

Submission
No 1330

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

I gave birth to my first baby in July 2006 at _____ in hospital. I was 19.

My birth experience was so horrific I was left with PTSD. I felt utterly unable to have another child in the hospital system afterwards, and turned to homebirth with a private midwife for my next child, which I would never have intended on doing.

I was not treated with dignity throughout my birth process. I was coerced and manipulated into procedures I clearly objected to, such as foetal scalp monitoring, I was told I didn't care about my baby for declining induction due to pre-eclampsia. In the the postnatal ward, midwives commented that I was detached and 'at odds' with my baby as I had trouble with swaddling and infant care (I was 19 as previously stated and it was my first baby). I was not properly supported to breastfeeding and ended up expressing my milk for seven months to feed my baby (I went on to feed 8 children subsequently, so I had no physiological barrier to breastfeeding). I was verbally berated for not being able to assemble a complex, hospital grade medala pump after being shown it once. I made complaints of a sore arm which were dismissed by the nursing staff and later revealed to be deep vein thrombosis days later when a renal doctor managing my pre-eclampsia heard that my arm was painful and hot and sent me for a scan.

I left the hospital with severe depression and anxiety after my experience and felt terribly isolated and alone. I would not wish my experience on my worst enemy and would never trust the public system for maternity care again. All of my subsequent pregnancies were handled by independent midwives and private obstetricians, and I received much better care.