

I had a rather traumatic birth - not as bad as some of the women on your website but it still bothers me a year on and I don't know what to do about it.

It all started because of the snow last year. I was snowed in on my due date (2nd December 2010) and I watched the days go by and still snow and no baby. Eventually at 10:30 pm on 8th December the street was cleared and I went into labour 3 hours later (how's that for timing). I was exactly one week overdue. I phoned the hospital as instructed only to be told that since the pain was in my back it couldn't possibly be labour and I had a urine infection and should go see the doctor in the morning!

Being a first time mum I let it go. Took the paracetamol and waited an hour by which time the pain was more intense. This time I phoned NHS 24 who listened to what I had to say and sent an ambulance for me as we had no idea what condition the roads were in. I got the hospital in 20 mins where they said I was at 4cm and contractions were every 5 mins. I felt great and in total control. They offered me a birthing pool which was fantastic, the pain moved from my back to my front but it was manageable and I spent the next two hours in there and went from 4cm to 8cm in that time. Then it all went wrong.

I'm happily breathing on gas and air, letting my body push and they made me get up to check the baby's heartbeat. They told me it wasn't recovering correctly although they could see the head. They got me out of the pool and then said it wasn't the head it was the sack and my water's hadn't broken. They asked if they could break my waters, to which I said yes, and the next thing I know I hear the words "foetal distress" and "meconium". I'm on a gurney and they are talking quickly to my husband and wheeling me to a theatre. By now I'm 9cm and pushing hard and they're trying to get me to stop (stop, are they serious!) to put in an epidural while a doctor tells me he needs to perform a cesarean - the one thing I didn't want. All control was taken away from me.

My arms were strapped down and the drugs began to take hold while they carried out the procedure. Gemma was born within 10 mins. A very nice nurse told me it was a girl and took a picture on my phone for me. She didn't make a sound until they cleared her airways of the meconium and I didn't get to do skin-to-skin or hold her. She was put into an incubator and taken away to SCBU. I know it was the best for her but I was heartbroken and very confused.

I was wheeled to recovery and then put on the main ward with women and their babies. By the afternoon I was taken to a room on my own and left there. That evening I was finally taken down to SCBU to see Gemma only to find out when we got there that she had been moved to NICU and on CPAP. We didn't know and it was such a shock to see her like that. I must say most of the staff in NICU were fantastic and let me touch her head but it was so different to what I had thought birth

was going to be like. One nurse however told me to go back to my room and leave her be after I'd been downstairs for an hour. I cried all night that night. It was another two days before I got to hold her and I had been adamant with the staff that I was going to breastfeed. It had taken me ages to convince them to help me get started. Gemma spent another two days NICU before moving to SCBU for two days. She was then placed with me and we had a night together before going home. Before we left we received an apology from the midwives that we hadn't been warned that Gemma had been moved to NICU. They were supposed to tell us before we went to see her but they forgot.

I was bruised from my waist to my knees and looked like I had black cycling shorts on. They said this was because she was in the birth canal and they had to pull her back. Walking was very difficult but as she was on the floor below in NICU I walked every single day to go see her. I think this helped my physical recovery as I had no choice but to get up and move. I hated being in hospital. Even though I was in my own room I was surrounded by other mums and their babies. I would hear them crying at night and all I could think about was that Gemma wasn't with me. I can't fault the midwives outside the idiot who told me I wasn't in labour - I do wonder sometimes if the outcome would have been different if I hadn't listened to her. Most of them [were](#) very good to me and would help me out with simple tasks like waking me at night to express and taking [my](#) milk to the NICU for me to let me sleep.

It took me a long time to admit I had a problem. My PND scores were borderline but I was told to go and get fresh air. I'm much better than I was. I'm not so depressed anymore but I do find myself thinking on the birth a lot. Especially now that she's almost a year old. Its like I'm afraid to let it go but I know its eating away at me. I don't know what to do about it.