

Kara's Homebirth Experience

I decided to have a home birth with my first baby after going to see a Midwife Led Unit in Okehampton. It was very nice but still a little bit too clinical for me - I'm not a fan of hospitals and knew I would not be confident in that kind of environment. My Fiancée, Ben suggested (on the rather rough ride back to Plymouth over the moors) considering a home birth and so it went from there. I referred myself to the jubilee team, was designated Amanda and Mandy and had all my antenatal appointments with Amanda who reassured me and answered the numerous questions that I had. She took on board my fears and concerns and ensured I was happy long before my boy was due.



I really wanted a birthing pool, so we got in touch with the Plymouth Home Birth Group who meet once a month and rented one from Abigail. It was great as we could pick it up 2 weeks before he was due and did a dummy run pumping it up.

Ben had got some plastic sheeting and was going to cover the floor with it on the day (we had been told numerous times that a first labour can take up to 13+ hours) but luckily had done it the night before I went into labour. It was nicknamed the murdering room as it looked like a scene off CSI! I woke up at 1am thinking it was my baby kicking me in the ribs (as he did every night in the early hours) and I need the toilet. Sleepily I went downstairs and realised it wasn't pain in my ribs but felt like severe period pain. This was new.



They came one after another and an hour later they were every 10 minutes. I woke up Ben and told him it was time. Another hour later they were every 5 minutes. I was using a TENS machine and wouldn't get off the toilet. I had my Mother-In-Law (to be) as my female birth partner and she arrived and immediately told Ben to get dressed (he was still in his boxers) and to get pumping the pool up. He told her it could take most of the day for this birth. At which point she took one look at me and practically shouted at him to get into gear and this baby wasn't far off coming! I don't think I have ever seen him move so quick! One of the funny things I can remember is sitting on the loo and hearing the pump downstairs going ten to the dozen and him running with buckets of water. His face was more red than mine!!

In hind sight I think being on the toilet, is what helped move things along rather quickly as this is obviously a place where I felt most relax to allow things to move down (so to speak). We called Amanda at 3am and she arrived at 4am (after picking up extra gas and air on the way). I was still sitting on the toilet at this point and things were getting a little overwhelming so she rushed in with the gas and air, this I know understand to have probably been the transition period. The gas and air immediately did the trick and I started feeling much calmer and in control. She insisted after the contraction had finished that we move downstairs to the 'murder room' (still gets called that now hahaha). She examined me and I was 8cm dilated and said I should get in the pool. I didn't believe her, I was still under the impression it was going to take the best part of the day!

The pool was amazing. My whole demeanour changed and I was able to focus on what had to be done. I was on my knees leaning over the pool side holding the gas with one hand and Ben's hand with the other. It was at that point i remembered watching one born every minute and thinking the screamers and those that panicked had longer births and so I focused all my energy on the contractions and then on the pushing and remained calm. After every contraction Amanda checked my baby's heart beat. We were both doing well. The second midwife, Mandy arrived at 6am. I remember Amanda saying the baby's head was born and with one big push he would be here, and push I did! I was so focused on the pushing that I didn't realise he was out. Amanda told me to sit back on my heels and my baby was underneath me so I brought him to the surface where he screwed his face up and started crying.

Finley arrived in the pool at 6:26 weighing 7.2lb. The midwives were amazing! I hardly noticed they were there until Finley arrived. It all happened so quick I still had my pajama top on!



I sat in the pool for about 5 minutes just holding him and keeping him warm. Then Ben cut the cord and I got out of the pool. I was given an injection as previously agreed with Amanda to help deliver the placenta. I stayed on the sofa whilst checks were made and Finley was checked etc. Once everything was OK, Ben took Finley and held him skin to skin whilst his mum helped me get showered off and dressed and then I went and laid on the sofa with my baby for the rest of the day and had a huge plate of pate and toast and a big mug of tea! Something I had been craving for 9 months!!

It was a such a positive experience. Everything. The midwives were great, being at home was fantastic, couldn't have done it without Ben and his mum and being at home not having to climb into a car or travel anywhere at any point was the best part.

I would recommend a home birth to anyone who is able to consider it.