

## Brexit and Mental Health: Are you coping?

Written by Jane Brophy on 23 December 2019 in Opinion  
Opinion

Soon to be departing British MEP Jane Brophy reflects on Brexit's under-recognised impact on EU citizens' mental health.



Photo credit: Yui Mok/PA

---

For the last three and a half years, Brexit has been almost everywhere. It has crept slowly into our daily lives, through the news, chat in the pubs, the political agenda and even our art and culture. However, one area where the impact of Brexit has been forgotten is mental health.

So much has been made of the political situation around Brexit and the effects it will have on our economy and country, but nobody has mentioned the impact it has had on people.

Think of the effects this insecurity over the last three years has had on the three million EU citizens living in the UK, the 1.24 million UK citizens living in the EU or even the British workers whose jobs

rely on EU membership.

---

## RELATED CONTENT

- [Guy Verhofstadt: Citizens' rights issues must be resolved before Brexit](#) [1]
  - [Senior MEP laments 'hateful' UK election](#) [2]
  - [Citizens' rights 'the great unvoiced issue' in UK general election](#) [3]
  - [Brexit Steering Group member expresses worry over citizens' rights post-Brexit](#) [4]
  - [UK Leave camp 'terrified' of second Brexit referendum, says senior MEP](#) [5]
  - [Brexit Steering Group zeroes in on safeguarding citizens' rights](#) [6]
- 

Extension after extension, these people have had to deal with the possibility of losing their job within 24 hours, losing their right to work and live across the EU. Think of the feelings this must bring up and the effects it must have on your daily life.

They lost the physical security of their homes, their social status as well as the identity and values they believed in. They lost the ground from under their feet.

"Nobody should be made to feel isolated and this whole Brexit saga seems to have been an opportunity for discrimination and hostility to become a norm in our society. We are better than this"

Along with two of my Remainer Labour colleagues, Seb Dance and Julie Ward, I co-hosted an event discussing this exact topic. Professors Emmy van Deurzen and Digby Tantam are two of the leading academics when it comes to this topic.

Their research has been pivotal when it comes to Brexit and its' impact on mental health. Their research is emotional, powerful and shocking. Their findings have discovered many harsh truths and common feelings amongst Europeans living in Britain.

In their studies they found that families have been ripped apart and couples have split up. The topic really is that divisive on a human level. Some participants said they felt 'unwanted' and 'unwelcome', with one even predicting the situation to become 'the next Windrush'.

EU citizens living in the UK were not given the right to vote in the 2016 referendum and were eliminated from that democratic process. There is a general feeling among people that politicians have failed them. This feeling comes not just from EU citizens but British citizens too. And they have a point.

We have seen our politics become the most polarised it has been for decades in the UK, and naturally, along with this disparity, the feeling of disconnection from society has become rife.

In 2017 over half of EU citizens polled by KPMG felt less welcome and valued in the UK. Many felt they had lost their sense of belonging and that they were no longer safe.

A Mental Health Foundation poll found that 54 percent of EU citizens felt powerless, 39 percent felt insecure, and 38 percent felt worried as a result of the threat of Brexit.

"A Mental Health Foundation poll found that 54 percent of EU citizens felt powerless, 39 percent felt insecure, and 38 percent felt worried as a result of the threat of Brexit"

Brexit wasn't just a personal blow for these people, it was also a moral and emotional blow in terms of the future of the world we live in.

Many studies reported an increase in discrimination, hostility, violence, abuse, not only for EU citizens in the UK but also for minorities. This type of hate does not deserve a place in our society.

We are meant to champion liberalism and freedom, not be a breeding ground for hate, abuse and insecurity. We are meant to be a leading country, not just in terms of economics and innovation but also in respect to human rights.

We are meant to be Great Britain. We need to embrace these people, to make them feel welcome and not to isolate them.

With or without Brexit, we will rely on these people in the future to provide fundamental services both at home and in Europe.

Nobody should be made to feel isolated and this whole Brexit saga seems to have been an opportunity for discrimination and hostility to become a norm in our society. We are better than this.

We, as humans, owe more than to alienate people, cut them out, and make them feel worthless.

### **About the author**

Jane Brophy MEP (UK, RE) is a member of Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs committee

### **Tags**

[Brexit](#) [7]

[Mental Health](#) [8]

### **Categories**

[Health and social care](#) [9]

[Public order, justice and rights](#) [10]



The Parliament Magazine is a Dods Group plc title

### **Site Sections**

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)

- [Climate Crisis](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2020](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

## **Services**

[Dods PeopleDods](#)  
[MonitoringDods](#)  
[ResearchDods](#)  
[EventsDods](#)  
[Training](#)

## **Media & publishing titles**

[Politics HomeThe](#)  
[HouseThe](#)  
[Parliament](#)  
[MagazineHolyrood](#)  
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)  
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)  
[Service](#)  
[World](#)  
[PublicTechnology](#)  
[Training](#)  
[JournalDods](#)  
[Parliamentary](#)  
[CompanionVacher's](#)  
[Quarterly The](#)  
[European Union and](#)  
[Public Affairs](#)  
[Directory](#)

## **Dods events**

[Westminster](#)  
[BriefingDigital](#)  
[Health & Care](#)  
[ScotlandMEP](#)  
[AwardsThe Skills](#)  
[SummitScottish](#)  
[Public Service](#)  
[AwardsPublic Sector](#)  
[Procurement](#)  
[SummitPublic](#)  
[Sector ICT](#)  
[SummitCyber](#)  
[Security](#)  
[SummitCyber](#)

[Security](#)  
[2017Training](#)  
[Journal Awards](#)

## **Partnership events**

[The Health and  
Care Innovation  
ExpoCivil Service  
LiveCivil Service  
AwardsChief  
Nursing Officer for  
England's  
SummitWomen into  
LeadershipThe  
Youth Justice  
ConventionSocitm  
Spring  
ConferenceNHSCC  
Annual Members'  
EventDods at Party  
Conference](#)

---

[Privacy Policy](#)[Terms & Conditions](#)[Advertising](#)[Sponsorship](#) [Subscriptions](#)

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/brexit-and-mental-health-are-you-coping>

### **Links**

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/guy-verhofstadt-citizens%E2%80%99-rights-issues-m-st-be-resolved-brexit>
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/senior-mep-laments-%E2%80%98hateful%E2%80%99-uk-election>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/citizens%E2%80%99-rights-%E2%80%98great-unvo-ced-issue%E2%80%99-uk-general-election>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/brexit-steering-group-member-expresses-worr-over-citizens%E2%80%99-rights-post-brexit>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/uk-leave-camp-%E2%80%98terrified%E2%80%99-se-ond-brexit-referendum-says-senior-mep>

[6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/brexit-steering-group-zeroes-safeguarding-citizens%E2%80%99-rights>

[7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/brexit>

[8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/mental-health>

[9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/health-and-social-care>

[10] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/public-order-justice-and-rights>