

PEOPLE TALK

m a g a z i n e

EXCLUSIVE

Why *Coronation Street's* Ken Barlow will be voting Conservative

interview

we ask **DAVID CAMERON** about his plans for change



SCHOOL STANDARDS Carol Vorderman on boosting maths skills

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Carol Vorderman on boosting maths skills



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editorial

Let's make this a year for change – a year when the positive defeats the negative.

After 13 years of Labour government, it's clear that we can't go on with a weak Prime Minister and a divided government.

We need change to get the country back on its feet. And very soon, we'll have the chance to vote for it.

David Cameron showed strong, decisive leadership on the MPs' expenses scandal. He has made a personal commitment to the NHS. Conservatives believe in uniting the country and working with other political parties, rather than always looking for dividing lines.

That's why the only way to get the change we need is to vote Conservative.

Cutting the cost of living



Feeling the pinch: ordinary families are paying the price of Labour's debt crisis

Even without treats and luxuries, everyday living in the current climate is proving expensive for many people. Politicians must do all they can to reduce the burden. A Conservative Government will take action in a number of ways.

Freezing council tax

Conservatives will work with local

councils to freeze council tax for two years, by reducing wasteful spending. Combined with our pledge to scrap Labour's proposed property revaluation, which would have meant many properties moving into a higher council tax band, this could save a typical household up to £500 a year.

Re-linking the state pension to earnings

Council tax rises have eaten up much of the state pension. Means testing and over-complicated forms mean two million pensioners fail to claim the Council Tax Benefit they are entitled to. The Conservatives will remove the stigma attached to Council Tax Benefit by renaming it Council Tax Rebate.

A Conservative Government will restore the link between the state pension and earnings to help to stop the spread of means-testing.

Cutting household bills

Fuel bills are another ongoing worry for many people. Making energy improvements like fitting homes with cavity wall, loft and boiler insulation would pay for itself in just a few years – but the initial expense is often more than older people can afford.

Under the Conservative Green Deal, you will be able to make energy efficiency improvements worth up to £6,500 for no up-front cost. Instead, repayments will be made in electricity bills. And the reduction in fuel bills means there will be no overall cost to the householder.

A home with a standard package of measures could expect to see savings of £360 a year.

This way, carbon emissions could also be reduced by over nine million tonnes – so future generations will benefit too.

Why I'll be voting Conservative

- by William Roache MBE,
Coronation Street's Ken Barlow

I believe the surest way to tell if a society has strong values is by looking at the way it treats its elderly citizens. The older generation fought wars for us and built a better Britain for us. The least they deserve is respect and dignity in their retirement. Sadly many are not getting that today.

More and more pensioners have been pushed into the means test. Our excellent pensions system has been destroyed by Gordon Brown's tax raid, and one in three pensioner households are now in fuel poverty – four times as many as in 2004.

So how would the Conservatives be any different? I know that Labour have been deliberately spreading malicious rumours about how a Conservative government would cut

"I know David Cameron and George Osborne. They have the right ideas to get Britain back on her feet."



the winter fuel allowance and free TV licences for over-75s. I can promise you that this is completely untrue. I've checked it myself. The Conservatives have pledged to keep these benefits. What's more, they'll increase the value of the state pension for all by re-linking the state pension to earnings.

I know David Cameron and George Osborne personally. I'm pleased to say they are decent people with a lot of energy and the right ideas we need to get Britain back on her feet. That will be good news not just for the elderly, but for everyone in our society.

Time for change: William Roache will be voting Conservative for the change our country needs.

Getting a grip on crime

Government has a duty to keep people safe. For far too many people, our town centres are a 'no go' area in the evening. We can't go on like this.

More police on the streets

A Conservative Government will get more police officers on the beat by scrapping the excessive paperwork which means they spend more time filling in forms than out on patrol.

Tackling alcohol and drugs

Nearly half of all violent incidents are alcohol-related. Conservatives have promised to give local councils and the police much stronger powers over licensing – including the ability to take licences away from problem premises. And a new Border Police Force will help to stem the flow of drugs into the country.

Ending the early release of prisoners

Under Labour, tens of thousands of criminals have been released early and there has been an increase in re-offending rates. Conservatives would scrap Labour's early release scheme, and restore honesty in sentencing.





IN THE SPOTLIGHT: David Cameron

A general election is just around the corner, so we asked the Conservative leader about some of his party's plans to deliver the change we need – like helping older people, tackling crime, and restoring trust in politics.

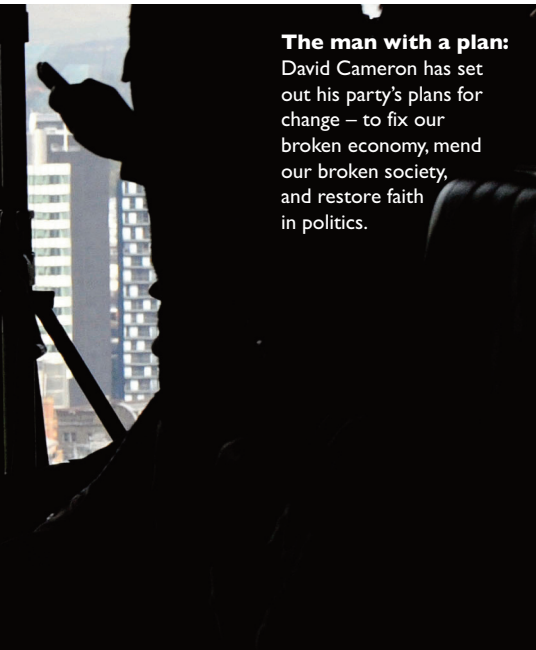
With faith in MPs so low, how can politicians regain the public's trust?

People are rightly angry after the expenses scandal – but it's also part of a deep frustration people feel with our whole political system. We've got to fix our broken politics.

A Conservative Government will sweep away the subsidies and luxuries that sit so uneasily with public service – including the gold-plated MPs' pensions. We'll make it the law that anyone who wants to sit in Parliament must be a full UK taxpayer. We'll cut the cost of politics by cutting the number of MPs by 10 per cent. And we'll equalise the size of constituencies so that everyone in the country has an equal vote of equal value.

As well as cleaning up Parliament, we've got to empower it. We'll introduce a power of recall to allow voters to kick out MPs mid-parliament if they have been proven guilty of serious wrongdoing. We'll claw back powers from the EU and make sure no future government can ever give powers away in future without first asking the British people in a referendum. And we will abolish the Human Rights Act and introduce a new British





The man with a plan:

David Cameron has set out his party's plans for change – to fix our broken economy, mend our broken society, and restore faith in politics.

healthcare. Older people tend to be more dependent on our NHS than anyone else, and we need to make sure that it cares for them properly and with dignity. That's why we have to stand up for local health services, and it's one of the reasons why, despite the debt crisis, we will increase the NHS budget year on year.

How would you help to tackle the worrying issue of crime and anti-social behaviour?

From the very start of a Conservative Government we will send out the strongest signals that if someone commits a crime, they will get caught and they'll be punished properly. They will get caught because we're going to free the police from much of the paperwork that wastes their time so they can spend more time on the streets. And they will be punished properly because we will overhaul sentencing by scrapping Labour's early release scheme. But we also understand that we'll only ever get to grips with crime if we confront its causes too. That means strengthening families, improving school discipline and getting people back in to work.

Bill of Rights, so that we can stop some of the nonsense of recent years.

What will a Conservative Government do to help older people?

I will make sure any government I lead will do whatever it can to make sure older people get the dignity they deserve.

First, we must offer older people a good standard of living. Unfortunately, I know that Labour are telling people that we would cut pensions. That's completely dishonest. In fact, we will restore the earnings link. Pensioners who live on fixed incomes also suffer from rising bills. So we'll work with local councils to freeze council tax for two years. And we will offer every household in the country up to £6,500 worth of energy efficiency improvements to cut winter fuel bills.

Second, pensioners need independence – being able to get from A to B on your own. So we need to help pensioners get around. Unfortunately, Labour are telling people that we will scrap free bus passes for the elderly. That is also completely dishonest. We will keep the free bus pass, and the winter fuel payment and the free TV licence.

Third, we need to guarantee access to

fact or fiction?

With a general election looming, there are plenty of claims and counter-claims being thrown around by all the parties. We get to the bottom of them...

Labour claim: That Pension Credits could be at risk of Tory cuts
NOT TRUE!

The Conservatives will not cut pensions or pension credit.

Labour claim: That the Conservatives would scrap the Winter Fuel Allowance and free TV licences for the over-75s
NOT TRUE!

David Cameron has said this 'is just plain wrong –

they are valued by millions, and we will preserve them'.

Labour claim: That the Conservatives would cut back on free bus travel for pensioners
NOT TRUE!

A Conservative Government would keep free bus travel for pensioners.

Labour claim: That Sure Start could be at risk of Tory cuts.
NOT TRUE!

In fact, the Conservatives will boost Sure Start by providing 4,200 more health visitors across the country so that every family has the support and advice they need to give their children a good start in life.

How to Get Britain Working

Conservatives have pledged more support for all those who have lost their job with a radical plan to Get Britain Working again.

If elected, Conservatives will replace Labour's failing employment programmes with a single new Work Programme. This will provide people with specialist support based on their individual needs, including advice on job-hunting, CV writing, and interview techniques.

Conservatives have said that they will not allow a generation to be written off by Labour's recession. They have pledged 400,000 new apprenticeships, college and training places for young people over the next two years.

The plans will come as welcome news for Britain's unemployed and will provide hope for the one in five young people who cannot find a job.

At the same time, Conservatives have revealed plans to boost Britain's budding entrepreneurs



Get Britain Working: Conservatives will tackle Labour's jobs crisis by boosting skills and apprenticeships.

MORE CONTROL OVER YOUR PENSION
 The Conservatives will end the effective obligation to buy an annuity. At the moment, retirees' incomes suffer because they are effectively forced to buy an annuity at 75, even though rates have hit record lows.

through a new network of business mentors giving one-to-one advice to anyone who wants to set up their own business.

Many families have had a tough time in recent years. Conservatives will give them the help and support they need to get working again.

Improving education

A thriving economy depends on a thriving education system. Pupils can't learn and teachers can't teach when lessons are disrupted. And all too often, parents can't get their children into their first choice school.

Empowering headteachers

Headteachers need to be allowed to use reasonable force to tackle violent incidents and remove pupils without the threat of legal action. A Conservative Government will make exclusions easier and give headteachers the legal power to ban,



Countdown to higher standards:

Carol Vorderman is leading a Maths Taskforce to see how the teaching of maths in primary and secondary schools can be improved.

search for, and confiscate any items they think may cause violence or disruption.

Increasing parental choice

Conservatives will let charities, parents

and teachers and others start new Academies – which will receive the same government funding per pupil as other schools. Parents with children at any state school will be able to apply to send their children to an Academy.

Residential care shouldn't mean losing your home

Every year, some 45,000 people are forced to spend their life savings and sell their home in order to pay for residential care. The Conservatives say this is a scandal.

The current situation is desperately unfair on those who have worked hard all their lives. Having made a contribution to society – and, indeed, the taxman – they face a huge trauma when they are at their most vulnerable.

It's not just the rich who get hit with a big bill. In England, assets of just £23,000 – including the value of their home – are enough to make people liable for the total cost of their residential care.

To make matters worse, there are very few private insurance options, and they are usually much too expensive.

The Conservatives have promised to do something about this injustice. They have proposed a voluntary scheme called the Home Protection Plan.

This scheme would be run by

NO INHERITANCE TAX FOR MOST FAMILIES
 The Conservatives will raise the Inheritance Tax threshold to £1 million – taking the family home out of Inheritance Tax altogether for most people. Only millionaires will pay Inheritance Tax.



Security and dignity: under Tory plans, pensioners can pay a one-off fee and have all their residential care fees paid for life.

existing insurers and not cost public money, although a Conservative Government will set out basic rules and safeguards.

There will be a one-off joining fee of around £8,000, payable at the age of 65. If people choose to pay it, all fees for any permanent residential care they

need will be waived for life. People currently over the age of 65 will also have a chance to join the scheme.

The Conservatives' Home Protection Plan offers older people the chance to prepare for the future with more confidence and a greater sense of security – which is no less than they deserve.

COMMENT: A clear choice between the parties £20k death tax under Labour – or help to protect your home under the Conservatives

Everyone wants dignity in old age. Every parent wants to give the next generation a better start in life than they had.

But just look what has happened over the last decade. Our pension system – once the best in the world – has been raided by Gordon Brown. Today's pensioners are already paying the price. Tomorrow's pensioners will suffer too. Meanwhile, four million people are now in Gordon Brown's inheritance tax trap.

As if that is not enough, Gordon Brown is now secretly planning another tax – a death tax – to play for his unfunded, ill-thought-out plans for social care. When you die, a Labour Government would take £20,000 from what you leave to your children and family.

This is part of a pattern. Gordon Brown has a track record of saying 'no new taxes' before an election, and then raising them by stealth after it.

David Cameron's Conservatives want to

help people in old age so that they can leave as much of their lifetime's savings as possible to the next generation. The Tories will offer people the chance, should they want to, to pay a one-off fee of £8,000 to cover the cost of residential care in old age. This is a voluntary scheme. No one will need to lose their home to pay for the cost of care.

So the choice at the election could not be clearer. A death tax under Labour. Help to protect your home with David Cameron's Conservatives.

Tell us what you think

How good a job do you think the current government has done on each of the following areas? (please tick one)

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Managing the economy

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Protecting the environment

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Supporting people in old age

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Raising standards in schools

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Protecting our national security

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Supporting Britain's Armed Forces

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

Keeping neighbourhoods safe

- A good job
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad job

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What issues in your local area would you most like to see the next government deal with?

And thinking about the country as a whole, what important issues facing Britain would you most like to see the next government deal with?

We're interested in whether people's answers to these questions depend on which party they support. Would you mind saying how you think you will vote at the next General Election?

- Conservative Labour Liberal Democrat
- Conservative or Labour Conservative or Liberal Democrat
- Labour or Liberal Democrat Other.....

Regardless of how you intend to vote, who would you prefer see as Prime Minister after the next general election?

- David Cameron Gordon Brown

You could help the Conservatives to change Britain in 2010. Please tick the boxes if you would like to help by:

- Delivering a few leaflets in my area
- Displaying a poster at election time
- Knocking on some doors in my area
- Joining the Conservative Party

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