

At the start of the week the Prime Minister set out her vision for dealing with certain issues relating to social vulnerabilities, including, rather importantly, mental health. Even during my short time as a Member of Parliament the issue of mental health has, rightly, catapulted up the political agenda but there is a lot more that needs to be done.

As well as pledging more support for treatment services there was one sentence in particular that stuck in my mind. She said “We must look at what more can be done to prevent mental health problems, and work with [charities] to capitalise on the crucial role civil society has to play in helping young people – and indeed people of all ages – build resilience”. The last two words are hugely significant. I know from my own experience that alongside treatment there must be a greater emphasis on coping strategies. Whether as a means of prevention or as part of the “cure”, for want of a better word.

Resilience comes in a variety of forms. I am personally a huge advocate of mindfulness. It doesn't work for everyone but for me breathing exercises and meditation help enormously. However there are other innovative and creative ways of helping build resilience, including events such as “Tea and Resilience” sessions being run at the RBLI Capel Morris Centre in Aylesford to help beat the winter blues. I love this initiative. It follows very much in the footsteps of Ruby Wax's Frazzled Café's – a similar project she has set up to help people chat about their own mental health, which she believes, as do I, help people cope.

Mental health is an issue that should be taken seriously. As well as treatment we do need to build resilience and I cheered, mindfully, that the Prime Minister recognises this.