

Emma McCartan – 9 February 2021

I recently saw a post on social media regarding maternity services and a request for feedback.

I am a first time mum and my daughter was born in Jersey General Hospital on 20th March 2020. This was a much wanted pregnancy after years of gynae issues.

I opted for midwife led support throughout my pregnancy but was really disappointed to find out that the midwife I had seen throughout my pregnancy wouldn't be available at the birth. This lack of continuity of care is something that needs to be addressed as I know this isn't the case in other settings in the UK.

Birth preferences weren't discussed in any detail at midwife visits or when I was in labour. I wanted to have a water birth, this is something I've been told is being encouraged however the red tape around facilitating a water birth at home in my own property was ridiculous.

Putting the onus of organising structural integrity certificates and finding out who built your property in the latter stages of pregnancy is less than ideal.

I went to the hospital to be checked over on 20th March at around 1am at that stage the midwife didn't think I was in labour I came home and tried to have a bath and use my birthing ball.

I returned to the hospital at 5.30am and was seen by the same midwife however her shift was ending so I was introduced to another midwife who then passed me on to [member of staff] a midwife who had a student with her [member of staff].

[member of staff] was fantastic but having my care handed over to 3 different midwives wasn't ideal. As such when I returned to the hospital I was thought to be 7/8cm dilated and by 7.30am fully dilated.

My contractions then stopped I believe this to be in part because of this. The birth itself was quite traumatic and they tried to use a ventouse multiple times but it didn't work. I needed to have an episiotomy and they used forceps to deliver my daughter.

I was discharged on Saturday 21st March and we went in to full lockdown on 23rd March. The main failing was in my post natal care. Whilst I appreciate the unprecedented nature of a global pandemic I believe the care I received post partum was sub-standard.

My physical recovery took longer than expected and I had to return to the hospital with a possible infection. When contacting the hospital I spoke to different midwives each time and I was made to feel like I was an inconvenience.

On one of my visits one of the midwives told me there was a "hole" in my wound and didn't qualify that statement. I was very upset on my return home and started searching for more information.

I made an appointment privately and the consultant I visited was shocked that I hadn't received an internal examination or that I hadn't been referred to a women's health physiotherapist.

The contact with the health visitor was minimal and arguably with covid there was ample opportunity for telephone and video calls.

Neither my partner nor I have any family in Jersey and felt completely isolated. My partner works as a healthcare professional and has to return to work 3 weeks after my daughter was born.

My breastfeeding journey was not what I had imagined no one ever checked my latch. I was in pain and independently sought advice from IBLC. I wanted my daughter to have breastmilk so exclusively pumped for 6 months for her.

I've since found out that some babies who have had a forceps delivery have difficulty breastfeeding and a cranial osteopath can help. This could've completely transformed my feeding journey.

My daughter has still not been weighed and the last contact we had with a health visitor was before my daughter was 6 weeks old.

With regards to support I don't feel I had any support post partum no one followed up on me or my daughter and how we are doing and that is not OK.

I am deeply saddened by the treatment I have received my daughter will most likely be my only child.

I would appreciate some acknowledgement of this email and to be informed of measures that will be taken to ensure no one else has this experience.