# Challenges and Advocacy Surrounding Elective C-Sections in UK Maternity Care



Around a third of babies in the UK are born via caesarean section according to NHS data, with approximately half of these surgeries being planned. Despite this, there remains a significant stigma around elective C-sections, and instances of women being refused the procedure are not uncommon.

Louise Thompson, a former cast member of "Made In Chelsea," shared in her book "Lucky: Learning To Live Again" that she was denied a C-section during the birth of her son Leo in 2021. She nearly bled to death after her womb tore and later required an emergency C-section, multiple blood transfusions, and developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result.

A parliamentary inquiry into birth trauma has recently called for a national plan to improve maternity care, urging that women's choices about childbirth be respected. Dr. Ranee Thakar, president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), asserts that a woman’s choice regarding a caesarean should be respected and supported by healthcare professionals, provided she is fully informed of the risks and benefits.

Dr. Shazia Malik, consultant obstetrician at The Portland Hospital, highlights the historical stigma around elective C-sections, stating that there are numerous medical and psychological reasons that may make a planned C-section the safest option for some women.

Amina Hatia, a midwife at Tommy’s, emphasizes the importance of informed consent and urges that no decisions about pregnancy and birth should be made without it. She advises women to seek a second opinion if they feel their concerns are not being addressed.

Emma Armstrong, also known as The Naked Doula, advocates for personalized and positive caesarean experiences, emphasizing that C-sections are major surgeries that also require significant recovery. Armstrong encourages open discussions with medical teams to ensure a calm and supported birth experience.