

## Oliver's Birth Story written by David, Oliver's father

### **Claire and David did NCT classes with Zana in Romsey, Hants in 2014**

We joined our local NCT classes in a hope to meet people in our local area having babies around the same time as us. My wife was far more informed about the whole pregnancy and labour process than I was and I was hoping to use the NCT courses to get more information on all of the different aspects of pregnancy. We came to the classes with a pretty clear picture of what our birth plan would involve and the classes only helped to confirm our plan. It was amazing that Zana our NCT coordinator never judged or commented on our plan - she simply listened to our views and provided us with the information for us to take away and make our own informed choices. We always felt that our confidentiality was maintained throughout the group sessions and she was always approachable after the class sessions if there was anything concerning us which we didn't feel comfortable sharing with the group. However, our group was fantastic and we could share pretty much anything with confidence.

Our plan was to have a water birth in our local midwife led birth centre and our local midwife was fully supportive of our wishes. However, if we had faced any opposition to our plan from anyone in the NHS I certainly would not have had the confidence to question them without the knowledge and support gained from the NCT courses. We were very lucky that on the whole this didn't happen.

The pregnancy went pretty much a smoothly as you could imagine, Claire had quite a lot of Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP) but other than that no real issues - I am convinced this was mainly due to my wife's positive outlook and she was luckily one of those women you hear about who actually blossom during pregnancy. We were fully aware that as this was our first baby that we could go past our due date and we were very clear that we didn't want to go through the induction process if we went over 40 weeks. The NCT classes were extremely helpful in this regard as it gave us the confidence that this was the right decision for us as pretty much everyone we knew who had gone past 41 wks and been induced ended up with a long labour, difficult 2nd stage, ending with C section. So when we told our midwife at the 40 wk appointment that we didn't want to be booked in for an induction at 40wks +12 days it was a completely informed decision on our part and one that both of us were certain of. I was surprised at the amount of pressure we were put under by the NHS to follow this induction process and when we asked for the evidence to support why we should be induced only anecdotal risks were quoted. This further convinced us to stick to our plan and the baby would come when it was ready.

Claire finally went into labour at 40wks +10days - she did the most amazing job of staying calm on the build up to going into labour. I came home from work to find her in the bath monitoring her contractions and telling me that she felt fine and that there was nothing to worry about. I was a little shocked at this but remembered to remain calm and not stress her out. I just went into auto pilot and made sure we were ready to go when she felt we needed to. I called the birthing centre in order to let them know the situation only to discover that the birthing centre was in fact closed due to "staffing issues". I simply could not believe it as we had only really planned on having our baby there and simply hadn't considered that it could be closed. Claire was amazing and helped me to stay calm; this now meant that we would need to make the longer journey (25mins) to the hospital. Claire was

having 1min long contractions at 2-3min intervals at this stage and was managing them very well. We knew however that the stress of getting into the car and making that longer than planned journey would impact this significantly. However, we had no other option so we tried to get Claire as comfortable as possible along the back seat of the car and headed off. By the time we arrived the contractions had pretty much stopped and we knew that it was imperative to get Claire back in the zone so that the contractions could return. The midwives in the hospital were very helpful and we were fortunate that there was space in the midwife led unit within the hospital so the birth plan should still be possible. They showed us to our room and I immediately turned off the bright lights and Claire focussed on her breathing - the contractions returned but with much greater intensity.

The midwife then examined her and she was 3cm dilated at 9:15pm. Fortunately all of our birth plan information was clearly written in our notes and they knew straight away what our plans were. They were extremely helpful and offered to move us to a pool room. This helped put us both at ease knowing that we may still get the birth experience we had set our hearts on having. Claire got into the pool at around 10pm and proceeded to manage all the contractions and pushing fantastically with her breathing techniques and gas+air and little Oliver was born at 12:30 weighing 8lb 7oz. Amazing!

I can say with certainty that I would not have coped with the whole experience without the knowledge and confidence that the NCT course provided me. I knew that Claire would remain calm and collected during the whole process as this is her natural way; however I knew how important it was for me to remain calm. The NCT group has proven invaluable after the birth too with all the class now having had their babies and we are all in daily contact sharing our experiences and knowing that friends are going through similar experiences certainly helps to reassure you that we are doing ok.

Thanks again for all of your help  
David, Claire and Oliver