



The MidBritain Report is researched by BMRB and published by Associated Newspapers. It features original data from individuals who represent the mid-section of the British population.

The report monitors the confidence of MidBritons regarding the economy, the government and their political outlook. The report is produced on a quarterly basis.

Q1 08: 2,282 MidBritons (Mar 08)  
 Q2 08: 1,612 MidBritons (Jun 08)  
 Q3 08: 1,912 MidBritons (Sep 08)  
 Q4 08: 1,198 MidBritons (Jan 09)  
 Q1 09 Base: 1,667 MidBritons (Apr 09)  
 Q2 09 Base: 650 MidBritons (Jun 09)

\* Indicates significant movement from period to period.

The survey panel has been carefully selected to represent the breadth of individuals within MidBritain. A deeper understanding of the composition of this audience can be found at our website [www.midbritain.com](http://www.midbritain.com).

Insight into the UK's superconsumers  
**MIDBRITAIN**

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## MIDBRITAIN IS DIVIDED ON THE UK'S SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC FUTURE, BUT A GROWING CONTINGENT PREDICT GREENSHOOTS.

### 1. Greenshoots of recovery, more of the same, or is the worst still to come?

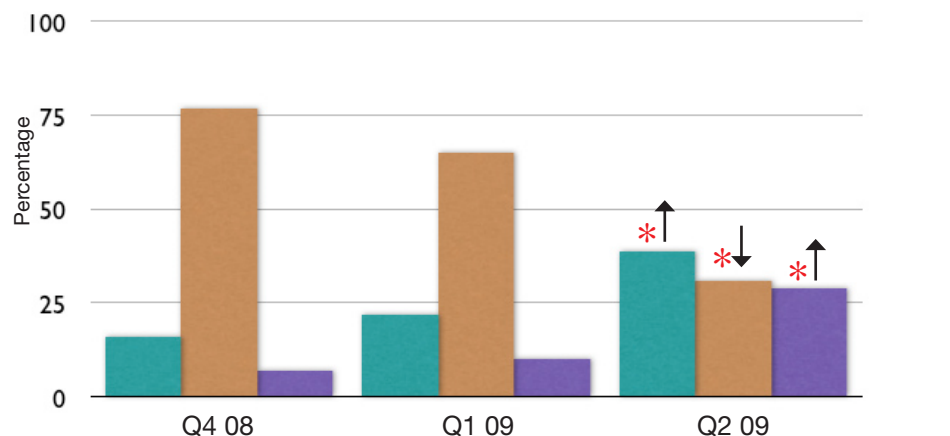
MidBritain's economic outlook for the next 6 months is split fairly evenly three ways. And for the first time in more than a year, there's a considerable rise in the number of MidBritons who think the economic situation will get better.

This quarter's results represent a significant shift in attitudes towards the UK economy going forward. 1 in 3 have indicated that they believe that the worst of the recession is over, by stating that the economic situation will improve – up 19% from 10% to 29%.

Greater confidence in current stock market performance, signs of a recovering housing market and lower mortgage rates has led to a feeling of greater economic stability. Together these factors have culminated in increasing confidence towards the future economy.

However the positivity is not universal with opinion still severely divided – 39% state that the economy is likely to stay the same, while a third still believe that we've yet to reach the bottom.

**Q** How do you expect the general economic situation in this country will develop in the next 6 months?



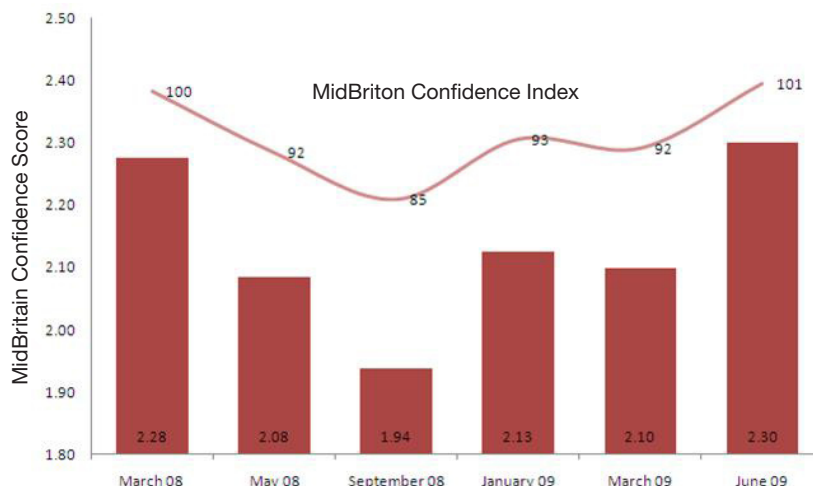
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## 2. Confidence index back to early 2008 levels

The MidBritain Consumer Confidence Index uses economic indicators of particular importance to this audience, to track their overall confidence in the UK economy.

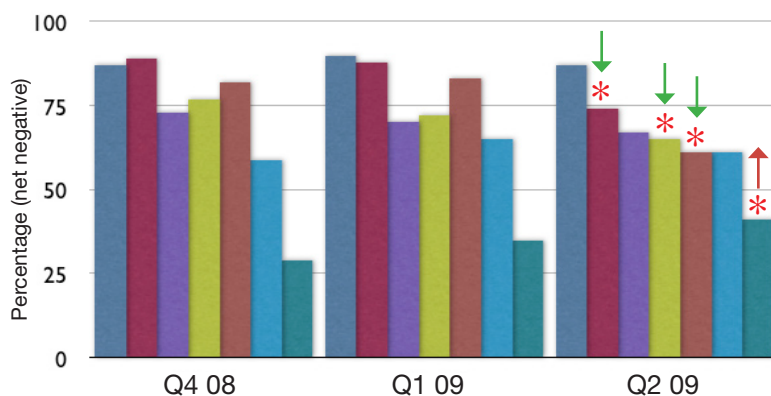
Since March 2009, MidBritain's confidence fell quarter on quarter with an all time low in September 2008. Signs of confidence began to show at the start of 2009. In June 2009, MidBritain's confidence is back to levels seen over a year ago. This is largely due to their positive predictions for the next 6 months.



## 3. Some signs of improvements but current assessment of the economy remains negative

**Q** How would you currently rate the UK market in terms of the following?  
Net negative

- Employment
- Economic situation
- Living costs
- House Prices
- Stock Market
- Interests Rates
- High Street Prices



MidBritons are less likely to be negative about UK economic stability (down 14% from 88% to 74%) and the stock market (down 22% from 83% to 61%). Negativity towards house prices also appear to be moving in the right direction.

Attitudes towards interest rates remain similar with prosperous MidBritons still feeling the negative effects of low savings rates. This quarter high street prices (clothing and consumer goods) have seen a 6% rise, this is likely to have reflected retailers reluctance to discount before the July sales.

Quarter-on-quarter living costs are down slightly from 70% to 67%. Living costs (food, household bills and inflation) have been trending downwards since the start of the tracking, in particular those who rated living costs as very bad plummeted from 58% in Q2 08 to 29% in Q2 09.

The current view of employment remains strongly negative this quarter and it's seen as the worse aspect of the economy. In Q2 08 those thinking the employment situation was very bad (8%) this has continued to rise each quarter with sharp rises in Q4 08 and Q1 09. MidBritons view the employment market rather grimly however only a minority believe there likely to be directly effected by this.

**Q** How would you currently rate the UK market in terms of employment?  
Very bad.

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Very bad	8%	13%	35%	52%	50%

## 4. MidBritain will increase spending as confidence in the UK economy grows

MidBritons state that living costs, uncertainty about the economic situation, interest rates and high street prices currently have the largest negative impact on spending. This quarter high street prices is having a greater impact on MidBritain spending rising from 43% to 51%.

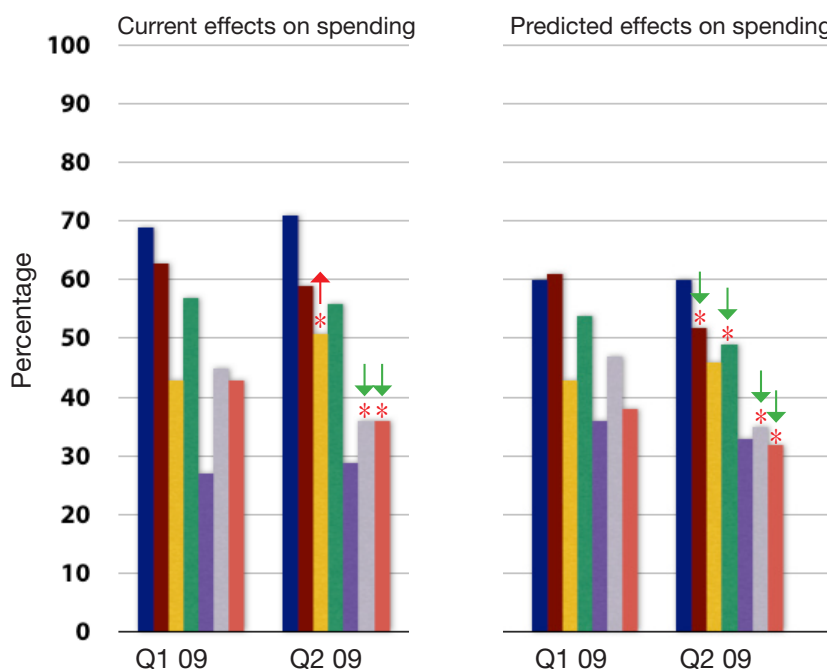
The stock and housing market are having less of an effect on MidBritons spending whilst all other factors remain unchanged.

Looking forward to the next 6 months MidBritons are expecting that economic situation, stock market, interest rates and house market to improve and have less of a negative impact on spending.

**Q** What kind of effect (if any) have the following had on your, or your household's personal finances and spending? (Current)

**Q** What kind of effect (if any) do you anticipate these having on your, or your household's personal finances and spending in the NEXT 6 MONTHS? (Predicted)

- Living costs
- Economic situation
- High st prices
- Interest rates
- Employment situation
- Stock market
- House prices



## 5. Fears over household outgoings substantially lower than a year ago

MidBritons are feeling more comfortable across the board about their bills and other household outgoings. Fuel prices, the cost of living, household bills and mortgages/rent have seen the greatest decreases.

Despite this significant downward trend, MidBritons are still closely monitoring their expenditure, with 2 in 3 stating they are careful with their money on a day to day basis, making it important that brands justify the price of their products and services.

**Q** How comfortable do you feel with the following household outgoings/bills?

Comfortable %	Q2 08	Q2 09
Fuel Prices	4	11*↑
Disp. Income	11	16*↑
Council tax	10	20*↑
HH Bills	12	21*↑
Cost of Living	8	20*↑
Credit Cards	32	36
Mortgage	35	43*↑

Very Uncomfortable %	Q2 08	Q2 09
Fuel Prices	68	36*↓
Disp. Income	41	32*↓
Council tax	39	22*↓
HH Bills	35	20*↓
Cost of Living	35	17*↓
Credit Cards	17	15
Mortgage	13	7*↓

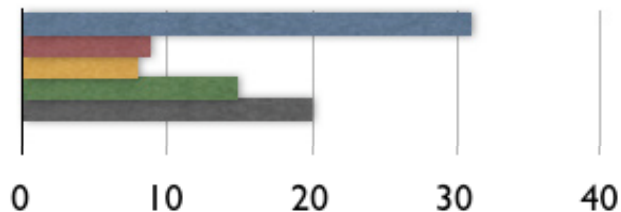
## 6. Tories continue to pile pressure on Labour, but 62% of MidBritons are still up for grabs.

Currently the Conservative Party is MidBritain's overwhelming choice to be the next government, with 31% backing them compared to Labour's 9%. But with 62% of MidBritons being self declared swing voters, Cameron has some way to go in order to seal the deal. Labour, theoretically, could still win if they can manage to convince a large majority of those who remain unsure, to vote for them.

The recent scandal over MPs expenses has resulted in greater apathy and disillusionment among MidBritons, with 15% saying they wouldn't vote in an election were it held tomorrow.

**Q** And if there was an election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

- Conservative
- Labour
- Liberal Demorcrats
- Don't think I'd vote
- Don't know



## 7. At last some good news for Gordon

Gordon Brown's trust rating has increased. Despite this he is still a long way behind opposition leaders David Cameron and Nick Clegg. David Cameron remains the most trusted politician with 46% MidBritons trusting him. David Cameron has secured himself as the top trusted Tory now significantly ahead of William Hague, who is on 40%, and Boris Johnson, who is on 38%.

Nick Clegg has maintained his rank and increased his profile as a result of his strong stance on the MP expenses.

However all political parties need to be wary, 73% of MidBritons say that the political parties don't reflect the feelings and opinions of the UK population, a 7% increase from Q1 08 when it stood at 66%.

Top of the Polls		% Previous ranking	
1	David Cameron	46	(1)
2.	William Hague	40	(2)
3.	Borris Johnson	38	(3)
4.	Nick Clegg	32	(4)
5.	Vince Cable	25	(5)
6.	Gordon Brown	24	(8) * ↑
7.	David Davis	18	(7)
8.	George Osbourne	15	(6) * ↓
9.	Alistair Darling	15	(9)
10.	Ed Balls	13	(10)
11.	Harriet Harman	13	(10)
12.	Jacqui Smith	8	(12)