

# LABOUR VS. TORIES

## Labour

## The Choice

## Tories

The next election will be a big choice about the change we want for Britain. Labour offers change for the mainstream middle. Our vision for Britain is fundamentally optimistic - based on our enduring belief that Britain's greatest strength is the talent and enterprise of its people. Even in tough times, we can achieve great things. And we will remain true, as always, to the values of fairness and responsibility for which we stand.

The Conservatives offer change to benefit the privileged few - a change you can't afford. The Tories' vision for Britain is fundamentally pessimistic - about a Britain that is broken and with only an age of austerity to look forward to. The Conservative approach is to abandon the responsibility of government, to let the recession take its course and to leave people to sink or swim.

## Labour

## Action on the economy

## Tories

In today's global financial crisis, Labour has made the right choices. It is vital that we continue to support the economy until recovery is secured. Government action is helping individuals, families and businesses through to recovery sooner and stronger. The Government will continue to support the economy until the recovery is secured, whilst also implementing a credible plan to deliver strong long-term growth and jobs.

They opposed our action on Northern Rock; opposed our help for young people, families and businesses; and now they threaten to choke off the recovery with cuts at the worst possible time. Labour market expert Professor David Blanchflower says that Tory plans risk pushing unemployment up to five million.

## Labour

## Family Finances

## Tories

We have given 22 million basic rate taxpayers a £145 tax cut; the VAT cut is worth £275 off the average household bill; the £75 above inflation increase in the child element of the Child Tax Credit, is worth up to £2,235 a year for families; and bringing forward the increase in Child Benefit, is worth an additional £22 on average to every family with children.

The Conservatives have opposed our fiscal stimulus which is delivering real help to people. The Tories would cut tax credits and the Child Trust Fund. Their first priority is an inheritance tax cut which would give £200,000 to the richest 3,000 estates in the country.

## Labour

## Jobs

## Tories

We are investing £5 billion in Jobcentre Plus to help people back to work. We are guaranteeing work or training for every 18-24 year old unemployed for a year because we do not believe that Government should leave anyone behind. Labour's Future Jobs Fund will provide 150,000 new jobs, around two thirds of which will be directed at young people.

The Conservatives refuse to support Labour's £5 billion investment in helping people back to work. They offer a gamble - not a guarantee - to young people out of work. By refusing to offer support to people during the recession the Conservatives threaten to choke off the recovery with cuts at the worst possible time, leading to more people unemployed, bigger deficits and bigger debts in the future.

## Labour

## Education

## Tories

By 2011 we are committed to ensuring that every school gets at minimum 30 per cent of their pupils getting five good GCSEs including English and maths - compared to over half failing this benchmark in 1997. We want every school to have discipline that is good or excellent - not just satisfactory - within three years and we will rebuild every secondary school and half of all primaries in the coming years.

The Tories would make cuts to schools now and in the future, jeopardising discipline, standards and school building plans. Their "Swedish" style school reforms could mean schools opened in rented office blocks, without playing fields or playgrounds, in a system which overall cost more meaning cuts to existing schools. They would fund the start up costs by cutting existing school building plans.

## Labour

## Business

## Tories

We've put an additional £1 billion each month into the pockets of families and retailers by cutting VAT; 200,000 agreements have been signed with businesses to defer tax bills. Our car scrappage scheme has been extended to help the car industry.

The Tories have promised a £4 billion increase in tax on business investment, hitting sectors like manufacturing, transport and utilities and discouraging firms from investing in the future of their business.

## Labour

## Banking System

## Tories

When the banks faced collapse last year and the global recession hit, we stepped in to protect savers and to support businesses and families from going under. Because we supported the economy, conditions are better and we are able to begin the process of reform and reconstruction protecting the taxpayer and the consumer.

The Tories' lack of judgement has been consistent throughout the financial crisis. They opposed our action on Northern Rock - they would have let it go to the wall. In fact, when the financial crisis began, they were welcoming a report calling for the abolition of all mortgage regulation.

## Labour

## Immigration

## Tories

Our new flexible points-based system for immigration is reducing the overall numbers of migrants and making sure we attract only those people with the skills our economy needs. Migrants must also support themselves, learn English, pay taxes and obey the law.

The Conservatives voted against tougher penalties for those who attempt to smuggle people into the country and continue to oppose ID cards which will help control our borders and stop fraudulent access to benefits and public services. Instead they propose an inflexible, arbitrary cap which would fail to provide the flexibility necessary to support the British economy.

## Labour

## Environment

## Tories

We have introduced the Climate Change Act, a world first, binding the UK government by law to reduce carbon emissions by a third by 2020 and by 80 per cent by 2050. We are also working to make Britain a leader in green technology, manufacturing and services and have put in place an ambitious set of plans to deliver a secure, low carbon energy mix with renewables, nuclear and clean coal all playing a part.

The Conservatives have flip-flopped on nuclear power, opposed Labour's Planning Act which is paving the way for investment in low carbon energy, and campaign around the country against wind power. By abandoning mainstream European allies such as Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy, the Conservatives would leave Britain a bit-part player in the international fight against climate change.

## Labour

## Health

## Tories

If you have suspected cancer, you will see a specialist within two weeks of GP referral. New access to diagnostic tests will mean cancer diagnosis, with results, within one week. Over three quarters of GP practices now offer extended evening or weekend opening hours.

The Tories say they would scrap your right to see a cancer specialist within two weeks. The Tories do not support a right to one-week cancer diagnosis. The Tories would let GPs go back to setting their own hours, meaning that doctors could cut back on evening and weekend opening.

## Labour

## Europe

## Tories

We are using our strong alliances in Europe to tackle global challenges including climate change. We are fully engaged in Europe to ensure British business and consumers gain from the economic benefits it offers.

The Tories have abandoned their alliances with the parties of Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy - retreating to the fringes of Europe, jeopardising the mainstream alliances needed to tackle common challenges.

## Labour

## Crime

## Tories

Taking the tough and necessary measures to combat crime and anti-social behaviour. Investing in neighbourhood policing teams and new technology to make our streets safer. Since 1997 there are over 16,000 more police officers and more than 16,000 community support officers.

The Tories voted against automatic five year minimum sentences for carrying an illegal gun, against tougher sentences for murder, sexual and violent offences and against increasing the maximum penalty for causing death by dangerous driving.

## Labour

## Older people

## Tories

Labour will introduce a new National Care Service, and as a starting point next year personal care will be free for those with the highest needs.

The Tories do not support a National Care Service, and David Cameron's plan for an £8,000 insurance payment at age 65 would do nothing for people unless they leave their homes and move into permanent residential care.