

The politics of James Purnell

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It has been widely reported that [Andy Burnham is planning](#) to appoint [James Purnell](#), with whom Burnham served in Gordon Brown's cabinet, as his chief of staff if he becomes prime minister.

The questions this raises are obvious, apart from who he is and what sort of politics he represents.

Two questions better than that are:

- * Do we need another Oxford PPE graduate in government, when we know all the harm all these people have already done?
- * Do we need another former chair of the Labour Friends of Israel in government, perpetuating the Zionist hold on its thinking?

To those we might add:

- * Do we need another second-generation New Labour politician in government, placing in power yet another person of no apparent substantial achievement except for the fact that they owe most of their loyalty to Blair in power? Haven't we seen that this does not end well enough by now?

And of course this is this one:

- * Do we need [another former corporate lobbyist](#) for neoliberal entities in Downing Street, because that is what Purnell has been of late? Again, haven't we learned by now that this does not tend to end well?

And, whilst mentioning neoliberalism:

- * Do we need another of this ilk in power, and that is undoubtedly what Purnell is?

So what is Burnhama doing?

Is he surrounding himself with figures such as Purnell because he wishes to reassure markets, civil servants, Labour moderates and business interests that his government will remain within broadly familiar economic territory? Or does he really share common ground with him, suggesting that Burnham's government will be built in the mould created by Tony Blair, which ended so badly in the 2008 global financial crisis?

Those last two questions are not necessarily the same thing.

But they are questions that Burnham will now have to answer, because nothing at all suggests that Jamew Purnell is in any way connected to the realities of most people's lives, the problems that this country faces, or finding solutions to them.

So, why should he have such a powerful position in No. 10 if Burnham really wants to create change?