



## MidBritain backs Cameron's Conservatives to lead the UK out of recession

David Cameron's Conservative Party are on course for victory at the next general election, after a survey by leading market research company BMRB revealed that middle class voters think his party is better equipped to deal with these turbulent times.

Despite the Prime Minister's wealth of economic experience and a flurry of activity, including the return of political heavyweight Peter Mandelson, a stimulus package, bank bailouts and numerous schemes aimed at helping to stave off job losses and get credit flowing again, MidBritons are no longer convinced that Labour is the right party to extract the country from the current economic crisis.

Gordon Brown's handling of the downturn has resulted in a significant increase in his trust ratings – from 18% in the last quarter to 32% now – yet still nearly four out of ten MidBritons favour David Cameron and the Shadow Chancellor, George Osborne to lead the country back to economic prosperity. Whereas only 12% of all MidBritons believe that the Prime Minister and Alistair Darling are the right team.

MidBritons claim the Government's VAT cut has been a flop, with 85% saying that they hadn't noticed any impact.

More than three quarters of MidBritons (77%) think that the economy will continue to decline over the next six months. 35% think that the situation will get a lot worse, while only 7% believe that things will get better.

MidBritons are very concerned about the current state of employment. The number that rate the UK job market as bad has risen sharply in the last quarter from 54% in October 2008 to 87% this time around.

If there was an election tomorrow, MidBritons would vote overwhelmingly for the Conservative Party. 45% said they would support David Cameron and his team, a 10% jump in the past year and a 3% rise in the last quarter.

Gordon Brown's Labour only has the support of one in ten MidBritons, down from 12% at the beginning of 2008 but up 3% since October.

Nick Clegg's Liberal Democrats win 8% of MidBritons' votes – a 2% fall over the last 12 months.

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 Base: 2,282 MidBritons (Mar 08)

Q2 Base: 1,612 MidBritons (Jun 08)

Q3 Base: 1,912 MidBritons (Sep 08)

Q4 Base: 1,198 MidBritons (Jan 09)

\* Indicates significant movement from Q3 to Q4

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**



Associated Newspapers Ltd  
Northcliffe House  
2 Derry Street  
London W8 5TT

Tel: 020 7938 6000  
Fax: 020 7938 6677



Rebecca Stamp  
BMRB Senior Associate Director  
BRMB  
Ealing Gateway  
26-30 Uxbridge Road, Ealing  
London W5 2BP

Tel: 020 8433 4377  
Fax: 020 8433 4001

For all press enquiries, please contact:  
Oliver Lloyd at Brown Lloyd James  
Tel: 020 7591 9610  
Email: [oliverl@blj.co.uk](mailto:oliverl@blj.co.uk)

### In this issue:

1. MidBritain support for Tories extended over Labour
2. Despite leap in trust Brown remains a long way behind Cameron
3. Fears over economic stability increase
4. MidBritain predicts the economy will get worse
5. Meteoric rise in number of MidBritons worried about jobs
6. MidBritain says Government's VAT cut has been a total flop
7. MidBritons prefer Cameron/Osborne to lift UK out of the slump
8. MidBritons hopeful of an Obama affect on the global economic crisis
9. MidBritons take comfort as cost of living falls

# 1. MidBritain support for Tories extended over Labour

If there was an election tomorrow, MidBritons would vote overwhelmingly for the Conservative Party. 45% said they would support David Cameron and his team, a 10% jump in the past year and a 3% rise from the last quarter.

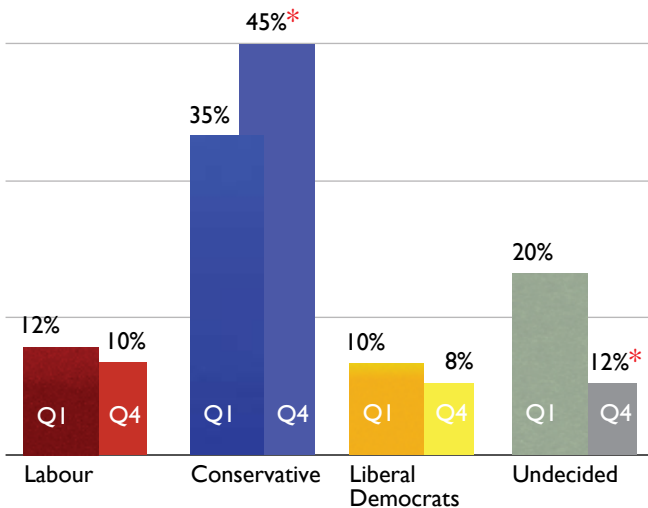
Gordon Brown's Labour only has the support of one in ten MidBritons, down from 12% at the beginning of 2008 but up 3% since September.

Nick Clegg's Liberal Democrats win 8% of MidBritons' votes – a 2% fall over the last 12 months.

Since March 2008 there has been a marked decrease in the number of those who are undecided from 20% to 12%. The Tories are most popular among those aged over 55, with more than 60% of the vote. But they are also notably strong with younger voters under 35, the party's second strongest demographic.

**Q** If there was an election tomorrow, who would you vote for?

Q1 March 08  
Q4 January 09



# 2. Despite leap in trust Brown remains a long way behind Cameron

Gordon Brown has almost doubled his trust rating from 18% in September to 32% in January, however, he still lags a long way behind Cameron who is the most trusted politician with 61%. The Prime Minister appears to have

recovered somewhat since the troubling times of the summer, but David Cameron's trust rating is the highest it's been since March 2008.

The steady increase in awareness of Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg is accompanied by a boost in his trust rating which pips the Prime Minister's at 34%. Vince Cable (despite lower awareness) is level pegging with George Osborne on 32%. Whereas the current Chancellor, Alistair Darling trails his counterpart with just 22%.

# 3. Fears over economic stability increase

Economic stability remains a top concern for MidBritons. Recent volatility, shaky markets and falling share prices have led to a record leap in those stating that the stock market is bad, from 62% in September 2008 to 82% currently.

Interestingly, the Bank of England's interest rate decreases have impacted the majority of MidBritons in a negative (59%) rather than a positive way. With MidBritons having an average of £30k in savings, many are unhappy at the effect of falling rates on savings accounts.

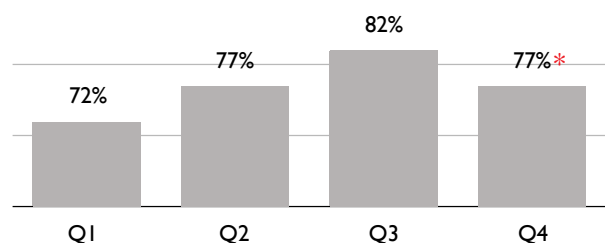
# 4. MidBritain predicts the economy will get worse

More than three quarters of MidBritons (77%) think that the economy will continue to decline over the next six months. 35% think that the situation will get a lot worse, while only 7% believe that things will get any better.

Men are the most pessimistic about the UK economy in the first half of 2009, with 82% predicting the worst is yet to come.

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

■ Worse (Overall)



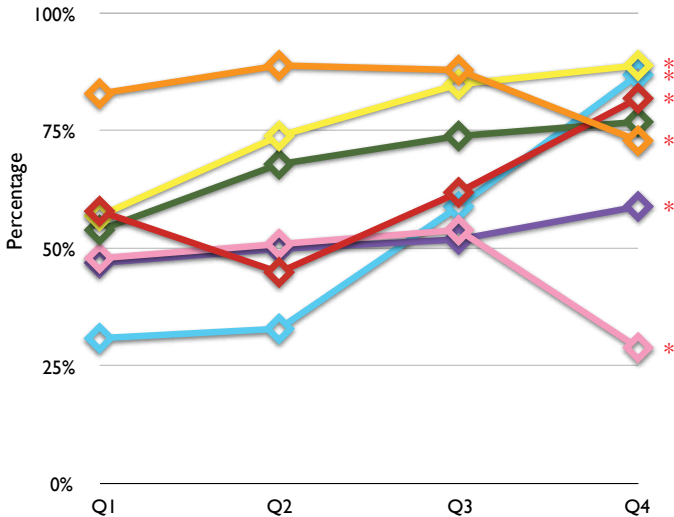
## 5. Meteoric rise in number of MidBritons worried about jobs

MidBritons are very concerned about the current state of employment. The number that rate the UK job market as bad has increased in the last quarter from 54% in September 2008 to 87% this time around.

Only 30% say they feel secure in their jobs, with more than one in ten (12%) feeling insecure. Workers aged 45-54 are the most fearful, with nearly a quarter (24%) worried about losing their jobs.

**Q** How would you currently rate the UK market in terms of the following? Answer – Very bad, quite bad

- ◆ Cost of living/inflation
- ◆ The stock market
- ◆ UK economic stability
- ◆ House prices
- ◆ Prices on the high street
- ◆ Interest rates
- ◆ Employment



## 6. MidBritain says Government's VAT cut has been a total flop

Despite many MidBritons noticing a decrease in their outgoings in the last quarter – very few put this down to the drop in VAT.

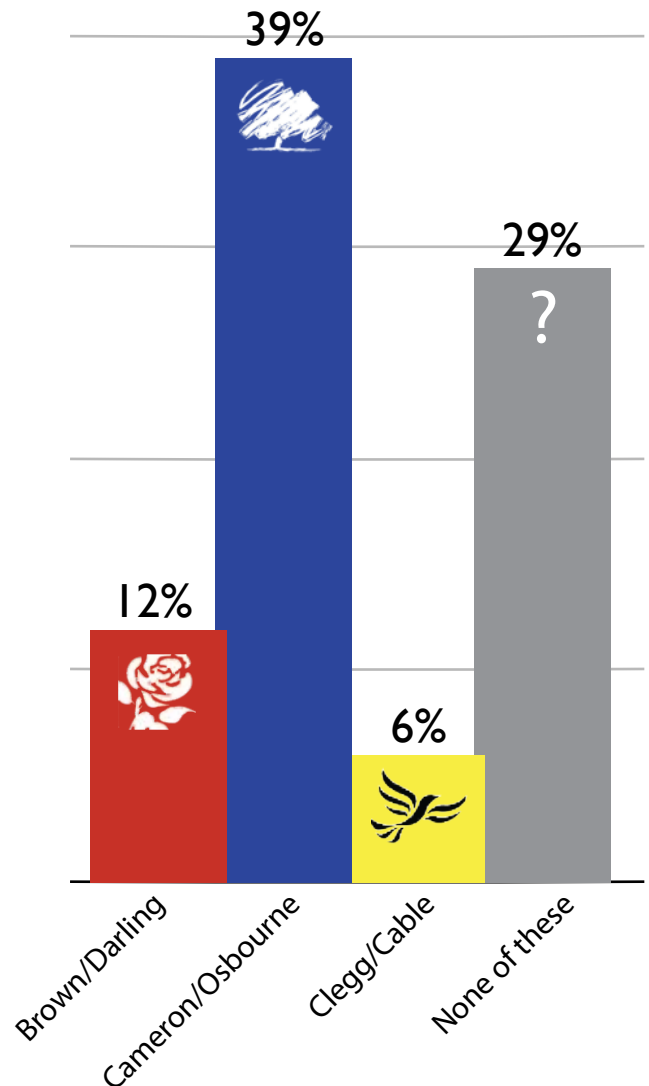
Most (85%) claimed they hadn't even noticed the drop in VAT. Just 14% said that they had noticed the tax drop 'a little'.

## 7. MidBritons back Cameron/Osborne to lift UK out of the slump

Despite Gordon Brown's handling of the economic crisis and a significant increase in his trust ratings – from 18% in the last quarter to 32% now – nearly four out of every ten MidBritons favour Conservative leader, David Cameron, and his Shadow Chancellor, George Osborne, to 'get us out of the current economic situation'. In fact more than half of those aged over 55 support this pairing.

Only 12% of MidBritons believe the Prime Minister and Alistair Darling are the right team to lead the country back to economic prosperity. Interestingly, almost a third of MidBritons say that none of the country's main political parties are capable of mending the economy.

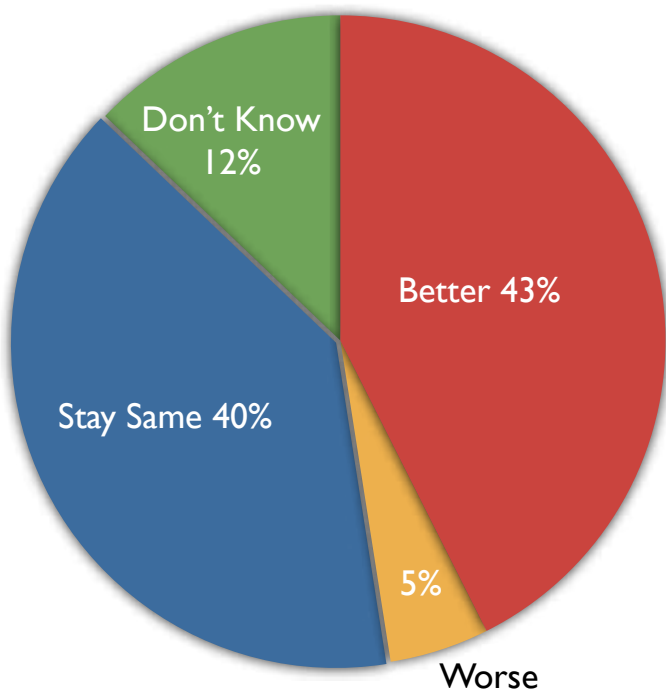
**Q** Who do you **trust more** to get us out of the current economic situation?



## 8. MidBritons hopeful of an Obama affect on the global economic crisis

43% believe that an Obama administration will have a positive impact on the global recession. Only 5% of MidBritons think the world economy will deteriorate further under an Obama presidency, clearly demonstrating his popularity among MidBritons. While four in ten think the situation is likely to stay the same.

**Q** Barack Obama will take up office on 20th January, what impact do you think he will make to the World economic situation?



## 9. MidBritons take comfort as cost of living falls

Despite the gloomy outlook there are some positives. MidBritons have noticed a decrease in the cost of fuel, groceries, council tax, household bills and mortgages in the last quarter.

As a consequence MidBritons have more money in their pockets this quarter. As levels of disposable income have improved from Q3 to Q4.

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

Comfortable	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Fuel prices	5%	4%	6%	22%*
Disposable income	10%	11%	11%	18%*
Council tax	9%	10%	10%	15%*
Household bills	11%	12%	9%	16%*
Cost of living (groceries)	11%	8%	8%	17%*
Credit cards/loan debt	30%	32%	36%	36%
Mortgage/rent	33%	35%	36%	43%*

Very Uncomfortable	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Fuel prices	55%	68%	48%	14%*
Disposable income	37%	41%	39%	26%*
Council tax	36%	39%	37%	26%*
Household bills	32%	35%	34%	24%*
Cost of living (groceries)	26%	35%	34%	13%*
Credit cards/loan debt	17%	17%	17%	16%
Mortgage/rent	13%	13%	15%	12%*