

Andy Burnham on his background...

Burnham said that he came from a Labour background, where both of his parents worked in telephony and were Labour voters, but not Labour activists. Asked about his Catholic background he described himself as 'not a believer' but said that it was one of three organisations that had shaped him (along with Labour and Everton). He described what he saw as an overlap between Catholic and left-wing political views. His standout political achievement was his work on Hillsborough, whilst his biggest regret was the welfare reform vote during the leadership election, choosing to vote with the party line although he disagreed with it because he thought it important to present a united front.

Andy Burnham on his political position...

He has a 'working class Labour sensibility', economically 'very left-wing', patriotic and in favour of 'strong law and order'. In the last Labour leadership election, he saw himself as being to the right of Corbyn but to the left of the other candidates. A Labour loyalist, he described the attempted 'coup' against Corbyn as 'wrong' and a 'bad moment in the recent history of the Labour Party'.

Andy Burnham on devolution...

He sees devolution as a big part of reconnecting people with politics – a problem that partially explains the referendum result. He and Steve Rotherham have met with the leaders of Leeds, Newcastle and West Yorkshire to form a body that can speak on behalf of the north on issues such as transport, Brexit, and devolution, which the Government would find hard to ignore. This will be a 'dividend from devolution'. He doesn't want Manchester to be seen as 'the London of the north', but to help lift up other northern areas.

Andy Burnham on the terrorist attack...

He described the 'strength of the place' in the aftermath of the attack on Manchester Arena as 'amazing' and spoke of the strong partnerships with different organisations and the business community. He described the city as 'in recovery' and described the arena re-opening as 'a difficult moment for the families' affected. He said that 'Greater Manchester has a long road to recovery'.

Andy Burnham on how the role works...

Burnham spoke about his job's 'soft power', allowing him to give 'clarity' on topics such as young people and requiring him to work with different partners. On homelessness he wants to end rough sleeping by 2020, bringing together different organisations and donating part of his salary to the cause. On health and social care, he wants to build an integrated service. In his job, he believes the power comes from being 'clear about what you want to do' and getting others to buy into your vision. There is a 'real potential to change things' – he has to work with the councils as members of the combined authority, rather than sit above them like the Greater London Authority.

Andy Burnham on housing...

He doesn't have control of housing policy in the ten local authorities but was elected on a manifesto to build more council and social housing and end rough sleeping. However, he will use the levers he has to introduce these policies. There is a 'hole in the safety net', which people are falling through. People need to work on homelessness in their communities, not wait for Labour to get into Government. He thinks that he's getting there and that more people are buying into his idea, citing the example of someone who cuts hair for free.

Andy Burnham on health and social care...

Burnham said that he has an opportunity 'no-one else has got' to create a 21st century health service that 'promotes good health and prevents ill health'. His ambition is an NHS that 'supports people with dementia as well as it treats cancer' with 'full integration' of the system, covering 'physical, mental, and social needs'. Budgets need to be combined to build a 'year of care tariff', an internal payment system, giving the NHS an incentive to treat patients at home rather than in hospital. He still believes that a 20% levy on people's estates is the best way to pay for social care, rather than leaving people exposed to a 'terrible lottery'. He said that 'privatisation results in fragmentation' and that care needs to be provided by one accountable organisation.

Andy Burnham on education...

He raised quibbles about the party's stance on tuition fees, saying that money could be better spent on apprenticeships and tuition fees, reaching those who don't attend university. He cited the 'apprenticeship wage' - £3.50 – as an example. Using the party's slogan 'for the many, not the few', he asked what the party has done for those who don't want to go to university and suggested measures including reintroducing EMA and improving technical education. He would rather do what is right than take a bold stance, so suggested halving rather than cutting tuition fees, if the money available was limited. The party should be investing in 'degree apprenticeships' and he is investigating ways to encourage Manchester graduates into the local NHS, e.g. by paying off tuition fees.

Andy Burnham on devolution and the wider Labour Party...

In his final point, he argued that Manchester had a 'rich history' of 'social disruption' – trade unions, suffragettes, anti-slavery. Through devolution power can be returned to those who feel that they haven't had any. He cited the example of young people, who have gained power through reduced transport costs. He told the party 'not to sit on the side lines' and to 'take ownership of the Northern Powerhouse.' He said that it was disappointing that there wasn't a northern city leader speaking, which 'doesn't send a great message out'. He said that the party needed to be less 'London centric' and to 'embrace devolution', putting 'Labour values into practise' and providing inspiration for the party to draw on.