

Megan's Homebirth Experience

My first pregnancy and birth was relatively easy with a 7lb 13oz baby girl, Florence, born in hospital after a 7 and 3/4 hour labour with no stitches or tearing. I had gas and air and diamorphine. The main reason that I chose a homebirth second time was that I knew if I had another 'easy' labour but baby's arrival didn't coincide with visiting hours I'd hate to be left on my own without my husband and daughter.

I was referred to the Jubilee midwife team and I cannot stress enough how amazing this service is, my midwife was basically available on any day should I need her. I was never made to feel like I couldn't get in touch despite not knowing her days off etc. The service that I got is of the same standard as private healthcare. All my visits were done at home by the same midwife, so Rob (my husband) and Flo got to meet her regularly. Our Midwife was pretty much guaranteed to deliver my baby but I was also introduced to a second midwife that would be the lead should for any reason Mandy not be available.

At each visit the topic of conversation was mainly led by any thoughts/fears I had about delivering at home over a cup of tea. Not the same service I had last time where birth wasn't discussed until antenatal classes at 37ish weeks and all other appointments my midwife (that definitely wouldn't deliver my baby) was looking at a computer screen in the doctor's surgery.

With each appointment my confidence grew. Our Midwife was so passionate and knowledgeable about birth and just women in general, that I started believing that yes my body could do this and its not just 'feminists and hippies' that manage to do it at home!

My due date came and went, Our Midwife checked in every couple of days via text. I had been having Braxton Hicks for about two weeks but nothing major happened until the morning of 22 February 2014, I was 8 days late now (Flo was born 8 days late too!) Woke up with quite strong but very irregular contractions, we decided to go for a walk to see if this would help nudge things along. My dad came too who would be having Flo overnight when the time came. I had an appointment with Our Midwife at half 12 that day anyway so just carried on with the morning not getting in touch just yet. I knew that things were starting though. Our Midwife checked me and gave me a sweep when she came-I was 4cm dilated and so happy to know! After lunch my dad and Flo left and almost straight away my contractions came more frequent. Baby was quite on my back so Our Midwife said my contractions would probably be quite frequent and short to try and turn her (exactly the same as Flo's labour!). Rob started setting up our pool straight away- this belonged to our children's centre, it was free and you just have to buy a liner for it.

I went into the baby's room and rocked my way through contractions that were now a minute apart lasting around 30 seconds and needing more concentration. I got into the pool at around 2ish with contractions still the same, I can't stress enough how amazing the water felt! We started watching a film but throughout it they started to slow down so I got out after about an hour. I went upstairs and laboured on our bed; the contractions almost immediately became much more intense and were still a minute apart but lasting around 40 seconds. I was fine just breathing through them, it never crossed my mind that I couldn't cope at home. At 5 o'clock I knew I wanted to get back into the pool. Our Midwife text me to check in, it was at 6pm that I text her to say they were really strong now; I had no expulsive feelings or pressure yet but could feel baby very low. Our Midwife was 40 mins away from us and so it was difficult to know when to get her to come. My waters went whilst in the pool and Rob phoned Our Midwife straight away. She left home at about half 6 and whilst waiting for her to arrive I was starting to feel pressure.

Once my waters had gone the feeling of the contractions changed, I wasn't aware of this last time as I had diamorphine (wasn't aware of much!). Contractions were much lower down and the pressure I could feel was quite surreal; I could feel my baby moving down with each contraction, I think I was pushing a little bit but I mainly breathed her out, remembering bits of hypnobirthing I had read. Our Midwife had discussed that I should breathe baby out rather than bear down and push too. I completely trusted my body and never doubted what I was doing was wrong. The fact that Our Midwife hadn't arrived yet didn't scare me really either...Rob was supporting me perfectly I wasn't aware I would feel this confident until I was actually doing it.

Our Midwife arrived about 10 mins before I crowned. At this stage I panicked a bit, I didn't remember the "ring of fire" last time...also I was a bit worried I would tear as I was so lucky not to the last time! But her head was born and then I felt her turn. It's amazing how aware I was of everything. I turned over in the pool for her body to be born, in my head there wasn't enough room for her to come out if I was on all fours!

Whilst my baby was crowning my second midwife arrived...they both came in quietly completely respecting my space and what my body was doing. Our Midwife only managed one quick foetal heart check and baby was happy but otherwise I had no intervention other than my sweep earlier that day. Elsie was born at 19:19 weighing 7lb13 1/2oz (nearly exactly the same as flo!).

I had a natural third stage too and afterwards Our Midwife talked us through the placenta. I had an injection first time round to make it come very quickly after delivery. I didn't know a natural third stage was an option!

Our Midwife did my post natal visits too. We got chance to discuss the birth in depth, the continuity of care is brilliant. I didn't realise until after I had Flo how much giving birth means to you. It is the proudest thing I have ever achieved birthing my two girls, but my second birth was far more empowering.

I would suggest anyone that can, should have a homebirth. Not because of any reason other than the care and knowledge that you get is absolutely amazing. At each visit your confidence grows so that you absolutely can birth your baby how your body has been made to birth. I'm a nurse and I respect medical professionals and hospitals but birth is about so much more than just the delivery. The jubilee team deliver a completely holistic package of care. For me it was necessary to do lots of reading and watching of you-tube videos to 'revise' what to expect. I wrote down anything I liked the sound of to help build confidence. Some hypno-birthing I read was a bit too far fetched for me but I found little bits from lots of different resources worked.

I cannot thank Jubilee Midwives enough for their support before during and after Elsie was born. By getting to me Our midwife knew exactly the best way to support me. Women's bodies are amazing and are made to grow; birth and nurture babies!