



Shapeshifting Burnham ditches trans rights to panic-grab Reform votes

Description

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burnham Public toilet doors in the background. Andy Burnham's head and shoulders in the foreground look

Greater Manchester mayor and Macclesfield by-election hopeful Andy Burnham has dumped his past defence of Trans people to protect his bid for Westminster, it seems. Journalist Alex Wickham has revealed that Burnham now backs the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) restrictions on single-sex spaces. This u-turn appears to be nothing but a transparent bid for Reform votes, something we could have predicted coming a mile off.

NEW: Another Andy Burnham u-turn appeared designed at dropping his past positions to win Reform votes

He says he supports the EHRC guidance on single sex spaces and the Supreme Court ruling

Previously he said trans women should be able to use female toilets

â?? Alex Wickham (@alexwickham) [May 22, 2026](#)

A political shapeshifter

This policy shift directly contradicts Burnham's previous stance and public record. He had previously slammed single-sex restrictions on bathrooms, claiming only a minority of people object to Trans women using female toilets.

However, the EHRC has now laid its 300-page statutory, and very [confusing legislation](#) before parliament on Thursday 21 May 2026. The new rules allow providers of services to exclude Trans people from single-sex spaces like hospital wards and bathrooms. And of course, Burnham has bent to government pressure and has toed the line. And not least of all because his bid for Westminster could be scuppered by Reform UK.

This updated code creates a total mess of legalese that simply [ignores everyday, lived experiences](#). As a relatively masculine cis woman, this new code scares me. The thought that I could be stopped going to the toilet by some dude because I have a partially shaved head and a deeper voice is unsettling as hell. And where does this end? Are we going to have genital inspectors on the door, offering you a pold and a spritz of perfume [if your body conforms enough](#) to get in? And if this is a scary thought for me, how the hell are our Trans brothers and sisters feeling right now? And what about [Intersex people](#)? Urgh, this reeks of misogyny. Any woman who sees this legislation as a positive has no idea the power they have just given to a male dominated society.

Trans rights lead Jess Oâ??Thompson warns it treats trans people as a third sex by forcing them to use separate spaces, which violates human rights law. Oâ??Thompson stated:

It still treats Trans people as a third sex, so they should be made to use separate spaces â?? entirely ignoring the harm this causes, rights law. We will keep fighting this discriminatory approach.

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Prioritising legal definitions over reality means the EHRC creates an even more hostile environment for people who just want to live their lives. We need to just learn to leave people alone.

Reform has Burnham running scared, it seems

This ridiculous u-turn comes as Burnham is campaigning as Labour candidate for the [Makerfield by-election](#). The safe-seat was specifically resigned by [Josh Simons](#) to give Burnham a clear path to return to Westminster.

But then again, Burnham may have a reason to panic, as Reform candidate [Robert Kenyon](#) may actually pose a threat. Burnham needs to win back a fifth of the voters who have drifted to Reform to secure the seat. And what better way to do that than to throw Trans people under the bus?

Look heâ??s desperate to win the by-election and one day emerge as PM. Principles and previous policy opinions are completely dispensable- 4 U turns this week already. Consistent with how he was when last MP. He will let down his soft left supporters.

<https://t.co/bFFWGueoeg>

â?? Gwynoro Jones (@Gwynoro) [May 22, 2026](#)

Additionally to this, he has pivoted on a number of policies to win those votes back. He used to say he wanted the UK to rejoin the EU in his lifetime. Binned that one on [Thursday](#) claiming it wasnâ??t a priority. Actually more likely because Makerfield constituents voted [overwhelmingly to leave](#). His previous criticisms of Westminsterâ??s fiscal rules on strict borrowing limits? Binned.

Burnham has proven heâ??s willing to throw marginalised people under the bus for a sniff of a seat in Westminster. The question is, will the people of Makerfield see through it? Or are they going to be happy to elect a man who shapes his principles around nothing but gaining more power?

Time will tell.

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1. News

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