

## A reflection

Published: January 18, 2026, 9:36 pm

---

It would have been hard to have worked in the development area over the last few years and not have come across Jo and Brendan Cox. I did. And my heart goes out to Brendan, their children and their wider family and friends. I cannot imagine their grief and the challenges they face. I can only offer my heartfelt sympathy.

I hope I will be forgiven though for adding some further thoughts. Jo Cox worked for development charities, was committed to equality, and to creating a better world. She was not alone, of course, in doing that but it does take courage on occasion to do so. She had that courage. It appears she has paid an enormous price for it.

What does that say? Three things come to mind. First, that this was clearly a political attack. It is hard to disassociate what she believed in from her death.

Second, I hope it makes people realise that politics is an honourable activity worthy of respect, even though that is not a popular opinion.

Third, put these two thoughts together and it very clearly demands serious reflection on the nature of politics at present. It must be said, however obvious it should be, that there is no room for hate in politics. Difference of opinion is, of course, a part of political life, but respect for others is vital to the success of that process. Today's attack is exceptional (although sadly not previously unknown: I also know Stephen Timms, the last MP to suffer an attempt in his life) but let's not pretend that means it is a matter of unfortunate chance. There is an element of hate in British politics. Of course, and thankfully, that does not usually lead to violence of this sort. But I would make a simple request, and that is that right now we challenge that political hate. This means that right across the political spectrum anyone who offers a politics of hate must be spurned, and that this should be done courageously, openly and as bravely as Jo Cox would, I think, have wanted.