

Submission
No 1316

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Jessica Lawler

Date Received: 15 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I was a experienced woman, mother and birther and the midwives at Hospital treated me with contempt and bullying when my waters broke at 35 weeks and 5 days. They told me I would "lie down and keep the monitor on until they told me I could move". They sent me into a shared room in early labour, wouldn't allow my husband to be present for support and then told me to "keep my noise down and stop annoying the woman next to me" while I laboured alone.

When I asked for water they told me it wasn't a hotel and physically ROLLED THEIR EYES at me when I explained that my labours don't establish until I am about to birth.

Eventually I managed to birth and not once did any midwife ask me how I was doing or what I needed.

Postnatally I was threatened and bullied into staying for routine observations and told if I tried to leave they "would call docs".

I am an articulate strong minded woman who has always advocated for myself, even as a 19 year old primip and yet I was left feeling powerless, alone and scared. I worry for what that means for other more vulnerable women.

I have since become a midwife myself and vow to NEVER forget how awful those midwives were. To never ever treat a woman like they treated me, but I do have to say, working within the system I am disheartened on a daily basis seeing women's freedoms and abilities to birth without fear undermined by an increasingly medicalised culture of doctors and "obstetric nurses".