

Submission  
No 307

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I am 35 and I had my daughter at hospital in January 2022.

I was fortunate enough to have been part of the MGP at public hospital. My midwife was fantastic, however when she was on a day off I had bleeding at 38 weeks. The midwife I contacted who was on call in her place, told me that this is normal and nothing to worry about. I now look back terrified of what that could have meant to me, she told me I don't need to be checked and bleeding is normal- it is not normal. I went into labour at 41 weeks and I laboured over night and failed to dilate leading to an emergency c section almost 24 hours later. The midwives during my labour were amazing and I could not thank the birthing suit any more for their efforts. However the after care in the maternity ward was sub standard. The nurses and midwives were so understaffed they had no time to support a new mum post c section. It was during Covid so partners weren't able to stay for long and no visitors were allowed. This meant that I had the baby on my own post c section, the following morning (day 1) I had asked for pain relief - this took 3 hours for 1 endone. I had asked to get up and have a shower and was told that they didn't have time. It was now 12pm and I was still sitting in the bodily fluids from labour and no one assisted to change my pad or the blood stained bed sheets. Thankfully I am a nurse and I removed my own catheter and my partner assisted me out of bed. I asked for pain relief multiple times with being told "we are busy". I was provided minimal assistance with breast feeding, I really had no idea, and was told multiple occasions that I'm in MGP so someone can help me when I go home. I saw no lactation consultation, no physio and was provided with no support/education on how to move safely with an abdominal wound. I was not provided any information on caring for my c section scar, or stomach support. I was septic in labour requiring IV antibiotics, I then asked when I went home if I needed more as I was on these in hospital and told no. I went home, the midwives came to see me and my daughter had lost too much weight as I didn't know how to even latch her properly, and I was struggling with feeding. Two days later I became septic and ended back up in the hospital. I was rigoring, had high temperatures and severe pain. I was then told by the Doctor that I needed my baby in and I need to be caring for her when I could barely even move with pain. Whilst back in for my second admission I had minimal care again, I had to express as the antibiotics I was taking were causing distress to my baby. The midwife/ nurse proceeded to tell me breast is best and I don't know what I'm doing and I should not be formula feeding my child whilst I was sick and that I will lose the connection with my baby. After looking up the medications they aren't advised to take them whilst breast feeding - when I asked this to the nurse, I was told I was being dramatic. I was having no care in hospital other than the antibiotics and blood pressure. I was away from my newborn for 4 nights with again really minimal assistance or even assessing my mental health. I went back home and I had got COVID in the hospital so no one could provide me any help due to the isolation. then as the 10 days were up I no longer was able to have assistance from the MGP so they said just contact your GP if you need more help. I still really didn't even know how to breast feed. I feel that I was left to figure it all out and was not overly provided with the level of support a new mum should be. I felt that my concerns were dismissed in hospital, I didn't even get given the NSW baby bag that every new mum gets. I feel my experience was harder due to Covid, but this ultimately was the result of the nurses/ midwives being understaffed. They did the best they were able to but ultimately this results in poor mother and baby care as they do not have the ability to provide education as they were severely under staffed. We weren't shown how to bath a baby, how to put a nappy on. The only safe sleeping information was a one page photocopy. I feel my experience was traumatic and other than I am a nurse and have the capability of assessing myself and caring for myself I would have had so many difficulties and my mental

health would have struggled if I wasn't able to figure it out on my own with the support of my husband. I am thankful to the nurses for doing the best that they can, but the resources need to be improved for patient, baby and staff safety and well-being.