

**Mothers-to-be may get right to homebirth**  
**Sarah-Kate Templeton**  
**Sunday Times 11.10.15**

Dear Editor

What a missed opportunity to explore what may be a landmark moment for childbearing women. Instead the article gives most weight to the latest threat to autonomy; the belief that when women have power over our own bodies we will use it to the detriment of our unborn children.

James Titcombe fails to understand that in prioritising our 'experience', we have safety at the top of our minds.

I am the woman in the photo which accompanies this piece and wonder if the tragic stories he has heard extend to women like me who, together with their babies, have faced the full barrage of medical intervention in the name of safety. Never have I felt less safe than when I was on the receiving end of a violent blur of procedures which ultimately left my baby daughter in the special care unit and me only partially continent and mobile and fully unable to even think about being competent in my role as new mother considering I was suffering from both PTSD and PND. Obstetric intervention can be life-saving but in many cases, it isn't, it is just what happens as the well-documented 'cascade' of intervention unfolds.

I hope the obvious passion James has for keeping mothers and babies safe can be extended to minimising the risks of unnecessary hospital interventions. All women need champions of safety who also fight for improved compassion and respect in the birthing room. Champions who can see the whole picture, beyond the limited images of their own personal experience.

The maternity review presents a real chance of improving the experiences of women and their babies as well as safety. For the sake of thousands of women like me, I do hope that deeply ingrained prejudices around non-medicalised births don't ruin it.

Sincerely,

Sam O'Brien