

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO POLITICIANS – EDWIN HAYWARD**

Brexit affects EVERYTHING. If you care about austerity, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about austerity. If you care about cancelled operations, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about cancelled operations.

If you care about children's services, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about children's services. If you care about Universal Credit, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about Universal Credit.

Brexit will spread like a virus into every aspect of life, making us poorer, less competitive, more isolated in the world. Your heart can be filled with compassion until it threatens to burst, but if you don't care about Brexit, you don't really care about your country.

If you care about mental health, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about mental health. If you care about the closure of children's centres, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the closure of children's centres.

If you care about disabled people, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about disabled people. If you care about underfunding of the NHS, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about underfunding of the NHS.

Brexit will upend whole industries, and send foreign investment and multinational companies fleeing. Your intentions may be purer than an angel's, but if you don't care about Brexit, you don't really care about your country.

If you care about young people, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about young people. If you care about the treatment of migrants, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the treatment of migrants.

Brexit will fan the flames of intolerance and racism. It will "other" whole groups of people and sections of the community. You can wring your hands at the state of the world until they bleed, but if you don't care about Brexit, you don't really care about the UK.

If you care about cuts to the police, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about cuts to the police. If you care about saving Post Offices, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about saving Post Offices.

Brexit will shred all our international trading arrangements (covering 60%+ of all our trade), and undo half a century of deal-making. You may desperately want to see businesses thrive, but if you don't care about Brexit, you don't really care about the UK.

If you care about the hostile immigration environment, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the hostile immigration environment. If you care about nursing bursaries, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about nursing bursaries.

If you care about adult social care, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about adult social care. If you care about the threat of deportations, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the threat of deportations.

Every flavour of Brexit will impoverish us, with the impact felt disproportionately by disadvantaged communities and the lowest-paid. You may be a paragon of virtue when it comes to fighting inequality, but if you don't care about Brexit, you don't really care about the UK.

If you care about special needs pupils, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about special needs pupils. If you care about rising child mortality in poorer areas, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about rising child mortality in poorer areas.

If you care about equal pay, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about equal pay. If you care about the surge in violent crime, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the surge in violent crime.

The UK is an economic powerhouse, but it also runs its finances very close to the limit. Brexit will tip us over the edge, just like the financial crisis did. You may be a fervent patriot, but if you don't care about Brexit, you don't really care about the UK.

If you care about workers' rights, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about workers' rights. If you care about the plight of the homeless, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the plight of the homeless.

If you care about the erosion of further education, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about the erosion of further education. If you care about racism in our society, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about racism in our society.

We're awkward around money, reticent to talk about it. Maybe that's why so many politicians skirt around the hard facts of Brexit. Scroll back through this thread. EVERYTHING depends on having adequate funding. Yet Brexit will impact our economy for decades to come.

Here's the rub: all the information you need is already at your disposal. You have HOC briefings, evidence to Select Committees, impact assessments, expert (shudder) testimony, warnings from industry, UK and EU preparedness notices, and more.

If you take the time to look, to really dig, EVERYTHING points to Brexit being a disaster. The only question mark is over just how much of a disaster it will be. So if you care about your country, but not about Brexit, you don't really care about your country.

Hauliers warn that Brexit could destroy their business. Farmers warn that fruit & vegetables could rot in the fields. The NHS warns of severe staffing

shortages. Universities warn of loss of funding and collaboration. Car manufacturers warn they may have to move production.

Airlines warn they may not be able to fly. The Government is preparing for food and medicine shortages, converting motorways into car parks and requisitioning ships. Police are planning for civil unrest after Brexit. Take a step back, a really BIG step back.

Are any of these things the rational behaviour of a normal country in normal times? Isn't it extraordinary the lengths to which Brexit is forcing us to tear up the norms of everyday life? Could now be the time to learn, understand, internalise and think again?

The EU has its problems. Many of them - it's far from perfect. But you wouldn't tear down a tower block because you don't like the colour of the paint on the 7th floor, or the leaky drainpipe near the roof. You fix the issues, make things better, or learn to live with them.

Brexit is happening on 29 March 2019 at 11pm UK time. The only way to stop it is to rescind Article 50. The only way to delay it is to extend Article 50. Once we're out, we're OUT. We can bicker about the shape of the future relationship, but there will be no safety net.

A longer transition period merely extends our stay in purgatory a while. At the end of transition, the hell of a no-deal Brexit will be waiting for us, since we will have lost all our treaties and trade agreements on Brexit day.

Facts don't care about belief. They can't be trumped by patriotism, or hope, or courage, or sheer bloody-mindedness. And the facts of Brexit - if you choose to explore them - all point to it being a chaotic mess that will harm the UK for generations.

So when you're thinking about the NHS, social services, education, the plight of local constituents and local companies - all the myriad things that cross your desk - think about Brexit FIRST. Think about Brexit LAST. Think about Brexit ALL THE TIME. Think AGAIN.

I have just one voice amongst millions. But you, and 649 other men and women, hold the future of our country in your collective hands. You have the power to save us, or doom us, and on your heads be it. Please make the right choice. Thank you for reading this far.