

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

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to have my voice heard and to tell my story. This experience has shaped who I am today and is one I will carry for the rest of my life.

My story starts with a surprise pregnancy back in July of 2023. My partner and I were ready to take the plunge and were excited about what was to come. My first interaction with the health care system was an appointment with a GP who referred me onto the RHH. As this was my first time engaging with the system I had no idea of the process, the different maternity models or care that was available to me and I believe this was the first mistake I made. I was put in to the midwifery group practice scheme which had me see a different midwife every appointment. I really struggled with this model as I found it hard to retell my story each time. There was no opportunity to build a relationship and therefore feel safe during a vulnerable time.

As my due date came and went each appointment became harder to attend with more and more pressure from doctors to be induced. An intervention that did not align with my values. I carried my daughter to 42 + 2 with no signs of spontaneous labour in sight. I very reluctantly went into hospital for a balloon which proceeded into a syntocin infusion the following day after no progress. In the lead up to the induction day I had raised concerns about the baby's position stating I think it has turned and was now posterior for which I was reassured multiple times was a common position and most babies will rotate during labour.

My induction came on thick and fast and before I knew it I was in the depths of labour with very little awareness as to who or what was happening around me. The midwives were very good at giving me space to labour with minimal interruption. I became aware of a change of shift shortly before I felt the need to get in the bath and start pushing. By this stage I had been labouring for 9 hours with thick fast contractions and little reprieve. I had been drinking litres of water but wasn't able to void. I had made it known to midwives with no offer to put a catheter in and empty my bladder. After 2 hours of pushing I was struck by an overwhelming instinctual feeling that I needed to stop, that things were not progressing as they should be and that I needed help. I began to use the language "I can't do this anymore" "my baby is stuck" "please help me" to which the midwife responded you're doing an amazing job keep pushing. Put your fingers inside. Feel your baby's head. It took another hour of begging for help and asking someone to check the progression before I was able to speak to an obstetrician. They quickly established that my baby had become stuck with her head flexed to a point that I would be unable to push her out. It was agreed I would be prepped for theatre and undergo a C-section. By this stage I was exhausted a complete shell. I was unable to be administered pain relief due to going to theatre and was begging for the whole thing to be over. To make matters worse theatre was busy and I was left to labour for another 3 hours before they were ready to operate. During that time no one checked in to give me updates or explain what was happening which made me feel frightened. When I was finally wheeled downstairs I was met by an anaesthetist who prepped me for the operation. I had been spinally blocked and had no sensation from the nipples down. I was mentally preparing for what was to come when I was approached by the doctor from earlier. She had

explained that due to the length of time I had been labouring and pushing whilst on the syntocin drip I had pushed my baby down so far that they were concerned about how the operation would go and that they thought they had a good chance of a ventouse delivery . I was frightened and confused by the sudden change of plan, I felt helpless and completely out of control. I was being asked to make decisions about myself and my baby in a state of delirium and complete vulnerability. I was wheeled into the bright lights of theatre and remember being surrounded by a whole team of senior staff all on standby . Due to the fact that I had been completely spinally blocked ready for surgery I had no sensation from the nipples down so could not feel any affects of the syntocin they had begun to re administer . As the contractions started to build a midwife in the theatre had her hands on my belly feeling the contractions and telling me to push . I could feel things begin to get tense as the ventouse use kept popping off . I was asked to consent for them to perform an episiotomy to make space. After multiple failed attempts a panicked doctor told me he would be moving to a forcep delivery. I was told I had 2 contractions / pushes left before they would have to move to an apparently already dangerous emergency c section . That last effort to push with no sensation or feeling was the hardest thing I've done . It felt like the difference between life and death. My baby was delivered at 00:03 on Saturday the [REDACTED] . She was born flat requiring some resuscitation and had sustained a 3cm laceration on her forehead. I had been left with a 3C tear , episiotomy and PPH . At this stage I had no idea of what that meant for me and my recovery moving forward .

I was rushed out of theatre and wheeled straight back to the ward where I was left alone, broken with my new born baby. The midwife who had been there in delivery said she had to race to get to labour ward to assist another woman. I have never felt so alone and frightened in my whole entire life . I did not have contact with anyone for approx 4 hours post delivery . No one to explain what had just happened , how it had happened , why it had happened.

The days following I have little memory of . A blur of multiple midwives , a quick check in from the delivering doctor and some brief tips on how to feed . A phone call 48 hours later from a mental health support team asking if I was suicidal or at risk of self harm, when I said no they said I didn't fit high risk for mental health support.

I was bed bound for 3 days with a urinary catheter , feecal incontinence , flatal incontinence . I kept failing my trial of void as my bladder had been so distended from the extended period of time without voiding during labour. Plus navigating being a new mum . Feeling like I was unable to bond with this new little being due to feeling so broken.

My experience through the RHH maternity system is one I think about every day. I am now left with irreparable damage , I wear a permanent pessary and may never have the opportunity to deliver vaginally again. Not to mention the on going psychological damage and affect on my mental health.

I understand many of these factors were out of my control and that was the way nature intended it to be, however I can't help wondering.

- Did this happen because I wasn't listened to in regards to my baby's position. Could more have been done prenatally to assist with position changes . During labour I had very junior midwives and no one more senior to ask for support (this is no fault of their own)
- The fact I couldn't void my urine, and no one listened to me
- I couldn't make informed decisions during a critical time

- That I had been so pressured to come into hospital for an induction
- That due to understaffing I had been left alone during a time of complete vulnerability pre and post delivery which left me in dark place psychologically one that I still see a therapist for today.
- I didn't have any continuity of care, no opportunity to build a relationship, a crucial part of the pre natal journey
- No post natal mental health support apart from a quick debrief with the delivering Doctor.

As someone who works in the health care system I understand what it is like to be stretched at work , to not have adequate resources to be able to do your job properly. I feel passionately about patient care and feel that giving people the opportunity to tell their stories is a great first step in improving the way we deliver care in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell my story. If you have further questions please feel free to email .

With warm regards

