

Submission
No 631

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I have had 2 babies through [REDACTED] and experienced coercion on both occasions. I went through the Birth Centre on both occasions, but it was only when I needed to attend the main section of the [REDACTED] hospital for various reasons that I experienced coercion & threats. I have no issues at all with the care I received from the Birth Centre, in fact they went above & beyond, particularly with my second baby. Their post birth support (2 weeks of home visits after birth) was also absolutely fantastic

Birth #1 - May 2020

This was at a time during the first COVID lockdowns. I had no complications at all during my pregnancy, however at my 38 week midwife appointment (Birth Centre), my fundal height was measuring small. The midwife told me that she would schedule in a ultrasound as piece of mind. 1 week later I hadn't heard from anyone regarding the appointment (and the [REDACTED] department is impossible to contact via phone and given it was COVID, attending in person to query wasn't an option). I instead called the Birth Centre and was called back soon after to give my appointment time. When I attended the [REDACTED] unit a couple of days later (alone due to COVID), I was accused of purposely missing appointments (when I wasn't informed about them). A doctor then came into the examination room and I was then told that my baby was measuring in the 5th percentile and that I needed to be induced ASAP because otherwise my baby would die. Obviously I was alone at this point and completely coerced into being induced at 39 weeks. The doctor had no idea of my pregnancy (measuring "small" the entire time). I was then induced 4 days later and whilst the induction process was "smooth" I was again pushed to start the Oxytocin only 1 hour after my waters were broken, with no option to wait longer, despite contractions beginning to start. My son was born quite quickly, a very healthy 2.75kg and 5th percentile.

Birth #2 - November 2022

This time, I had really done my research in terms of risk. Again I used the [REDACTED] Birth Centre as my care provider and worked very closely with them to avoid another induction and they were extremely supportive in doing so. At 41+3 weeks I was "required" to attend the main hospital for monitoring and an ultrasound to check on the baby (although the ultrasound technician conceded he had no data to compare to at that gestation). Here, I was pressured by 2 obstetricians (including a senior obstetrician), again pushing for me to be induced otherwise my baby would die and that I didn't seem like "that kind of person that would allow my baby to gestate for so long". At the time I was extremely sick with a cold (that ended up lasting 2 weeks), so I wanted to at least delay the induction a few days, however they told me that I wouldn't even be able to try to birth in the birth centre unless I was induced before 42 weeks. They did not care at all that I was sick. Reluctantly, again due to coercion, I agreed to the induction.

Luckily for me my labour started naturally the night before my induction was booked and I was able to achieve a natural birth in the birth centre, with labour only lasting 4 hours.

Again, the birth centre was extremely supportive and respectful of my wishes during this whole process.