

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 4 July 2023

---

Partially  
Confidential

I experienced birth trauma during the labour and birth of my first child, who was born at Hospital on . I had been in labour for 30 hours when I phoned the on call midwife for the midwife group practice at around 5am on Saturday morning. She tried to deter me from coming to hospital even though my contractions were reliably 3 minutes apart and lasting for at least 1 minute each. I said I thought I really needed to be examined and reluctantly the midwife agreed to come in and examine me.

There were 2 other midwives sitting at the desk when I arrived at the labour ward, they took one look at me and said in their opinion I would probably be sent home to labour as I didn't look like I was in active labour. When the on call midwife turned up to examine me she realised I was 9cm dilated and rushed me into a birthing suite. She did not discuss how I wanted things to progress simply told me to get my clothes off and get into the shower. After being in the shower for over an hour I requested that I be examined again. I think I was fully dilated but wasn't experiencing the urge to push. At this stage the midwife attached a CTG monitor and said I could try and push if I wanted to. I was using the gas at this point for pain relief but requested an epidural. I was told it was too late despite the fact I hadn't experienced any urge to push and it turns out my baby wasn't born for at least another hour. So I battled on with the gas and tried to push as best I could. I was told by the midwife that I needed to focus on pushing instead of making so much noise. She also blatantly said I just wasn't pushing hard enough. This was so insulting as I have got an extremely strong resolve and was giving absolutely everything I had to try and birth my baby safely. The midwife told me to keep pushing and then the next minute I knew she was asking my husband to press the staff assist button. At this point multiple midwives and an obstetric registrar and intern appeared.

Turns out my baby's heart rate was dangerously low and the Dr needed to deliver my baby ASAP. She explained that I would require an episiotomy and she would attempt to use the ventouse cup to deliver my baby. As I didn't have an epidural on board this was signally the most excruciating experience of my life both physically and mentally. Initially the Dr picked up an instrument to perform the episiotomy only to be told by the midwife that this was not the correct tool for this procedure. After multiple attempts to deliver the baby with the ventouse failed she resorted to using forceps. This was such a traumatic and painful experience having this large instrument used without an epidural. My baby arrived safely and was examined by the loveliest paediatrician. The Dr reviewed my perineum and initially said she'd just stitch in theatre only to discover I had a 3b tear which needed to be repaired in theatre.

The theatre staff were absolutely wonderful and the anaesthetist allowed me to choose between spinal and general anaesthetic for this procedure. After what I had just experienced I wanted this procedure to be performed under general, especially considering

and didn't want to be awake. The repair went really well initially and I completed a 5 day course of antibiotics to reduce the risk of infection. Despite completing this course of antibiotics I experienced at least 3 post operative infections at the episiotomy site. I was placed on multiple courses of antibiotics and provided with advice from midwives to sit in salt baths at least once a day, use iodine on the wound and dry my perineum with a hair dryer. Subsequently I was told by obstetric doctors to ignore this advice regarding wound management. Receiving different messages from different staff is definitely not ideal. I could feel stitches hanging from my perineum and asked at multiple appointments if this could be rectified which I was told no. I think this could have contributed to the infections and issues with wound healing. I basically had to bed for these stitches to be revised after waiting on the

labour ward to be reviewed by a Dr for over 3 hours with my newborn baby. The Dr did revise the stitches however said there was such a deep cavity due to wound dehiscence that this would simply have to heal by scar tissue forming to fill the space. This was such a long and traumatic postoperative healing process and one that to the day has left me in pain. This experience has affected my self confidence and resulted in intimacy issues and extreme pain.