

To whom it may concern,

Recently we received an email about the current process of complaints about midwives and being unaware of this until now it was a shock and very concerning both for ourselves personally and for the direction of maternity care.

We decided at the beginning of our first pregnancy to consult a private midwife throughout the pregnancy and have her assistance during the birth. Out of all the millions of decisions we had to make with having our first baby this was the wisest choice we could have made.

Private midwives are absolute heroes for pregnant women. They give so much of themselves for their job and their job is extremely taxing on them. I had no idea what was involved in birth prior to having one and I had little idea of what these amazing women do to help you through it.

We had not planned a homebirth but had booked into a public hospital birth centre. I laboured for days without progress and vomited the entire time. Our private midwife tried all her tricks of the trade to get the baby into a better, easier position, help me avoid drugs and interventions and be more comfortable. She was looked on in awe by the other staff as after having an epidural she rocked my hips for hours to help the baby move while I could not. We have absolutely no doubt that she saved me and my baby from a c-section. While the other midwives were happy to administer iv drips, gas and advice they were simply too busy to provide the level of support that we were given by our private midwife. She was with us constantly for over 50 hours and when I was transferred from the birth centre to the labour ward she cried along with us.

We recently consulted her again for our second pregnancy eager to attempt a homebirth this time as we were confident of being in expert care. We knew that our midwife knew us, our wishes, the history of my past labour and when to transfer if necessary. We could relax and focus knowing that our care provider was always accessible, available and understanding. Again we had meetings that lasted up to three hours discussing everything that came to mind. Books were lent, invites to get together with other mothers and general advice/ information was streaming in from emails and phone calls and again we felt supported and linked to the information and care we needed or might need.

Our pregnancy ended at 14 weeks and our midwife was there for us through every scary, horrifying step of our baby's death and then a D and C. She eased us through understanding our options and helped us through this very difficult time. She still keeps in touch and likes to keep tabs on how we are going and moving through our grief. This is despite having lost a client and income for the birth. She does not get paid for any of this continued care now the pregnancy has ended. She genuinely cares about our family. It's such a comfort to know that.

Pregnancy and birth, breastfeeding and baby care are daunting events at times particularly when things go wrong. It is so important to women's emotional health to have someone we can trust and relax with while being confident of their professional competency. Being able to find a midwife that compliments us and can become part of our pregnancy and birth team is so helpful to us as a family. We hope to homebirth in the future and without her we would be forced to decide ourselves if or when we would need to transfer to hospital. This would be on our judgement and with no medical training it would make birth so stressful and negative. I have no intention of giving birth in a hospital unless it's a medical emergency as our previous hospital birth was a negative one (due to reasons I have not discussed here).

The current situation by which independent midwives are being processed if there has been a complaint against them is totally unacceptable, unfair, unjust and unethical. No conditions should be placed on any midwife before an investigation has taken place.

I have grave concerns that at any time my midwife could find her registration under restriction and this would exclude her from continuing to be my main care provider. This will force me into the hospital system or to choose to free birth.

I request that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately and that some balance be resorted. Midwifery and homebirth is not a crime.