

Submission
No 303

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Hi name is *****. I live in _____, I'm 33 Years old and have a 4 year old and 2 year old. I had my first birth at _____ Hospital maternity in 2018 and my second birth in _____ Hospital Maternity 2020.

- My first birth in 2018 at _____ Hospital was traumatic. I was 40 weeks and 10 days pregnant. I was asked to come in the night before the induction and given a medicine to ripen and dilate my cervix. My husband wasn't allowed to stay, and during the night I had horrible pain and felt anxious without anyone to support me.
- My induction began at 6am, and it was the most horrific experience. The doctor couldn't break my waters and had attempted 3 times. I was in extreme pain, screaming and crying. My husband saw how much pain I was in and asked if I could receive an epidural or pain relief. The doctor smiled and said she can't have anything yet and continued.
- I asked to have an epidural during my birth, and the doctor had to give me a drip before they could commence with the epidural. The doctor attempted 6 times, in both arms. I could see the midwife wince when the doctor couldn't do it. When the doctor left the room I begged the midwife to get someone else to do the drip. Luckily the next doctor had started her shift and completed it in one go.
- After birth in the maternity ward, my husband and I had very little experience with babies prior. We asked the midwife how to change a nappy and she said "what you don't know how to change a nappy" and we both felt awful. I asked multiple times for support with breastfeeding as my latch was uncomfortable and causing pain. I received minimum support from the midwives. My nipples became red raw, bleeding and excoriating to feed. I began to start to think, why can't I do this, why isn't my body working the way its supposed to.
- My second birth was in 2020 at _____ Hospital. I had a traumatic pregnancy, excess fluid in the uterus, Gestational diabetes and a baby measuring large. As I was high risk, I had many appointments monitoring the baby however, each time with a different Doctor. This was emotionally draining and traumatic as retelling the situation with my baby multiple times bring up anxious feelings.
- After giving birth, I was completely exhausted and in the maternity ward. I was given limited support with changing my baby's nappy, feeding and settling and my husband couldn't stay during the night to support me. The midwives said they had a huge number of patients to care for and thus I felt neglected, barely receiving support.

This limited support continued for 2 days, in which I had sleepless nights as my baby started cluster feeding early and still in pain from giving birth. On the Third day I requested to leave and was put onto a waiting list for my baby to be check by the paediatric doctor, I was number 7 (the last patient). I packed my bags and waited with my husband all day, it got until 10pm and the midwife said the paediatric doctor had finished his shift. I was crying, and exhausted and wanted to go home so I could receive more support in caring for my baby with my husband.

The midwives checked over my baby without the paediatric doctor and said I could go home as I would receive limited support that night with my baby. They said I needed to get my general

practitioner to check my baby the next day. The midwife caring for me asked me to sign papers to say I discharged my baby without the approval of a doctor and that there were no legal ramifications for the hospital. I refused to sign and she checked with her supervisor and they said I didn't have to sign the papers. The midwife said this experience has occurred before, and they only have 1 paediatric doctor on a shift, and they can be called away to emergencies anytime. I left the hospital, crying and doubting if I made the right decision, feeling like a bad mother when all I needed was support.