

Earlier this week there was a rather disappointing report from the Care Quality Commission into parts of Kent's mental health services.

I always try to be fair when reading through these reports because I often meet with the service providers and know the challenges that they face, many of which have come as a consequence of Government policy. I also recognise, as does this report, that the staff are very hardworking and that a report like this can impact on morale.

However with that said I also find it incredibly frustrating to read a report that effectively highlights failings within such an important support service for vulnerable members of society. I have long campaigned on mental health issues and have the right support in place is essential if we are to help those most in need. I have met local families who have faced tragedy because of failings that meant that the right support has not been implemented at the right time.

One in four of us will face a mental health condition at some point in our lives. Many are manageable with help from our GPs. Others require greater intervention through therapy. But some are so severe that they need intensive support and often involve other issues, such as drugs or alcohol or both, so are extremely complex. Each one faces the challenge of resource. I don't just mean money – we have a shortage across the country of trained therapists, something that cannot be solved overnight but one that our local service, along with some fundamental systems change, must address if it is to pass its next inspection.

The staff I have met are hard working, compassionate and dedicated. They are the frontline for those who suffer enormously from poor mental health and they therefore deserve my support and that of others to work through the recommendations of report.