

Mental health

There is a rare agreement amidst the noise of this election. All parties agree we need to spend more on mental health services and need to do more to help those with mental health problems.

So let me pose a couple of questions today. What initiatives nationally would make best use of additional money? And for those of you living in the Thames Valley, what additional local facilities and staff do we most need?

There are a range of therapies that are used for differing conditions, where experience and practice can refine the approaches to seek to improve the success rate. There are drug treatments for things like depression, where the medics need to be careful not to create a dependence on drugs which becomes a problem in its own right.

I find in many of the unsatisfactory debates about public service it is often nothing other than a bidding war where £1bn is good and £2bn is much better. Spending the money wisely should be a bigger part of the debate. Indeed we should start with what we need, and then cost it to see when and how we can afford it.