's arm". My husband knew she was being manipulative, and held his ground. When that was unsuccessful she came back to me and said the same things. I continually said, "okay, well lets just see how the forceps go first". Knowing in my heart that my baby wasn't of excessive size and that I did not have gestational diabetes. She then started talking to her colleagues (while I was still getting the anaesthetic in), saying that I was attempting to freebirth and when I "couldn't figure out what I was doing" I called a random midwife I knew to come over and assist me. This obviously wasn't true. But I didn't have the energy to correct her. I couldn't believe what she was saying. In the end I ended up consenting (coerced) into a c-section. The surgery itself was long and difficult. Baby was acynclitic. I lost 2.5L of blood and ended up with an inverted "T" incision. When my surgery was finished and my baby was born my private midwife had already left the hospital. I only heard from her twice after that day, including one home visit. The next day in the hospital the OB told me multiple times how she'd saved me and my babies lives. How we were so lucky that she was the Dr on because of how difficult the c-section was. She told me (while I was still in ICU), that the most important thing was that I needed to get back on contraception and make sure I didn't have another baby for 3 years. She told me to never labour on that scar again. She told me that if I attempted another homebirth and presented to that hospital, I would be turned away and refused treatment (which I know is not true). This OB told me that my choices were reckless and dangerous. She was disappointed to learn that my baby was normal size. Whilst in hospital recovering with my baby for the next 48 hours, she insisted that me and my baby be treated as diabetics with blood sugar monitoring (which was, of course, normal for both of us). I discharged against medical advice (with much difficulty) with PTSD symptoms, postnatal anxiety and a long journey of healing ahead of me.

42. I planned a home birth for my first pregnancy. I wanted to have the gold standard continuity of care with a known midwife, minimal testing throughout my pregnancy and an intervention free, physiological birth at home. I was a low risk and healthy woman. This was a very educated decision which I researched in depth, and I didn't take this lightly after my own professional experience as a registered nurse working in a Special Care Nursery environment. I went into labour at 39 weeks and 3 days. I laboured at home for 24 hours, I had my midwife at home with me supporting me when I felt I needed extra help. At home, with my known birth team, I felt safe, respected and supported. My son was posterior during my labour, causing me to have extreme back pain and I made the decision to transfer to hospital for pain relief.

Once I transferred to hospital, the care I received from the hospital staff was a direct contrast to my care at home with my known midwife. I was spoken to rudely, disrespectfully, and as though I was uneducated. Hospital staff attempted to coerce me into making decisions aligned with hospital policy and did not respect when I made an informed decision regarding my labour and birth. This is the opposite to the care women should be receiving in labour, not only to feel safe and supported but to also progress in their labour. My birth ended in an unplanned caesarean after 49 hours of labour, which included 4 hours of pushing.

I have been left with significant birth trauma, which is mainly caused by the way I was treated and spoken to by hospital staff. I have put in a complaint directly with the hospital, and I had to follow this up myself as I had not been contacted. Nothing came of my complaint and the hospital defended the way I was treated. I have had to have psychologist sessions and birth debriefing to heal from the trauma of my birth and anxiety this has caused me, which have been at my own financial expense. I am thankful I had postpartum care from my known midwife, which helped prevent my birth trauma from developing into postpartum depression.

43. I had a great homebirth transfer. My midwives and I made the call that transfer was needed, together. Blood in waters and baby didn't have a happy heart rate even after trying lots and lots of different positions, acupuncture etc. I had a 'gut feeling'. The transfer was via ambulance which my midwife came along in. Babe was born ten minutes after arriving in a dimly lit room passed straight through my legs and into my arms. He needed a bit of help after birth with breathing, but came straight back to me after about ten minutes. Delivered placenta naturally and discharged later that day. I can't fault any of it. I felt it was where home birth and hospital birth can meet perfectly.

44. Transferred postnatally from a planned home birth with private midwives. This ended in a 5 day special care nursery stay. The experience and treatment we received on our first evening there has left me so traumatised that even writing about it is so hard.

45. I had a postnatal transfer for a secondary PPH on day 2 the hospital that I was transferred to and both medical and midwifery teams were nothing but supportive and caring. My private midwife was also there along the way

46. Not had a homebirth myself, but as a midwife I've been treated poorly by paramedics (Men), actually- who acted like they were "properly trained" and I was an unskilled witchcraft worker ... highlighting that in some areas paramedics have no idea of our scope of practice nor do they respect us as primary care providers...

47. My (unnecessary) transfer ended in being held down and assaulted by an OB resulting in ongoing PTSD (still 3yrs later). Consent is non-existent in hospitals as far as I can tell. They only care what you want/say as long as you agree with them. Same went for my private midwife unfortunately.

48. My homebirth transfer was fantastic. However, the closest hospital is 4 mins. We chose to drive an hour away to go to _____ as that's the only Sydney hospital that allows continuity of care with private midwives. If only more hospitals allowed private midwives to have hospital rights this wouldn't be necessary.

In hospital I was respected and felt my midwives were too. (They may have a differing story). They successfully fought for what I wanted and helped us to make evidence based decisions and not be bullied into anything. The staff gave us evidence based options too and respected our position and we all made the decisions together.

Aftercare was a bit disjointed in the hospital as my midwife was not there in those first few days but we were treated well and with respect.

Overall I cannot fault my hospital transfer to westmead hospital.

I've had to unpack my birth and have counselling to feel at ease with it but that's more about being a failed homebirth than any treatment in hospital.

49. My baby boy _____ was born at home on Thursday 9 November 2023.

The labour was calm and peaceful under the caring guidance and skilled supervision of 2 midwives and a student midwife.

The birth went well, and _____ fed on my breast for 2hrs after emerging into the world via the birth pool. My partner, birthing team and I were on a natural high. We shared a sense of joy, connection and accomplishment that our preparation and teamwork had led to such a great outcome.

During the 'third stage' of labour, it became apparent that the placenta was not delivering spontaneously. My midwives employed a number of interventions to assist with the natural delivery of the placenta, including administering syntocinon, and employing controlled cord traction, to no avail. When it was clear I was losing blood and feeling unwell, an ambulance was called.

My primary midwife gave detailed information to the paramedics who then transferred me to _____ My midwives, my partner and baby _____ accompanied me.

My primary midwife called ahead of time and requested a theatre be prepared for the manual removal of the retained placenta. As she did not have visiting rights, they ignored her request.

Upon arrival at it took some time to find a space to triage me.

My primary midwife gave clear handover notes to the head midwife on duty in the hospital. Despite clear notes being given, conveying to the team all of the steps that had been taken, and the significant amount of blood lost (approx 1L upon arrival to) there would be a delay getting me into theatre as there was no theatre prepared, and it seemed the validity of my midwife's professional assessment was in question as a homebirth midwife who did not have visiting rights at - meaning multiple staff needed to reassess me and establish their own notes from scratch. It felt like there was an attitude amongst staff at that looked down upon homebirth midwives, and women who choose to homebirth. I would have preferred to transfer to where my midwife does have visiting rights, however was closest.

The head midwife in the hospital attempted, with force, to give me the green whistle many times. I was distressed and informed her I did not want it. The mouthpiece was forcefully put in my mouth by multiple staff at various times which caused me more distress. It also impeded me communicating with staff who were trying to assess me and physically examine me.

I think I was examined by three or more staff in that initial triage situation. The head midwife, the junior doctor, and finally, ob-gyn. All of these people attempted to manually remove the placenta, or dislodge it by pulling on the cord whilst still attached. I did not want this to occur at any time and by the time the OB decided to attempt this, I was screaming NO and buckling my body to move my vagina away from his hands. He stated that he was trying to avoid putting me under for a procedure, to which I communicated that was the reason we had presented at the hospital. I clearly stated I wanted to go under a general to have the placenta removed. My midwife had already tried to dislodge the placenta at home. Her attempt was the only one needed to know further treatment was required that could not be provided at home. But the feeling in the room was that they could not trust her word nor mine, and each time put me through further trauma by not listening to me, not respecting my wishes and putting me through unnecessary painful physical examinations repeatedly.

It was very distressing watching my baby, merely hours old, being held by my partner, both of them witnessing me writhe on the table in pain, crying. I was shivering and upset and exhausted. I felt unheard and disrespected. I felt humiliated, naked and bloody in front of a crowd of judgemental people.

When moved into theatre I became surrounded by male staff who sought to give me oxygen. They were frustrated with me being upset and agitated, even though I told them I was claustrophobic and that was why I didn't want the green whistle earlier, or to put the oxygen mask on. This was a time of great distress and required a calm, reassuring bedside manner. I did not receive such a manner at any time, and this added to my overwhelm. While one man barked 'Just put the damn thing on!' another tried to force it over my face. I then saw the OB come in and sit at the foot of the table, slouch on a chair, put a hand to his chin and watch with a tired bemused look on his face, as if he

was waiting for this petty drama to be over. There was a sense that the staff did not want to deal with me, or wish they didn't have to, like I was a crazy homebirther wasting their time. I felt very exposed and vulnerable, and extremely uncomfortable.

While under general anaesthetic I was given stitches without my consent. My midwife had already assessed me at home and in consultation with me, I had decided against stitches. I am still very upset to this day that my decision was revoked while I was unconscious.

I never saw or spoke to the OBI again.

I was kept in ICU overnight and told repeatedly I would be reunited with my partner and my newborn baby. They were allowed to visit once, in scrubs, around 1am and I think I fed I can't remember. They left, believing that we would be together, placed in a room in the maternity ward, within an hour or so. I could not rest properly wondering where they were, being separated from my baby, and feeling isolated, distressed and alone. It wasn't until about 6 or 7am that the paperwork was finally completed and I was allowed to be moved to maternity. (I was told the delay was entirely due to paperwork not being signed). Those hours were the longest of my life. My partner and my baby were forced to sleep on an armchair in the room I was triaged in. The room where so much trauma had occurred for all of us. They were offered no support, no bed. That was my baby's first night on earth. Cold, uncomfortable, hungry, and separated from his Mamma.

I was in for a total of 5 nights. On day 3 or 4 of my stay, a nurse was the only one who made enquiries as to my mental health and that of my partner, and pointed us to resources should we require them. She asked if I had been offered a debrief, and when I said no she asked if I would like one. I enthusiastically said yes. A couple of days later, at 6:45am, the junior doctor burst into my room and sat on my bed and abruptly barked 'I heard you have some questions?' and stared at me. I tried to awaken and function in order to have this conversation at a time thrust upon me, with a junior doctor instead of the Dr that performed the procedure on me, having been through labour, surgery, major blood loss, trying to adjust to life with a baby alone in hospital, and being under the effects of opioid pain meds. She sat with me for 10 mins and could barely remember the facts of my case. She briefly explained why the actions were taken by the team that night but I wasn't confident that she was referring to my individual case as opposed to stating sentences that covered her and the hospital's liability in emergency situations. There was a tone to her words as if to say 'if it wasn't for us, you wouldn't be here'. It was a tone that pervaded my stay, during which multiple inferences were made to the dangers of homebirth and my choices felt as if they were being questioned. I did not feel respected. I did not feel cared for. It did not help matters knowing the junior doctor was someone I had seen at EPAS multiple times the year prior when losing two babies. She did not remember me from those previous occasions. This added to a sense of being one of many, a number in a system, as opposed to a woman being at the centre of high quality care.

I asked to see the OB multiple times during my stay and each time was told he would eventually get to me, and that he was busy. He never made the effort to speak to me. I wanted to ask questions to his face including why he went against my wishes to pull on the cord while I was conscious and in pain, and why he gave me stitches without my consent. I am disgusted that would let a patient who has undergone emergency surgery go home without a proper debrief (scheduled at an

appropriate time in consultation with them), particularly a woman who has birthed and been through such a traumatic and life threatening experience.

Studies show that a high number of retained placentas are due to previous surgeries such as D&Cs. I received a D&C in February 2022 at .

My stay at was an overwhelming, distressing and confusing time. There were so many nurses who told me different information and had different medical perspectives. I am so glad I had my private midwife on my team who came to the hospital every day to check on me, advocate for me, fight for my rights, question the coercive nature of hospital processes, and assist me in healing and getting back on my feet. There were instances in my first week of motherhood where made me feel like I was already failing. As a patient you always get a sense that the staff know better than you, despite you knowing your body and your baby better than anyone.

had a mild case of jaundice, and knowing that sunshine is beneficial, I went to walk him out to a balcony for a moment of fresh air. A nurse on station saw me slowly strolling past with my partner and in his crib on wheels (I was actually using the crib as a walker I was so weak). She called out and asked us to stop. She sharply told us that our baby was not to leave the ward without a midwife. What a ridiculous policy. This is my baby. Not yours, I thought. Again, we were too drained to fight so we went back to the room.

These kinds of attitudes and rules, along with the appalling food served, create an atmosphere of surviving, not thriving. It all adds up to a picture that says 'we want you to get by, and get out'. There is no sense of healing, or holistic care, or wellness.

On my last day in the hospital when a newborn check was conducted (repeating the checks already performed by my private midwife) a 'click' was heard in 's right hip. I was not concerned, nor was my midwife. The nurse who conducted the check suggested a paediatrician double check this. I said yes, however the paediatrician took so long to appear, that I packed up to go home at 3pm and declined to wait for them any longer. This was with the knowledge that any concerns would not be addressed until 's 6wk check anyway.

I packed my bags and mustered the strength for the walk to the carpark, timing the exhausting journey between feeds. As I was exiting the room, two nurses rushed in with a form to be signed 'in accordance with hospital policy', noting my decline of the optional check, which may result in increased 'morbidity' for my baby. How insulting for a new mother to be treated in this way and made to feel like she is already failing her child in the first week of its life. I angrily signed the paper (which I wish I had the strength to decline) and walked out. I turned the corner and was stopped by a nurse. 'Hang on, wait a minute!! You're not taking your baby out like that are you?!' was in his car seat carrier wearing a singlet and a nappy. It was a hot Summer day, over 30 degrees, and I knew the car would be hot. Despite having my child's health and wellbeing at the top of my mind, I was treated like an imbecile and spoken down to. I was so tired and emotionally battered and didn't have the energy to engage in a discussion. I could not believe someone who had a duty of care toward me would treat me in such an undignified way. Despite our exacerbated faces, she further spoke

down to us explaining how a baby should be dressed. We were pressured into covering the baby with a blanket that we would remove a moment later due to the heat.

Some days after I was sent home from hospital I received a text from a midwife from MGP. I had been a patient of the MGP prior to making the decision to homebirth. She looked up my patient records without my permission, as word had got around about my case. She wanted to check in on me and wish me well. I told this to my private midwives and they were shocked at this unethical behaviour. Once someone is no longer a patient, I am told it is unethical to access their records. My case was a hot topic amongst the community however, I learned.

At the time of writing I do not have my medical notes on hand from my midwife or I would be happy to obtain them and share them with the inquiry. I do know, however, that:

I lost a total of 2.4L of blood.

I received a total of 3 blood transfusions.

I received an iron infusion.

My birth story was exactly the one I wanted, until I got to where the dream turned into a nightmare.

s blanket policy of keeping a baby in NICU while its mother is in ICU is overkill. Each case should be assessed individually. In my case my baby was well and with his father who was responsible and capable of caring for him. My baby was admitted to NICU without my consent, after staff coerced my partner, for the first two days of my stay, leading to a situation where he was over-medicalised. This led to an overly complicated series of medical tests, questions and treatments that were completely unnecessary and caused additional stress to our family.

50. I had a homebirth transfer 4 weeks ago. I'm a midwife and planned my homebirth for 5 years. Totally uncomplicated pregnancy with my private midwife, spontaneous labour at 41 weeks, laboured at home for almost 24 hours and transferred to hospital (my workplace) after 3 hours of pushing. Hospital staff didn't read my transfer plan, (but I guess we're busy organising CTG and cannula and other things doctors wanted) and doctors wanted to go straight to OT for a spinal, trial of Instruments or caesarean without watching me push first. My husband and midwife advocated for me and gave me space to show them what I could do. I had an episiotomy and quickly progressed to birth my daughter, direct OP with a nuchal arm.

I cried every day for a week mourning the birth of my dreams. I wish I had decided to do the episiotomy at home, but at that moment the transfer felt right. I'm disappointed when I look at my records that show my baby was born at '___ hospital'.


I wanted the full homebirth and physiological birth experience I prepared for and trusted so completely. I couldn't have done any more to set myself up for success, my baby just had other plans or knew something we didn't.

Planning a homebirth was the best decision I could have made. If I went through the mainstream maternity system, they never would have supported me through a 4.5 hr second stage. I would have been pressured into a caesarean for sure. I know because I almost buckled because the hospital doctor had no faith in me, gave up before even bothering to fully assess my situation. She said "she's pushed for 3 hours and made no progress" and that there wasn't any point in watching me push when we pushed back the idea of going to theatres.

For me, It's planning a homebirth or nothing.

At home I felt totally safe and trusted everyone chosen to be in my space, they asked consent every time I was touched.

In the hospital as soon as my baby was born I quickly had to switch into advocating for myself, voicing my wishes loudly to protect myself and my baby, and the hospital staff stopped asking for consent. I was injected with multiple medications for management of a PPH without my consent or even being told what was happening and I had to ask if I was actively bleeding or if the medications were prophylactic, mainly speaking up to put myself into the conversation. I only knew what was going on because I am a midwife and I could hear and understand the doctors giving orders. The doctor ordering all the meds and fluids couldn't even tell me what the EBL was at the time and the hospital midwives just did as they were told. This is how they treated a known colleague, I can't imagine how scary it would be for any other woman.

I recently just had a homebirth, everything went well till delivery.. he got stuck and had shoulder dystocia and then a small haemorrhage, all managed at home by my beautiful midwives. I transferred in due to being symptomatic and just for precaution measures, unfortunately I was not met with the nicest paramedics who told me to "reconsider where I give birth next time" my birth was not a reflection of homebirth, my midwives managed everything at home and would of potential ended worse in a hospital due to interventions.. after just having a baby and it not going as planned this was a massive struck to my heart. Hospital was not where I wanted to be and not with strangers telling me it was my fault because I chose to birth my baby at home. My brain had forgotten I even birthed at home and I'm still grieving being able to sit on the lounge and relax with my family for the hours after birth but can't wait to birth more babies at home  this post is what's needed for a lot of people to heal

I had planned a homebirth and then had to transfer to hospital before labour, I got Covid at 36 weeks and it absolutely destroyed my placenta, leading to pre-eclampsia, high blood pressure and polyhydramnios (do NOT underestimate the effect that Covid can have on pregnant women). I had a caeser at 41+3, and with my private midwife it was still an amazing experience, and took away all my fears of surgical births, and provided me with some truths to counteract the myths about caesareans.

I had a transfer and an emergency C-section . Apart from the shock of ending up with a C-section after 3 straightforward babies the experience was good. No judgement from staff about HB and decent treatment from people who didn't really have the time to give much support being a busy hospital but they did what they could.

I planned a home birth in 2020 because my local hospital wouldn't permit a VBAC. We transferred knowing it probably meant a c-section. The hospital midwives were very positive about home birth and very supportive. The attending OB was patronising. PPM was told she couldn't stay (due to COVID restrictions) but pushed to stay for a hand over. The paediatrician who attended post partum tried to have PPM reported/ deregistered even though I laboured longer at hospital waiting for c-section than I did at home.

I stayed 5days in hospital and the midwives and paed nurses were supportive. The paediatrician and his registrar asked lots of questions about why we planned a homebirth. They were not hostile toward me in fact the registrar seemed genuinely interested. He asked why I hadn't had the glucose test for GDM and seemed surprised that there are other indicators you could look for and then choose to do the test if it seemed necessary.
