



A new mum of two, shares her experience of care received during and after her pregnancies. Highlighting the important impact of embedded Trauma-informed principles and building *Trusting, Empowering Relationships* with her care providers.

“You can only describe my childhood as chaotic. Both my mum and dad drank and took drugs and often fought. I had to look after my wee brothers, making food and getting them to school. We often had no money for food, and I had to make something with what I could get. Social work did nothing to support us and that’s why I didn’t trust them.

I started hanging out with the wrong lot around 11yrs and started smoking joints then. Over the next couple years, I used more with drink and when I was 15yrs I was smoking Heroin and my life fell apart. I had fell out of school and my friends were all using drugs too. That’s when I met my son’s dad. He took drugs and he would hit me and steal any money I had.

*When I was pregnant with ***** I was still with him, and I didn’t tell the midwives that I was still using or any the abuse I was getting. I saw so many different midwives and doctors, and I didn’t trust anyone, but I was really worried they would take my baby. I knew I need help, but everyone said they would take him off me if I said anything. Social work came to my door just before he was born and we had a meeting in the hospital and he was put in foster care, until he was 11 months. I think police let them know after my neighbour called them because ***** was giving me a beating. This didn’t help me trust social work and it took me a while to be honest with my worker. The staff were all judging me, and I trust no one. It felt like I was being punished again and none of them got it.*

*I have had help from addictions and now been in recovery for about 3 years. I met ***** and we had been seeing each other for about a year when I was pregnant again. This time I was honest from the start. I called my old social worker and she let ***** the special midwife who helps people like me during the pregnancy. She did all my care, and I could talk to her about anything. She really listened to me and supported me to have a say in my care, I really trusted her, and this helped me to trust some of the other staff too. Some things happened to me when I was younger, and I got really worried when at the hospital and petrified of labour. She made sure staff knew about my past and that there was a plan written to support me. I called her when I started, and she called the labour staff to let them know. I managed really well this time and felt the care I got was much better. There are still some staff who don’t get it or make me feel small, but I have learned to ignore them. I feel the special midwife really understands and this showed in my care and experience this time. It would be great if all staff were like her”.*