

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric](#)
Subject: Birth submission
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[REDACTED]

Apologies this is rushed, I only just saw this and the deadline is tonight.

My birth story [REDACTED]

-I submitted my referral for RHH when I was 5 weeks pregnant. They lost my referral, so I missed out on MGP and ended up in the satellite stream seeing whoever was there in the Glenorchy clinic. This meant I had to constantly retell my story and make sure things were missed.

-I was diagnosed with gestational diabetes. This changed the whole course of my pregnancy, despite the fact that my GD was well controlled, my blood glucose levels were always within the scope allowed for pregnant women, I was on fasting insulin, an incredibly low dose around 6 units before bed.

-The diagnosis meant that as I approached my due date I started having to have meetings with the doctors through the Wellington clinic. One of the doctors, [REDACTED] told me that my body wouldn't know what to do as I'd never been in labour so it would be better if I just took an induction, an epidural and the synthetic drip for my labour. Despite me saying I wanted a natural birth with spontaneous labour and to avoid interventions. Another doctor, Dr [REDACTED] told me that I was a fool not to be induced at 38 weeks and that I was putting my baby at risk. He told me if I was lucky my baby would be ok but that it most likely wouldn't. I left his office in tears to go and be monitored by the midwives who were very understanding and supportive. Both of these doctors pushed induction at 38 weeks despite this not being evidence based for gestational diabetes and without either doctor looking at my specific case, particularly my blood glucose levels being completely controlled, my baby measuring exactly on the 50th percentile in every scan and there being no risks identified to indicate early induction.

-I declined induction at 38 weeks and was told I would need to sign forms to state I was holding the risk. They still booked me a later induction date in my 39th week. the immense pressure to try and spontaneously go into labour before the booked induction was horrible, I did not get to enjoy this part of pregnancy as I felt like I had a horrible deadline hanging over me. I ended up agreeing to a stretch and sweep which I feel kick started the labour but not enough.

- my labour went for 56 hours, it ended in emergency cesarean. Because my labour was slowing down, most likely because I was exhausted from being awake for so long, I agreed to have my waters broken, which led to the drip and agreeing to an epidural, the drip was causing my baby to stress out so I had to have a very low dose. The midwife I had during this time was excellent and agreed to a low dose and for me to have more time to still try and go naturally. Unfortunately her shift ended and the person who took over marched in, put compression socks on me, turned off the drip and told me I was going into surgery.

She then Covid tested my partner despite us having been there for days. Turned all the lights on and completely took over the atmosphere of the room. Her name was [REDACTED]. The doctor told me I could have a few hours to rest before the cesarean (must not have been an emergency if this was allowed). [REDACTED] insisted on coming to poke and prod me every 20 minutes so I couldn't rest.

-the doctor who performed my surgery was considerate and compassionate. She spoke to me kindly and explained what was going on. Overall because of her the cesarean itself was ok.

-it took me a long time to come to terms with the birth going so wrong and for seemingly no real good reason. I really feel that had I been trusted, listened to, and had continuity of care so that someone was advocating for me, I wouldn't have had to be cut open.

For a long time I did not feel my daughter had been born, I would say on the day she was cut from my body, instead of on the day she was born. I couldn't touch my scar or the area around it. I really felt I had failed and that I didn't give birth properly. I felt I wasn't listened to, I felt I had to prepare myself for battle every time I had to have a pregnancy appointment. When I went into labour I had the same mindset, I didn't feel I was going into a trusted place where I would be taken care of. I felt I had to go in being prepared to advocate for myself and battle for my wants. And I was right. And perhaps this impacted my body's ability to relax and give birth.

- I recently had a second birth at the RHH around a [REDACTED] ago. I wanted a VBAC. I didn't get it. This time I fought to get into MGP, despite the hospital losing my referral yet again, and even though I didn't get the

VBAC I wanted I feel better about this birth as I had continuity of care. I didn't have to retell my story every time I went in and I felt like my midwife was on my side. I won't be having more children, especially after the last experience. So I'll never get to experience birth how I wanted. And I can't help but feel that if those doctors, notably male doctors, hadn't felt that they knew everything and just completely discredited my wants and my ignored my specific risk profile, then I wouldn't have had the first cesarean which led to me having the second. The VBAC failed because having previously had a cesarean, I once again had a big target on my back that said intervention. I once again had to meet with the doctors to explain why I didn't want an induction and I didn't want the drip (both of which increase risk of uterine rupture but for some reason they're still pushed on women wanting VBAC).

I feel like the woman's choice is lost, and I feel like birth has become so over medicalised, it's men in white coats creating a problem, then saving people from the problem they created and then patting themselves on the back for what a great job they did. The same male doctor ended up performing my second cesarean and he was chatting away to his colleague, gossiping, like it's just another day in the office, as he sewed me back up. He didn't speak to me or acknowledge me, he didn't consider that this is the birth of my child and a moment I'll remember for the rest of my life. He just carried on acting like a saviour from a problem he created. There was about 20 people in the room, some just spectators, as I lay paralysed and naked on the bed with bright lights on. No one asked if it was ok for so many people to be there. The midwives in the room were incredible and very supportive and kind. A stark contrast to the surgeon.

Women should be allowed to have a say and birth should be treated like the natural experience that it is, instead of being treated like we are criminals who have done something wrong the whole time.