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EVEN if the Brexit vote hasn't led to Britain's immediate implosion, the spectre of a messy departure is now seriously haunting us. Recent holidaymakers will have noticed just how pricey things seem as foreign currency markets back away from our lemming-like plunge plans.

More personally, a number of good friends of mine recently decided they no longer feel at home here. A surprising number of foreign university colleagues have silently slipped away from the UK in the last 6 months to better pastures abroad.

None of them have shouted that from the rooftops because most have left with a dominating sense of upset that a country that they've grown to love has taken leave of its collective senses. These highly-skilled people have sensed Britain's changing mood music and decided that there's better chances elsewhere.

But so what?, you might ask if you were a fervent Brexiteer. "If we kick the foreigners out, we can look after our own!

We can give local jobs to our local just-about-managing academics".

But UK higher education is an export industry worth billions precisely because it's a place where any talented person would naturally want to come to better themselves.

And this talent attraction improves the quality of education 'our' 'local' students receive, with diverse classrooms helping to prepare them for an increasingly diverse outside world.

This slow ebb of talent from Britain's shores is a small symptom of a terrifying political crisis that is starting to engulf our political masters.

And even though no-one's trumpeting this crisis of political ineptitude from the ramparts, it's becoming increasingly clear that Theresa May's government is failing to take decisive action just when we need it most.

Corbyn's witless vacillation over immigration policy means you probably missed the absolute clobbering the Government took this week over universities.

The House of Lords fundamentally ripped the guts out of the Government's Higher Education and Research Bill in a way almost unprecedented in recent memory.

The scale of the defeat was less shocking than the fact of the defeat, because it's a problem of the Government's own making.

Every sensible voice in higher education and research in the land has unanimously pleaded with the government to abandon its unworkable ideas for allowing three men and a dog to set up universities.

But the Government blithely sought to impose these new rules, and expected universities to suck it up.

The Government's cack-handed politicking saw the unelected Lords stepping up to save our bacon.

A mightier U-turn is unimaginable as a bill creating a free market for universities ended up defining universities as non-market organisations.

This shows clearly how the Government is sliding further by the day into a fantasy bunker mentality where it is right and critics are wrong. Forced by Brexit to deny facts on a daily basis, it now seems the government has lost any remaining grip on reality.

At a time when the Government should be legislating to help universities withstand the pains of being ripped from Europe, the Minister is ripping up his bill and starting again.

So just imagine the mess when other departments try to defuse their own Brexit bombshells.

How will small business, agriculture, the environment, transport, or health cope with vexing events after six years on austerity's starvation rations? Just imagine the pain we'll all feel when a vital service collapses disastrously because of Whitehall denialism.

The university debacle is just a beginning of a coming debacle delivered by a paralysed government obsessed with Brexit and blinded to the public sector's current parlous state.

Unless the Government rapidly admits some serious home truths about the current scale of the public service crisis, then 2017 could be the year the whole house of cards comes tumbling down.

The slow ebb of talent from Britain's shores is a small symptom of a terrifying crisis starting to engulf our leaders

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