

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric](#)
Subject: Submission
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To Whom it may Concern,

First of all - I am typing on my phone with my 3yo in my care so please overlook any typos.

I gave birth at the LGH on [REDACTED].

I have only just in these recent months started to feel that I am back to full health since giving birth.

The reasons for this are not only because I experienced shattering birth trauma, but it has played a huge role in affecting my physical and mental health and wellbeing.

It is truly difficult to put such a traumatic experience into an email - it is hard to cast back and remember all of the details, small and big, as to why being in the LGH for birth was such an awful experience.

First of all, my mum gave birth there in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. She did not have a c section, but all of her births were instrumental. She has shuddered remembering having to sit on a donut cushion for weeks after.

After my birth she experienced a prolapse. When she went in for surgery she woke up to be told that they had removed all of her internal reproductive organs. She was never given the opportunity to give consent to such a procedure. I don't think it was spoken about as a possibility.

She has not spoken much of her birth experiences, even when I have asked. I expect because the memories are so harrowing.

One of my sisters birthed there in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Another sister in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

All of these four babies were induced and born via cesarean.

I have always had an innate interest in birth and babies. I have been researching pregnancy and birth for many years.

When I became pregnant in [REDACTED] I dived right in and read books, listened to podcasts, watched birth vlogs, joined social media groups, scoured the internet. I watched numerous documentaries and dived into the stats on births in hospital as opposed to home.

It seemed clear to me that physiological birth was a very natural process that required *safety* as one of the primary factors. On learning this I knew that my own home would be the safest place for me. I have a fear of authority figures (doctors, police, teachers, high profile people etc) and have never felt like I have a voice around people in positions of power.

I searched high and low for a way to support myself in birthing at home and I decided freebirth would be my best option. I was only 10 min from the LGH so I felt safe in being able to access emergency services if I needed them.

Sadly though, due to the inherent birth trauma in my mothers and sisters, and their deep fear of death and birth, I was unable to garner their support to stay home. They essentially pressured and manipulated me to transfer to the hospital after labouring all day at home. They promised me I would be able to get back in the bath as soon as I got there.

On arriving at the hospital, I was told that it had been a very busy day in the labour ward and the baths had been in use all day. So I was “lucky” that I had come in after the rush.

I had written very clearly only a piece of paper the things I wanted/didn't want. Which injections and tests etc I did not want to receive.

I remember one of the doctors in the room looking at this and the look on her face honestly looked to me like she was thinking “stupid dumb bitch” - obviously I can't know this, but as an autistic person with extreme hyper vigilance I am usually pretty perceptive.

I think after battling my family's fear all day that either a baby was about to fall out of me or I was about to die... I reverted to an almost childlike state where I felt unheard and defeated and I went along with what people around me were saying.

I accepted laying on my back for the nurse to check the position of the baby's head. It HURT. It made my whole body recoil in pain. If I had known I would never have accepted.

Later I accepted a cervical exam to see how dilated I was and once again the way she jammed her fingers inside me really ##### hurt. Which I had not expected bc when I had done my own checks earlier at home it was not painful.

I was fully dilated and had been in hospital a few hours. I could hear comments like "I'm ready to see a baby" and I remember feeling panicked that someone was going to come and say to me I had been taking too long to birth my baby.

The nurse came and checked my babies heart rate numerous times and she never asked me if I wanted this.

I got out of the bath and went to the room and got all fours; ready to push my baby out.

The contractions had eased it seemed, I was extremely uncomfortable, but I just wanted to get out of the hospital. The nurse coached me on how to push, so I followed her directions. I pushed to save myself, I pushed so I could get out of that awful cold room and go home where I knew we would be fine.

It don't know how long it took, 15-30min maybe. Out she came. I remember looking at her thinking I needed to suck the mucous from her nose and mouth but bc of the childlike/survival state I was in I deferred to the nurse and she thought baby was ok.

I had torn and the umbilical cord was too short for me to lift her to my chest. The pain of the cord touching the tear (which was hanging

wide open) was excruciating. I felt so stuck. All I could think was “ok get the placenta out then we can go home”. I sat on the toilet, to no avail. My body was cold, I felt frozen. The lights were all bright despite the instructions I had written about the environment of the room.

I decided to cut the umbilical cord so I could get in the shower. My mum held my daughter in a rough white towel (and no, I am not being sensitive, it really was not soft at all!!!). No one thought to suggest the recently born baby might need skin to skin. The room was freezing.

I got in the shower and the promised “endless hot water had ended”. I did ALL of the placenta release things I could think of, but I felt trapped. It had only been an hour or two since birth. I was desperate to hold my baby and get warm.

I can’t remember even talking to anyone about what the manual placenta removal meant, but I opted for it bc I felt I had no other options. If I could go back I’d demand to get into bed with my baby, tend to the tear (at least stick the skin back together) and get warm and give the placenta even a few more hours to release, which seems to be a variation of normal.

I had a shot of pitocin I think. I was laid back in the bed. My newborn still in the bloody towel being held on her back...

Two women were at me, one to pull I guess and one to press on my abdomen. The started but the pressing on my abdomen was excruciating. I pushed her arm off me with all strength I had left (I am

Reasonably strong). The lady on my abdomen was the one who had the angry “stupid bitch” look on her face.

Without any discussion, my sister came and restrained my arms, and I can only describe it like I was punched in the stomach. Just after I had given birth. I am still shocked remembering it. I wailed the most mournful sound from the pain.

After the placenta extraction, the attention turned back to baby. She was put on my chest; we were both cold. She was sleepy. The nurse then thought her thigh colour was a bit purple.

They took her over to a work station to suck fluid from her. They tested her O2 levels and they were very low. So they rushed her out of the room.

I was so “gone” by this point I just said “ok”.

My mum helped me to shower and dress. I could barely move. I am not sure how much blood I lost. And they told me I didn't tear even though I know I did. I just wanted to get out of there though and I didn't want anyone touching me. I kept a low profile as much as I could, not sharing the discomfort I was experiencing.

My baby was diagnosed with respiratory distress of unknown origin so everyone jumped to worst case scenario. She was put in NICU and started on 2 different antibiotics. I obviously couldn't breastfeed her at that point (I started expressing when I came back to my senses). I didn't even go down to visit her until hours later my dissociation/freeze response to everything that had happened made me really shut down.

They ran tests which all showed “nothing”.

As far as I am concerned my baby was COLD and did not receive adequate skin to skin. I also wish I had sucked mucous from her nose/mouth straight after she was born as I have seen many mothers do in videos I have watched of physiological birth.

We entered the LGH on Saturday evening, and we left the following Friday. It was the worst experience of my life. I feel we both barely escaped with our lives. Yet as others would see our story they would say “oh aren't you lucky you were in hospital not at home where your baby could have died”.....

My heart breaks that the younger version of me did not really take seriously the weight of going to hospital. If I had my time again I honestly would have hired an airbnb for a month and moved away from everyone. I wish my experience on nobody.

There are many more small details from my 6 days at the LGH about times where I felt unseen, unheard and uncared for.

And I haven't even mentioned the horror stories from my friends! One accidentally received a double dose of pitocin so she had back to back contractions. So many friends had uncomfortable induction stories to share with me. What the is with the high rates of induction? Why do doctors and nurses seem to not understand the cascade of intervention? It is almost like they froth on the action of it all, so eager they are to "save" these "poor" women and babies from their inability to give birth...

One night of my stay I lay listening to the woman in the bed next to me wail in pain from the "balloon" induction procedure. She ended up in a cesarean of course. She was so distraught and there was a lot of arguing with her partner and she ended up discharging herself early. I often wonder what happened to her and her baby.

One of the more friendly nurses in the NICU ward spoke to me of a woman who had birthed at 43 weeks and how dangerous it was. Where is she getting her information from?!?

Another woman (doctor?) sat with me and told me how worried she was that my baby was going to be brain damaged if I didn't do a blood test to check for some obscure things that might be wrong with her. This woman knew none of my family history or anything about my pregnancy or anything about me at all. She was so forceful in her fear mongering, it was not easy to decline.

Another woman for some reason thought it was necessary to put her face uncomfortably close to me and my baby to check on our breastfeeding - even though I had not asked for anyone to look! I am

still not sure what she thought she was doing.

It's hard to emphasise exactly how awful experience was, and how deeply it has affected all parts of my world since then. I have struggled with all aspects of life - looking after myself, socialising, making and attending appointments for health concerns I have had. I have attempted to seek help from a GP but it was too close to the experience of the LGH that I have not followed up with any blood tests she wanted me to have.

I have taken my own health entirely into my own hands and have slowly slowly healed myself with foods and supplements. The spot on my abdomen where I was punched still feels weird/not quite right. I have had unexplained abdominal problems on and off.

When I think about it now I honestly don't know how anyone could sustain that kind of blunt force trauma to their abdomen and not sustain injury to organs, it just doesn't make sense.

I think what happened was this:

- On entering the hospital I went into a survival state which was more freeze/fawn than fight or flight (bc you can't fight or flee).
- I think I used coached pushing to push my baby from my body before my body or my baby were actually ready.
- I think this caused us both to go into shock. My placenta wasn't ready for release. I think I tore because of the forceful pushing.
- I think she got very cold being held in a towel in a cold room, she wasn't able to regulate her temperature or anything like that. We had only a handful of minutes of skin to skin in her first 1-2 hours outside my body.
- I think the cold temp and not being close to me slowed everything down, hence low O2 levels in her fingertips.

All she needed was me. All I needed was safety.

I don't believe the current facilities, systems, standard procedures or staff at the LGH have the capacity to provide that for birthing mums.

Thank you for reading.

Regards,

