

Submission
No 1180

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 11 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I do not feel comfortable enough to give evidence at a hearing but would like to make a written submission regarding my traumatic birth experience.

In 2016, at the age of 26, I fell pregnant with my first child. I was very fortunate to be accepted into the Midwifery Group Program and was looking forward to having the same midwife throughout my pregnancy.

Unfortunately, around week 20 of my pregnancy, I developed high blood pressure. This put me into the 'high risk' category, and I was immediately removed from the program.

I think its such a shame that you need to have a 'trouble free' pregnancy to be part of the MGP program. After being removed the program I had to explain my pregnancy and medical situation over and over to a different midwife/doctor at each appointment as they had not bothered to read my notes. I strongly believe that individuals with high-risk pregnancy should not be denied continuity of care.

Due to the potential to develop preeclampsia, I was booked in for an induction. I ended up having an emergency c-section, due to my baby being under stress.

Upon the birth of my daughter, she was not laid on my chest or given to me, even though I was awake and willing. I was taken to a recovery room for an hour and spent the first hour of my child's life alone, in a cold empty ward.

When I was taken to the maternity ward I was allowed 15 minutes with my partner before he was told he had to leave because it was midnight and I was staying in a shared room. As a new mother I was left alone without my partner, with a crying baby who would not latch. I believe this was because I was not given immediate skin-to-skin contact or assisted to feed. It was distressing, and I did not see my partner for 8 hours when he returned at the start of visiting hours.

This experience was traumatic and deeply affected my motherhood journey.

When I fell pregnant with my second child in 2018, the first midwife I saw at the hospital told me to consider having a planned caesarean, as there would be less than 2 years since my first caesarean. I was told to think about it, and that at my next scheduled appointment I could book the caesarean in if I wished.

I went away and spent a lot of time researching and considering my options. I decided that I wanted to get ahead with a planned caesarean, as the thought of having another emergency caesarean was too traumatic.

At my next appointment I had a different midwife. She did not listen to my requests, completing refusing to book me in for a planned caesarean, and telling me that I had to go into spontaneous labour. She was condescending and aggressive in the way she spoke to me. I was visibly upset and was crying in front of both her and the student nurse in the room, and she showed no compassion, empathy, understanding or respect for my wishes. She had an extremely bias attitude and did not allow me to make my own decisions regarding my birth wishes.

Due to this negative experience, I enlisted and paid for a private obstetrician to see me through the remaining 10 weeks of my pregnancy and to perform the caesarean operation. This obstetrician was kind and compassionate, and my baby was immediately placed upon my chest after birth and I was able to initiate breastfeeding straight away.