

**Submission  
No 1141**

## **INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA**

**Name:** Mrs Kathleen Knoke

**Date Received:** 15 August 2023

---

Partially  
Confidential

In May 2020 I gave birth to my first child at \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital. What should have been a happy life event was traumatic for me. This was for several reasons as outlined below.

Due to covid I was forced to choose between having my support person or my child's father with me for the birth. This caused a huge amount of stress in the lead up to my birth. I then felt I lacked the support I needed during labour, I did not feel heard and didn't have someone advocating for me. During my second labour I had both my support person and my child's father and this was a hugely different and much more positive experience.

I missed out on the group practice due to miscommunication with my GP and so saw a different midwife at every appointment and during the 4 hours I was in labour before giving birth had a shift change and therefore 2 complete strangers looking after me. This meant they didn't know anything about my birth preferences or personality. As I was quiet during labour and unable to verbalise what I needed I was left alone at times when I needed help. In comparison for my second pregnancy I was in the MGP and my midwife knew me well enough to interpret what I needed despite lack of verbalisation.

During my first labour I was not consented for an episiotomy. The midwife informed me she was using local anaesthetic in case the obstetrician chose to do one but that was all I was told. The correct tools were not available at the time and the obstetrician later apologised that she had had to make do with inadequate scissors which meant the cut took 3 attempts and was ragged.

After my birth I found myself becoming upset anytime someone else spoke of their birth in a positive way after mine had been so traumatic. Going into my second pregnancy I felt the only way I could receive the required level of care was to be a part of the MGP. Getting a referral early was my number 1 priority and then I spent 3 weeks stressing over it, calling the hospital multiple times until I had my position accepted.

I had an amazing experience with my midwife, I had a great birth and recovery. I strongly believe all women deserve this level of care as the bare minimum.