

Submission
No 498

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In 2019 I gave birth to my first child at [REDACTED] hospital, I wasn't very educated on birth in the lead up and relied solely on my the advice of my midwives and doctors.

Unfortunately after my waters broke, I didn't go into labour quick enough for my birth team so I was induced, I was given the drip straight away and from here it is all a blur. The contractions were back to back, I was advised to have an epidural to try and give me some rest and help the baby come down, after this I didn't dilate any further and was left flat on my back in the bed unable to move and no guidance on what to do. I was checked a few times and then advised to go for a c section after almost 24 hours.

All of the lights then came on, I had to sign a form that I have no idea what it said, I was taken to theatre, my anaesthesiologist was really good though and helped me through the shakes and passing out and talked me through it, one of the nurses was really good and offered to take photos and explained the weird feelings I'd be feeling during the surgery. Once my baby girl was born I never got to hold her, I barely had use of my arms and didn't want to drop her, they made my husband leave with the baby as I started to heamorage, I had no idea what was going on and my husband saw all of the blood and didn't know what was happening either, they rushed him away.

Afterwards, I was taken to recovery, completely out of it, then eventually taken to the ward. I got to hold my baby for the first time 2 1/2 hours after she was born with no explanation and pretty much dumped in the ward, my husband was forced to go home (6.30am) because it was outside of visiting hours and left to fend for myself. I received no help for breast-feeding or getting her out of her bassinet, she had really bad mucus and was constantly choking on it and being left and not cared for, until a midwife came in while I was in the bathroom and my husband was helping me and she had an episode infant of her, so then they took it seriously. The call alarm would go off for 20 minutes before anyone could come and help, some were nice and helpful, others made me feel awful.

I also want to note, that upon arriving to the theatre, the theatre team let me know how tired they were from back to back surgeries etc, my backup midwife who had to be called in after my midwife had been on too long told my husband while I was in theatre still how tired she was from so many shifts. We felt like burdens and in that moment, we were so scared for our baby and had no idea what to expect. I'm just lucky that with all of the exhaustion and drugs I don't remember much during the surgery.

The whole experience still haunts me, the aftercare on the ward was the icing on the cake, I couldn't get out of bed to get my baby, no one explained anything to me or tried to help me with breastfeeding until 1 midwife (my mum knew her) during the day and 2 that were on nightshift noticed I was struggling stepped in and saved my breastfeeding journey, my baby lost more than 10% of her birth weight as well, she didn't want to feed because she was so full of mucus.

I went on to birth my second child via VBAC at [REDACTED] hospital in 2021 during lockdown, that was a whole other experience, the only downside of this birth was the unknown of the covid lockdown.

I am now due to give birth to my third child in the next 2 weeks and may need to have a planned c section for the safety of the baby and the trauma from my first birth is really affecting me in the lead and the doctors and midwife at the [REDACTED] Hospital are trying to help me through this. I don't understand why some hospitals have great, understanding and caring doctors and midwives and then others are shocking, from what I've been told, [REDACTED] is very understaffed, that is obvious and I never want to have to birth there again.