

Courtney O'Conner – 11 February 2021

My pregnancy started off very smoothly I was very poorly but that is to be expected with pregnancy, at 20 weeks I had 3 scans 2 done by the Sonographer and one done by the consultant it was discussed that after the consultant not being able to turn my child round I would be sent to Southampton to make sure baby's heart was fine. Now this was scary as when my partner was born he had a lot of issues including extra tissue around his heart that caused a double murmur. As a first time young parent I was petrified. Neither the doctors or midwives made me feel at ease with this and I felt terrible. After having the scan in Southampton I noticed an issue with my sons weight and that he was measuring very small for how far along I was in my pregnancy. It wasn't till I was 28/32 weeks that I was informed that my son wasn't putting weight and that I was in fact losing my waters slowly. Now to someone who's only in their 20's a first time parent and nothings being explained and it's all very long medical words you do begin to panic and get very stressed. I was in maternity a few times to be monitored due to losing my waters and having reduced movements and I never felt welcomed.

At my 38 week scan I was told that it didn't look good and that I would find out from the consultant that afternoon what the next step would be as baby hadn't put weight on within 4 weeks and they had concerns. When I seen the consultant I wasn't asked if I had a birth plan or how I wanted to birth my child. And I as a woman know my body and I wanted to Op't for a c section due to the fact that I'm a rather short lady and I knew I wouldn't be able to birth naturally. I was told no and that I would be induced on the Saturday. I spent that whole evening and the following day panicking because I was unheard by a professional who didn't know me and didn't know my capabilities. It took 4 days for my son to be born. As the first induction method didn't work can I add that [member of staff] was fantastic on this day and made me feel at ease. However there was concern as the method used was making my sons heart rate decrease. As this method failed I was given a dissolvable pessaire which was making me feel very poorly and again this method didn't work. On the 3rd day I was given the option of either have a c section or trying a catheter ballon. I was excused I hadn't slept for 3 days and I just wanted my child to be born. I felt forced by the midwife to have the ballon rather then a section. The whole time they were doing this I was in pain and in tears the doctors and midwife could see this. The matter didn't get any better as that evening I was very poorly and was sick, at 2am I had the ballon removed and was told that the doctor will be round at 8am to see me and tell me the next step.

At 8am I was taken round to labour ward and told that the remaining water I had would be broken there and then. I said can it not wait 20 Minutes till my birth partners get here as I'm Alone and I don't want to be alone. I was told no the doctor had to do it now! After this when the doctor explained me I was told well your 3cm dilated so good luck! I wasn't offered any support or help. I was in tears and had to Phone my partner telling him what had happened. By 12pm that day I was taken back to labour ward and given the hormone drip to try and get labour started. When the midwife examined me she was shocked and said I wasn't dilated at all but she would see what would happen. From 12-4 I slept and felt nothing. I was told that a review would be done at 6. By 6pm my sons heart rate kept dropping due to the drip I was checked regularly to see how my dilation was coming on. The machine kept saying I was contracting but I wasn't. By 9pm the consultant on duty came in to explain me, I was given gas and air and made to feel at ease this was the only time in the whole 9 days I was in hospital

this happened. The doctor explained that I was 1cm dilated and he was concerned that this was the 4th day and baby still hadn't arrived and I wasn't dilating and as my waters had been broken at 8am the risk to myself and baby getting sick was increasing and he wanted to now perform an emergency c section, and that he just had to speak to the head consultant on duty. By this point I think this was the highlight of my whole birthing experience with my son the Anesthetist I had was a ball and absolutely amazing! And made myself and my partner feel so happy and would constantly talk to us. He advised us that the medicine I was going to be given would make me feel poorly. I would just add that the staff in my section were lovely and understood when I was feeling sick but couldn't be that it would happen and made me feel comfortable. I was spoken to by the doctor midwife and all the staff during my section and by 11:45pm on 22/08/17 my son was born. They had some concerns because he was very tiny and seemed to sleep from the moment he was wrapped up. When I was taken back to labour ward I was asked how I wanted to feed and I said I'd like to breastfeed however because my son was so small he struggled to latch so it was suggested I try some formula. Just after midnight my little boy was sick and I couldn't move and panicked the midwife who came in wasn't very nice.

I was in maternity till the Sunday afternoon following my son's birth. As my son was small he was put into a hot cot. I was scolded by midwives for wanting to hold my child and have him close to me. I was also threatened that if he didn't feed to a certain amount he would be going to SCUB and he would be on a feeding tube!! On one of the days the midwife had a concern as my temp had spiked slightly and they were concerned. When she sent the doctor round I was asked if they could do an internal examination. After just having a c section I said no and I pointed out that I had been feeling unwell for days and I was ignored. I was given an antibiotic drip. By the time it came to me being discharged I was happy to be leaving as it wasn't a great time for myself or my family and with such a traumatic birth I wasn't listened to and felt disappointed with this.

My second birth was in March 2019 and from the moment I had my first midwives appointment I opted for a section and had to explain my reasons why constantly, the experience was more enjoyable this time. My baby was breech till I went in for my section and when the doctor did the scan she said well you can give birth naturally. I had to point out to the doctor that if she had read my notice she would have seen why I need a section and that it was due to the fact I haven't got a wide enough pelvis to birth naturally. When I said this she was very confused, the midwife I had at my birth [member of staff] was brilliant and made me feel at ease, I ended up being sick before going in for my section but again every staff member in theatre made me feel at ease and that it was not a problem that I was being sick. It took 3 attempts to get the spinal into my back, during the section I felt like I had a shortness of breath which I had never felt during my first section and I was constantly offered to be put to sleep which I refused and I didn't want it. Once my daughter was born we were taken to recovery where I was asked if I wanted to feed my daughter. This was a positive experience compared to my first birth. The day after my section I told the midwife I wasn't feeling very well and felt very sick, I was given anti sickness tablets which didn't seem to work and I was told oh it's the medicine from your section wearing off. Eventually I was taken to a private room where I wasn't checked on very often. The room had a horrible smell to it as it was at the back of the ward, the smell was making me feel even worse than I had originally felt. By the 2nd day I requested to be discharged because I couldn't stand the smell any longer and I just wanted to get back to my

family. I was advised against it and that I should stay longer. When I pointed out that I didn't want to die to the issues above.

Once discharged I went home and everything was fine till 1am when it felt like my stitches were melting and I couldn't move, I'll also had I had a really painful back for weeks due to the failed spinal attempts. When we got to maternity the level 1 doctor who I had seen was rather rude and said nothing was wrong!

I pointed out my stitches felt like they had melted and i was laughed at. I was once again discharged, a few day following I began bleeding form my stitches as a vessel had blown, I was made to feel silly by the whole team In maternity. Even though my second pregnancy and birth was more positive the after care by a few community midwives wasn't helpful at all. I was told I needed to Introduce formula because my daughters weight was below her birth weight, I was feeding her wrong and I shouldn't be using a pillow. To which I felt comfortable using a pillow to feed because the pressure on my tummy was painful and hurt and the pressure of using a pillow helped.

I am currently pregnant with my 3rd child and I Am due for a section on 23/03/21. Some of this pregnancy had been enjoyable however the complaints I have to make are against one consultant who I'm assuming is a middle grade on [member of staff] team who on my first appointment kept mentioning having my tubes tied I'm 24 years of age I do not want this as in later life I may end up not being with my current partner and may wish to have children with a future partner if anything was to happen like that. Thought out the whole construction I wasn't listened too and on 8 occasions she mentioned having my tubes tied. I was told I needed to take aspirin, which I pointed out I cannot take due to the fact I was still breastfeeding my daughter and I didn't feel Comfortable doing this. I recently had my 32 week scan and check up with [member of staff] Who can I say is one of the best doctors I have seen in the whole experience of any of my pregnancies he made me feel comfortable I explained issues I was having with my hips and back and that I was in pain. I said that I didn't want my tubes tied regardless of what the previous doctor had said and he agreed that he wouldn't do anything due to my age. We booked my section and ran though what's next what will happen etc. There was no Pressures from anyone, and I really hope that he will be doing my section because his a fantastic doctor and made me feel at ease and actually took the time to learn about the hard things or Things I found a struggle in my preclude births.

I am exited to be giving birth in a Matter of weeks however I'm concerned regarding the care in maternity and being poorly again. I'm just hoping that I will have a caring kind midwife like I had with my second birth.