

The Prime Minister stated that he wants to make Britain the best place to end life. While it is great to have such a personal commitment to supporting our older generation I believe we need to take steps to make this the best country to start life too and last week I held a debate in the Commons on the tragic and sensitive subject of still births and infant mortality.

I've met several constituents who have experienced the tragic occurrence of losing a baby. It was heartbreaking. Statistically we have one of the highest infant mortality rates in the developed world and this number has seen barely any reduction in 20 years.

Unfortunately 1 in 200 pregnancies in the UK that end in stillbirth - that is 4,000 babies a year. Yet so little is understood about why it can happen. However, we do know how to lower the risks and that these numbers can be significantly reduced by taking preventative measures.

Mothers themselves need to be able to spot the signs of reduced foetal movements quickly and we know that often with regards to stillbirth it can be due to problems with the placenta so earlier delivery could mean better chance of survival for the baby outside the womb. But we also need to do more to understand risk profiling which some pilot schemes have seen great success rates with increased measuring and monitoring.

The training of all medical professionals that come into contact with pregnant women needs to be updated and bereavement support improvements are also vital for those deaths we cannot prevent, ensuring the welfare of those who suffer this awful loss. Local charities Abigail's Footsteps and Kent SANDS are doing fabulous work on this.

It was a hard debate to lead but it was important to raise this on behalf of all those who have had a still birth, a tragedy I cannot even begin to comprehend.