

Submission
No 300

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I live in _____, I'm 31 and gave birth to my child at _____ Hospital in July 2022. I was considered a low risk pregnancy as I was fit and healthy and chose to go with midwifery led care. I was told I was assigned a pair of midwives but in reality, I saw one of them every other appointment and in the middle I saw whichever other midwife was available. This meant that every appointment I had to explain who I was again. The midwives themselves were fantastic and took a lot of time to listen. The birthing class provided was 2hrs online class and honestly was not very helpful. How can you possibly learn all you need to in 2 hours?

At 35 weeks, I was admitted to _____ maternity unit due to having some early signs of pre-eclampsia though I didn't meet every checkbox of pre-eclampsia. The midwives and doctors at _____ were great at taking time to listen and explain what was going on as best as time allowed. The following day the decision was made to transfer me to _____ as there was a risk I would need to give birth prior to 36 weeks and I would also need an MRI scan of my brain due to some of their concerns with the symptoms.

I then stayed there for 4 days whilst undergoing monitoring and scans due to the concerns of my initial team. Throughout this time, however, every obstetrician that I encountered would simply say 'I don't know why you're here, you're fine'. This happened every morning on rounds. I couldn't get any information as to why they were keeping me admitted to the hospital for days for additional testing whilst the doctors kept invalidating all the other information I had received. One midwife did her best to try and help me get information and to try and let me leave. This was traumatic to first be told I may have a life threatening condition (pre-eclampsia) and need an MRI for concerns with my brain, and then have everyone around me tell me there are no concerns.

4 days later I was able to leave. and had many symptoms that were terrible but I felt that I shouldn't go back as they would not take me seriously. I went back to _____ and several days later went to a scheduled OB appointment. She took my blood pressure and told me I should have gone straight back to the hospital as what she could see was very concerning. It was nice to finally feel validated, and I was checked in for the day assessment unit, and then again the next day as the results continued to be concerning. That night, my obstetrician called again and told me to check in to the hospital straight away following by blood results and that we would be inducing imminently as there were concerns both for myself and my baby.

The induction process happened incredibly quickly commencing the next day under the care of other obstetricians. I was told (not asked) that I would have the balloon and that I would have my waters broken in the morning. Very little information was provided about the process and what it would mean for my labour. When I walked into the birthing suite to go through labour with syntocinon, I was told that I couldn't have a water birth as I had hoped as I was being induced. I've since spoken to several other mothers who gave birth at the same hospital and were induced who were allowed to have a water birth.

Throughout the labour the midwives were fantastic and did everything they could to help me to get the natural birth I hoped for, helping to suggest different positions and tools. Ultimately after 13hrs in intense syntocinon labour I dilated to 9cm but the doctors were not happy and insisted that a caesarean was necessary.

We were able to play our own music in the theatre and everyone kept a cheery mood. After my baby was born they placed bub on my chest for a while which was great, but after that I was separated from baby and my partner for a significant amount of time whilst I went into recovery. I was required to stay in the hospital for a week after the birth as my pre-eclampsia symptoms got worse after the birth, not better. I was glad to see the obstetrician throughout the days following this who had initially asked me to come in for an induction. Having that continuity of care, even for a short while, made such a huge difference. Additionally, I had some continuity of care for the midwives across both of my hospital stays and then further for the follow up appointments at home. They booked me in for several follow up appointments as I couldn't get in to see my GP.

I truly wish MGP were an option here, continuity of care would have been such a gamechanger and midwives are worth their weight in gold.