

Anonymous

26th March 2021

The recent survey that I filled out seemed to only focus on a mother's most recent pregnancy so I wanted to write to share my experiences on my second pregnancy in 2019.

I fell pregnant around the February time with my second baby. I had an early scan following a referral from my GP due to developing hyperemesis gravidarum again. All was fine with the baby during this scan and my following 12 week scan.

The problems started when I attended my 20 week anatomy scan. The sonographer scanned me and immediately found that there was something wrong with our baby's brain. She told us she had to get a consultant and left the room for what felt like hours. My husband and I were obviously extremely nervous and anxious during the wait. I was then scanned by a consultant who found that there was something wrong with our babies brain development. We were referred to Southampton's fetal medicine unit (who were absolutely fantastic) and proceeded to have 4 weeks of scans and tests before we made the heartbreaking decision to end our pregnancy due to our son being so poorly.

During these 4 weeks of tests, we received 4 phone calls from midwives in the antenatal department at Jersey's General hospital. Each time was a different midwife who called and each time was to arrange our flight to Southampton. There was no care or compassion in the calls, it just seemed like a formality to get the flights booked.

This was by far the most scared I have ever been and I felt so alone and let down by the antenatal department at the hospital for their complete lack of support to me and my husband. I had no communication with any Jersey consultants or my community midwife (who I had seen throughout my first pregnancy and who I had seen 3 times during this pregnancy before my 20 week scan).

The midwives in maternity where I delivered my stillborn son at 24 weeks were absolutely fantastic. They were professional but extremely kind, caring and compassionate. However I was offered no counselling or aftercare (there may have been a leaflet in the back of some paperwork but it wasn't brought to my attention). The consultant that carried out my 20 week scan came to verify my son for the death certificate as he was born after 24 weeks and said that she would see me for my 6 week postpartum check up. I was never contacted about this and had to chase her secretary 6 times to get an appointment with her. I had my 6 week postpartum appointment when I was 13 weeks postpartum. This was not acceptable.

My GP (██████████ at health plus) was absolutely incredible following the death of my son. She arranged counselling for me and was extremely supportive post pregnancy during the many difficult months.

When I fell pregnant again, I made sure that I was under the same consultant as I had been before due to her knowing all of my history. She was so much better during this pregnancy and monitored me closely. I wish I could say the same for the antenatal department.

Again, I saw different midwives a lot of the time during my monthly scans and appointments. Some didn't know my medical history so I had to explain it all to them.

I was actually under the fetal medicine unit In Southampton for this pregnancy but due to Covid, I was only able to visit them once at 16 weeks to have a scan. I was due to fly back for my 20 week scan but was unable to due to the travel restrictions.

As you can imagine, the anxiety levels before my 20'week scan were extremely high anyway and the fact that I couldn't go to Southampton to see the specialists made it worse. But the most awful part was having to go to this scan alone due to Covid.

I turned up to the hospital extremely emotional but expecting to at least see a familiar face. I was met by a sonographer who I had never met before and taken into the scanning room. She hadn't looked at my notes and point blank asked me why on earth I was crying, and then proceeded to imply that I was lying when I told her I had had 4 scans before this one (she could only find the kites for 2 scans as the other 2 were in different parts of the folder).

I explained as much as I could explained that I was supposed to be having this scan in Southampton and she started to scan me. She couldn't see the baby's brain which lead to me getting extremely upset and agitated. She then laughed and said, 'we probably should be scanning you on the better scanner really'. I was in complete shock. She was rude, impatient and actually left the room when I started to have a full on panic attack. Eventually a midwife came in and calmed me down and arranged for me to come back later in the day to be scanned by the consultant, something which should have been done in the first place. This particular sonographer made a truly horrendous experience even worse.

The rest of my scans were carried out by my consultant. The care I received in maternity when I had my planned c section was incredible again, especially the midwives [REDACTED]

I am so shocked and upset that Jersey doesn't have a bereavement midwife. This needs to be made a priority along with supporting families that lose babies pre and post loss. Bereavement midwives are such a valuable resource to have and prove invaluable to families going through baby loss. We were lucky enough to meet one in Southampton and she provided exceptional care in the 2 times we met her.

I am sorry for the long email, I just had to relay my experiences in hopes that other families won't have to be as let down as we were when our son died.