

# An election before Christmas?

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Could Andy Burnham call a general election before Christmas 2026? In this video, I examine the rumours and ask why an early election might appeal to a Prime Minister whose government already has a substantial parliamentary majority.

Burnham inherited Labour's majority from Keir Starmer, but he does not have his own electoral mandate. I consider whether an election now could give him that mandate and potentially secure another five-year term, or whether it would be an extraordinary political gamble.

With the Greens, Reform and Lib Dems on the ropes and the Tories newly confident, but not with much extra support, he may take a gamble on going to the country.

That said, Labour could lose its majority in an early election while potentially remaining the largest party. That raises the possibility of a hung parliament and negotiations with parties such as the Liberal Democrats and SNP.

That could make electoral reform crucial. The Liberal Democrats might demand proportional representation in return for their support, while other parties could have their own conditions. But Burnham might calculate that losing Labour's majority now could still provide longer-term political opportunities.

There is also the economic situation to consider. I argue that the world economy faces significant risks between now and the currently scheduled election in 2029, and any serious downturn could transform Britain's political landscape and consign Labour to history as punishment for ending up in charge when a crash happens again, unless PR happens first. Burnham might realise that and want to get the order of events right to secure Labour's long-term future.

I also look at David Cameron's 2010 coalition with the Liberal Democrats as a possible precedent. A coalition lasted for five years before Cameron subsequently secured a Conservative majority in 2015.

None of this means an early election will happen. But there are political reasons why

Burnham might consider going to the country sooner rather than later. The question is whether he believes the opportunities outweigh the considerable risks.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqnowVlyNb8?si=0\\_WEex64VU9gku9i](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqnowVlyNb8?si=0_WEex64VU9gku9i)

This is the audio version:

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This is the transcript:

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Is Andy Burnham going to call an early general election? There are rumours swirling around that there might be an election in the UK before Christmas 2026. The Tories say they're preparing for it. There are signs that Labour is as well, but why is Burnham going to do that?

Labour has a substantial parliamentary majority already, inherited from Starmer, of course, but that does not give Andy Burnham his own electoral mandate. Could an election now strengthen his political position? Might it provide the long-term security that Labour wants? Is this a gamble that could instead destroy Labour's long-term future? Those are questions that need to be asked because they seem to be relevant at this very moment.

The rumour of the election is growing because Kemi Badenoch is driving forward the idea. Her party is rising in confidence. And at the same time, Labour is pushing its Election Reform Bill through the House of Lords very fast, as though they want it in operation for an election if they decide to call one, and there are rumours that Andy Burnham's closest advisers are in favour of just such a thing.

At the same time, it is being said that John Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, may deliver a stopgap budget this October. That's because the real desire is to issue a full budget next spring when Burnham is back in office with a government of his own choosing. So could there be preparations for an election in progress, although we haven't been told about it? I think that is at least possible. And there are four developments that might encourage Burnham to act now.

His bounce appears to be going well. Voters returned a Labour MP last week in the Holborn and St Pancras by-election, in the process rejecting Zack Polanski, the leader of the Green Party, in his attempt to get to the House of Commons. And that does suggest to Labour that they are beating off the Greens, which only earlier this year looked to be very hard for them to do. And that might then provide Labour with an opportunity to rebuild its electoral support, which could be the basis for this election campaign.

At the same time, the Tories are growing more confident, and Burnham may now see them as a threat in a way he has not done to date.

And, Reform's popularity appears to be declining. Nigel Farage is in trouble. Questions are being asked about his financial probity, and that is having an impact. For the first time in a long time, Reform does not look like a government in waiting. They look like anything but that, in fact. But Nigel Farage has repeatedly demonstrated an ability to recover, so Burnham might be choosing this moment as opportune to beat Farage once and for all, and to then have the opportunity for PR before another election emerges sometime in the early 2030s.

And let's come to that last point, and that is that the Lib Dems also appear to be in a little disarray over their leadership.

The fact is that right now, the Lib Dems, the Greens and Reform are all in trouble. The SNP is doing a little better in Scotland. I should mention that. And the Tories are overly confident, and he may want to act before Kemi Badenoch claims any sort of advantage. And so there are real reasons why he might be tempted to go to the polls right now.

But the opinion polls suggest that whatever he decides to do, Labour would lose its majority if he called a general election at this moment. YouGov, Electoral Calculus, and More in Common are all offering different forecasts of what might happen, and none of these is necessarily reliable; events are moving very quickly. But the trend is that Labour would win around 250 seats out of the 650 in the House of Commons, a loss of 150 seats or so. But they could win up to 280, and that would be enough to leave them in a position to form a coalition.

Reform could win between a little below a hundred seats ,or up to 150, depending on who you look at. And the Tories are in a range from 120 to 160 broadly speaking, swapping places with Reform.

The Liberal Democrats are forecast to obtain around 70 seats.

The SNP's representation in Parliament could go up by 20 seats, but the Greens might even decline.

The point is this: a hung parliament looks inevitable, whatever Burnham does, but that may not put him off calling an election. Labour is likely to remain the largest party in

any future government, if he were to call an election now, and the Liberal Democrats would be the most obvious coalition partner for Labour in that situation.

Support from the SNP might also be necessary, and we have to recognise that there will be conditions attached to all the support. The Liberal Democrats would undoubtedly demand a proper form of proportional representation as a condition of their support. The SNP might want a referendum on the future of Scotland. But Burnham may be able to give these things if he then secures a five-year term, which would let proper electoral reform come in, which he says he wants anyway, because that will provide a long-term secure basis for Labour representation in parliament, which first-past-the-post may not.

Now, it's also possible that Burnham might lose the opportunity to form a government. The Conservatives and Reform could create an alliance, although they say they never would.

The one thing we really know is the Greens are not currently forecast by anyone to play a major parliamentary role.

So the parliamentary arithmetic of this decision that Burnham would have to make is very difficult, but he cannot avoid the possibility that things may now be as good as they ever get for him, and this might therefore be the moment to strike.

And when we think about that, David Cameron may be offering Andy Burnham an interesting precedent.

Cameron formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats in 2010. That government remained remarkably stable until 2015, against all expectations. Cabinet ministers stayed in office. Policy, of a sort, was delivered even if it was austerity in the form of George Osborne's worst idea ever, and Cameron subsequently won an outright parliamentary majority. Burnham might see a coalition government now as a similar stepping stone to a win in the early 2030s.

A reduced majority, or even a coalition, might be preferable to defeat later, which could happen if he doesn't bring in proportional representation before the 2029 general election, which is scheduled. The fact is that waiting until 2029 could then be a much bigger gamble for Andy Burnham than having an election now.

And let's be clear. What Andy Burnham knows, but is not acknowledging, is that the world economy is facing considerable risks right now. Economic conditions could deteriorate significantly before 2029. If they do, he will be punished in an election that year. This is the other great factor he has to take into account. No government that sits over a collapse ever does well in the subsequent election. Labour could face growing public dissatisfaction if he doesn't go to the polls now.

And Reform might recover its electoral strength if he does not. A collapse could well

benefit Nigel Farage. Burnham's opportunity to secure another term could then diminish. An election now might therefore appear the safer option to Burnham. And he would know as a consequence that he would have to deliver PR after an election, and that might be the only thing that could save a Labour Party representation in parliament at the next election if there's a crash very soon.

He has therefore got wins to secure even if he loses his majority. But the question is: what does Andy Burnham actually want to achieve? Here the parallels with David Cameron might be relevant again. He was another person who arrived in 10 Downing Street without having any clear idea as to what he wanted to achieve. I've also got no message from Andy Burnham so far that he has any real understanding of what his big ideas are, and Burnham's cabinet is as short of ideas as he is.

So he knows he might be able to form another government now, but he doesn't know how to govern. In that case, a coalition could provide Burnham with an amazing excuse, just as it did David Cameron. Coalition government would inevitably limit Burnham's freedom to act, and the Liberal Democrats, if they were daft enough to become a partner in government, again, would be blamed for blocking Labour's proposals.

Labour would then have the opportunity at a subsequent election to claim they could have delivered, but for those nasty Liberal Democrats. And so a lack of policy ambition, which is what Andy Burnham is suffering from, could be more easily disguised at a subsequent election. This might be the thing that Burnham needs. A coalition government could cover for his incompetence, and that incompetence is, I think, real.

All of these factors make an early election more plausible to me. Burnham has got reasons to act now rather than wait until 2029. The loss of Labour's majority might be a price worth paying. A coalition could offer political stability and an excuse for inaction at the same time, and that might suit Andy Burnham, a Prime Minister with few apparent policy ideas, but a massive desire to stay in Number 10.

So will Andy Burnham gamble on an election before Christmas? I clearly do not know. I am not party to his intimate thinking on this issue, but the political opportunity exists even though the risks are substantial. Cameron's experience suggests that the gamble could succeed. Burnham might calculate he's got more to gain than lose, and perhaps having someone else to blame for inaction is the attraction for him.

My suggestion is, watch this space. This may not happen, let's be clear; that's a possibility, but don't dismiss the idea either. And the fact that Andy Burnham has said it won't happen means nothing. That's about as reassuring as the average football chairman's comment about faith in the manager is. Everything is possible. Burnham might go to the country very soon. Batten down for a potential general election. This could be interesting.

That's what I think. What do you think? You might think I'm completely barking up the

wrong tree. If so, answer the poll we've got down below. Let us have your comments. Please do like and share this video. Please do subscribe to the channel. Please do hit that bell button. And please, if you'd like to support our work so that we can produce more of these videos, please do make a donation. There's a Ko-fi button, or a coffee button, whichever way you wish to say it, down below. That's the way you can help us.

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Poll

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