

Submission
No 324

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am 30 and living within the _____ Region. I have two children 18 months and 6 weeks old. I birthed through the Public Hospital system.

My first birth I could not fault the care I received at _____ Hospital, everything went well considering I was induced - by my choice.

The second birth was nothing short of memories I don't really enjoy talking about when people ask me how my birth was.

As I was part of MGP, I expected far better Continuity of care, which is why I applied in the first place. The criteria for being able to get into MGP in the first place is incredibly challenging, if your BMI is over a certain amount (being overweight), having any medical conditions such as PCOS can affect your chances of being successful. People who need the MGP are people who have challenging health concerns and need to be monitored more, not just people of athletic stature with no complications. This needs to be changed.

At first I thought that I would actually see the same midwife and my experience would exceed the experience I had previously hiring a student midwife, I was wrong. I would be passed around to different midwives several times, not knowing who I would be seeing next. Though this program is spoken highly of in some communities of parenthood, I was less than impressed with the certain 'days' implied that anything could be done eg. to be induced, certain 'days' it seemed to even have my baby so that I could have the midwife I was assigned that would be working that day. The midwife I was finally assigned I'd literally only had in my antenatal appointments 1-3 times over the 40 weeks. I would not recommend MGP to anyone. I felt less supported here than in my prior birth.

A few times other peoples notes would be read to me (not names just notes), or new information that were other people's information would be given to me (low lying Placenta etc), confused, I would say "Do I have ...?" or "Are you sure they didn't say that last time?". Perhaps the midwives are that overworked in this department that error is occurring more and more?

I wanted my student midwife from last time to be in the birthing unit to see and assist the birth of my second child, for some reason I got the feeling from the MGP midwife staff that that request wouldn't be seen to - despite the happiness and acceptance from that staff member (previous student) to be there.

I went in for an S&S days earlier (I'd booked in again to get induced as I was happy to last time). Everything was fine, until I went in to get my waters broken on my induction date and I clearly wasn't as dilated as they first thought and I was in excruciating pain as they did so, it wasn't until moments later when I felt that I was crawling up the bed to get away from the

pain I could hear that they were apologetic but I wished they'd known to stop sooner and offer something else other than stopping to 'try again'. So I grit my teeth and continued because I didn't want there to be an again. This experience led a midwife to say "Maybe we should have given you the balloon" (to assisted dilation). I was pretty furious that I'd started my labour in this manner - highly stressed and already in a world of pain.

I felt I was left alone more often this time, I didn't feel I had the medical support I needed throughout that I had the first time. Somehow, a lot had changed in my treatment from 2022 to 2023 in the birthing unit.

Once my second child was born, I took my time to ease myself up to prepare for transition to the maternity ward. I was reminded before labour I could leave 4-6 hours after birth. I shrugged this off as maybe medical staff had to inform you that you could leave that early, but the first time there was no pressure. However once I showered (Child born around 7pm entry to Maternity Ward around 12am) I was reminded several more times that I could leave (basically not even admitted into the Maternity Ward at all) I said that I wanted to stay.

My partner and I were left for hours unattended to in the Birthing Unit because it appeared there was either no staff and/or no beds available. I asked my Midwife when would she finish her shift? She said once I had been admitted (She started early that day) I feel like I was an inconvenience for asking for a bed and to be admitted into the Maternity Ward and that it was going to take quite some time (limited communication) to get into the Maternity ward.

I had lost a significant amount of blood and they wanted to run blood tests on me, but wanted to send me home? it made no sense at all?

The next morning I was questioned by a Midwife why I stayed the night before. I felt incredibly angered by this, like I was an inconvenience. I felt so angry that I wanted to hurry up and sign out of the hospital and have nothing to do with them ever again, what a horrible thing to say to a new mother!

My baby and I were only checked once overnight, and not checked on for how feeding was going or if I needed help. I had so much trouble breastfeeding last time, that I brought my own formula to help with feeding as last time my Partner was treated like rubbish for asking for formula "Press the button" was their reply at the time as the nurses were busy when I had my first it could easily take over 30 minutes for formula to be given to us, so I learnt my lesson and brought my own pre-measured formula.

In a hurry to get rid of time-again mums, the bed beside me was empty (the lady was released from hospital but her belongings were still on the bed, shelves and bathroom?). They weren't busy, they just didn't want subsequent mums there was the impression "You've done this

before, so off you go" that's the vibe I got. Too bad if I was suffering from DV, PPD, PPA, homelessness, or any other challenging problems that required assistance, support or referral.

To be told several times I could go home 4-6 hours after birth it actually became nagging by the end, and I felt pressured and compelled to leave, even though I wasn't ready. So as soon as the 9am morning shift midwife came I asked to be released, less than 24 hours after birth, with a considerable negative outlook on ever having another child and attending Hospital for any reason.

Several mums I have spoken to have had such bad experiences that they have vowed not to have anymore children and experience this kind of treatment again. I am now one of those mums - I am extremely saddened by the comments and treatment I experienced this time that I cannot speak highly of the staff this time around.