

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the way that independent midwives are processed if a complaint is made against them. The system as it stands is completely unfair to independent midwives and puts their vital roles in jeopardy. Other carers within the birthing system are not treated in this way and nor should they be.

It should be every woman's right to be able to choose the kind of care they have when birthing their child, be it independent, private, or in a hospital. However, if the current system continues, more and more independent midwives are at risk of losing their positions through a system which is biased and unfair, thus taking away the choices available to birthing women. This concerns me deeply, both as a human rights advocate, and as a woman who has been through the birthing process.

I have personally experienced care by both an independent midwife AND carers in a public hospital. During my experience in the public hospital, my child was misdiagnosed over six different check ups as cephalic (correct position) and as a direct result of the ongoing neglect I received from the hospital staff (who, in their defence, were simply overworked), I ended up having a cesarean.

It was only when I went to an independent midwife (during my second pregnancy) was I able to learn that I had an abnormal shaped uterus, and that in fact my second child was ALSO breech. Through the help and support of my midwife, I was able to find a specialist to conduct an ECV via ultrasound on my baby, turn him into the correct position, and thus have a completely natural birth.

I feel confident to this day that without the support of my independent midwife, I would never have been able to have a natural birth with my second child, and I hate to think what the consequences of that would have been, considering that my second child suffered from severe reflux and had to be fed every two hours around the clock for several months. He had to be held and carried almost constantly to be settled. Plus I was parenting alone with a very difficult three year old. I really don't know how I would have coped in the situation if I'd ended up with another cesarean.

The support of independent midwives can be completely lifechanging. Please don't put their roles at risk.

This situation needs to change to put the roles of independent midwives and homebirthing back where they belong - accessible for all women.

Regards,

Heidi Hibberd