



Why do we need a pro-social security drumbeat?

- The social security system is **drenched in negativity**:
 - “For decades the public has heard a **constant barrage of criticism of welfare** and its users, and very little praise.” - Tom O’Grady, LSE.
 - This has had a **deep and lasting impact**
 - And, for various reasons, **we *still* hear very little praise**



Some consistent beats can help change the mood music



1. Make it visible

Name it: “Our social security system”

Say what it is and why it exists: “Our social security system **was set up to support everyone**, through support and benefits payments.”

Locate specific policy solutions within it: “..as **part of a decent social security system** we can all be proud of”



2. Show it’s a force for good

“The system is supposed **to support everyone, especially those who need it most** - a principle we can all get behind and be proud of.”

“Our social security system, **like our NHS**, should be there for us all, especially when we need it most.”

“People want to see a system **based on compassion and justice** that works for everyone.”



3. Bring to life why we need it - in straightforward ways

“With **rising costs** and **stalling wages**...”

“With so many people **struggling to make ends meet**...”

“If we become **unwell** or **disabled**, or we’re **caring for a loved one**...”



4. Make it matter right now, and for the future

“We need a social security system that’s **fit for the 21st century**.”

“Times have changed and **we need to update the system to meet modern challenges**.”

“We need a system that **works right now**, and that’s **ready for future challenges**.”

Watch outs

- Be aware that most people who are experiencing poverty don’t think about themselves as being “in poverty.” Talk more about people who are “struggling to get by” and who “can’t make ends meet.”
- Remember that most people want to see positive change, but don’t want a revolution. Make your message - and your solution - can-do and pragmatic.
- Avoid talking about specific policies without painting a bigger picture: sell the brownie, not just the recipe.
- Be careful to land economic arguments as part of a rounded, human-centred message.

These tips are part of a project that’s helping organisations align around a pro social security drum beat in the build up to the General Election. Contact Michael.Orton@warwick.ac.uk