



OUR MANIFESTO MAZE

It's our job to make sure that all children and young people across Scotland are able to understand, experience and exercise their rights.

Our Manifesto Maze outlines some of the barriers children and young people come up against when trying to exercise their rights. We know that some children and young people find it more difficult than others to navigate their way through the maze.

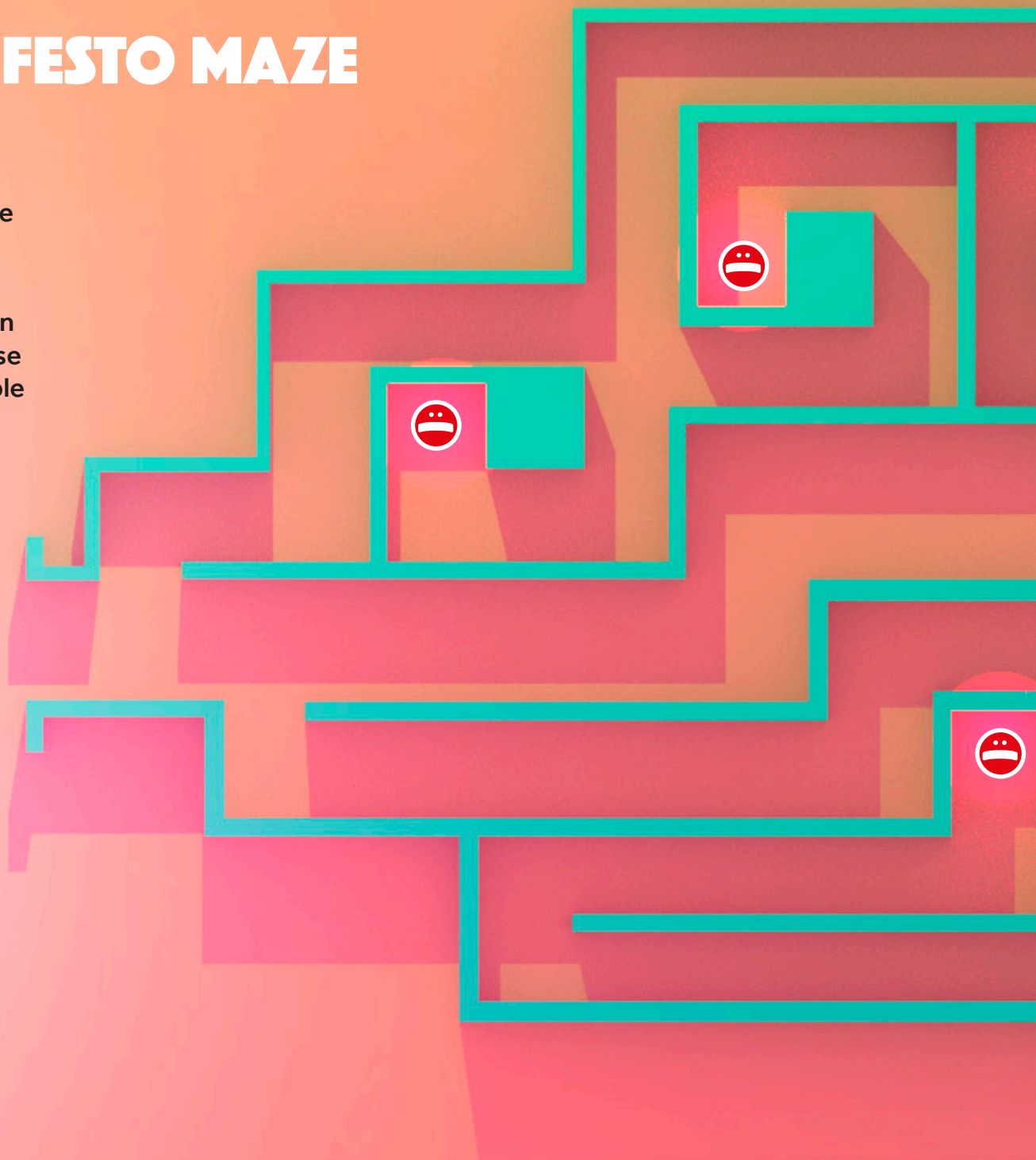
So here's how you can help. Take a look at the barriers we've identified. They're based on our work with children and young people – and what they've told us is important to them. Then let us know that you plan to support us in working towards solutions.

With your help, we can ensure that all children and young people across Scotland are able to fully enjoy their rights and find their way.

Thank you.

Tam Baillie

Children and Young People's Commissioner, Scotland



MANIFESTO ISSUES

These are the barriers we want to overcome.



Educational Attainment/ Poverty

When you're a child or young person living in poverty, it's more difficult to do well at school.



Access to Justice

When you're a child or a young person, it can sometimes be difficult to access legal advice and assistance when you need it.



Equal Protection

When you're a child, you don't have the same legal protection from assault as adults.



Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

When you're just 8 years old in Scotland, you can be held criminally responsible for your actions.



Protecting Children and Young People from Austerity Measures

When you're a child or a young person, services you need can be reduced or even disappear.



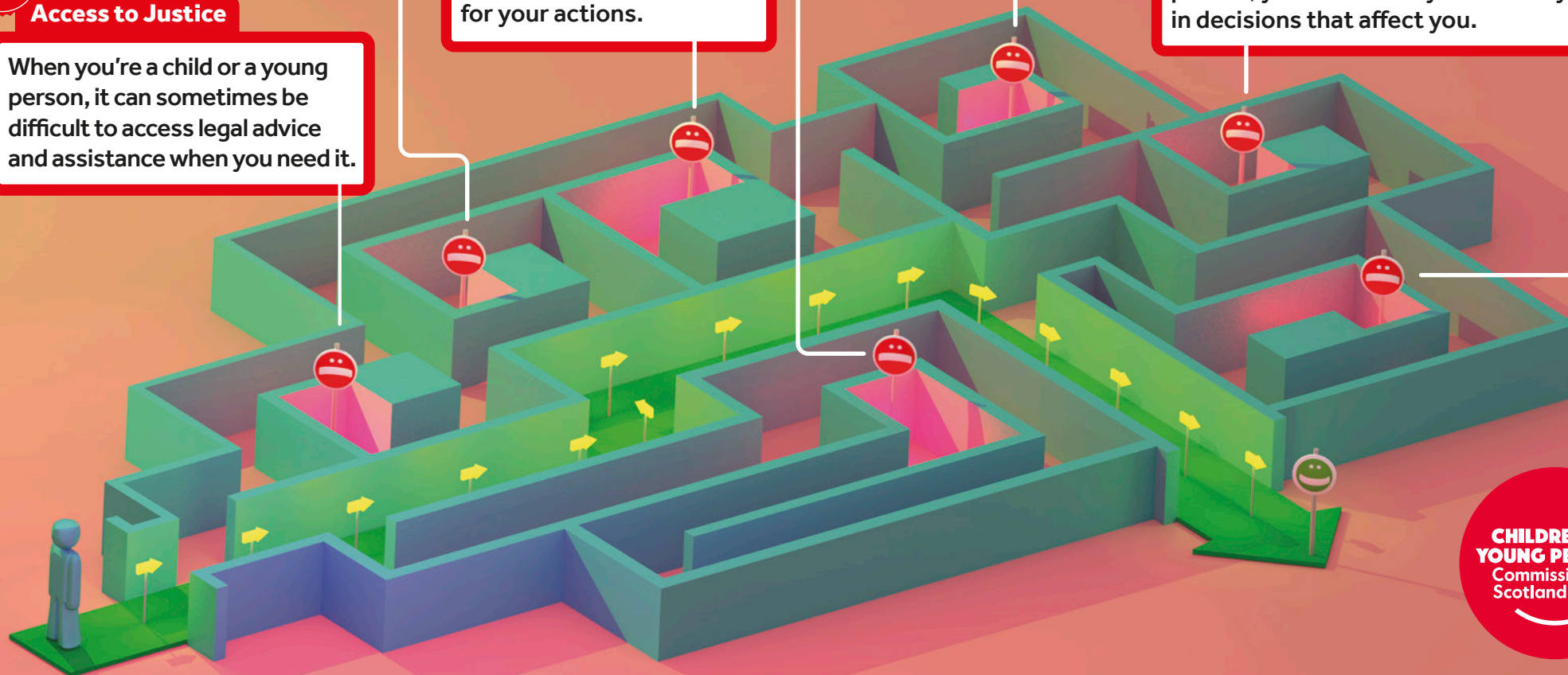
Ensuring all Children's and Young People's Rights are Respected in the Law

When you're a child or young person, your needs won't always be taken into account when new laws are being made.



Ensuring Policies and Legislation Respect Children's and Young People's Rights

When you're a child or a young person, you won't always have a say in decisions that affect you.



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S
Commissioner
Scotland

MANIFESTO CALLS

These are the potential solutions we are calling for.



Educational Attainment/Poverty

- All children in Scotland should be able to reach their full educational potential.
- Homework clubs, in-school access to computers/tablets and low-cost school trips can all help redress the balance for children living in low-income families.
- Ensuring pupils have a voice and can fully participate in decision-making at school is also key to improving attainment levels for all children and young people.



Access to Justice

- All children and young people should be able to access civil legal advice and assistance when they need this.
- Having access to this can mean the difference between a child being heard or not.
- This is particularly important where a child's parents are in dispute and the child is caught in the middle.



Equal Protection

- All children have the right to live their lives free of violence.
- The defence of a 'justifiable assault' against a child should be removed.
- Parents should be supported to find non-violent alternatives to physical punishment.



Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

- All children in Scotland under the age of 12 should not be held criminally responsible for their actions.
- The minimum age of criminal responsibility should be raised to 12, in line with the current minimum age of prosecution.
- Raising the age of criminal responsibility beyond 12 should be a longer-term aim.



Protecting Children and Young People from Austerity Measures

- All children and young people should know that the services they use will not be disproportionately affected by austerity measures.
- Current spending on children and young people's services across Scotland should be analysed in order to form a clear baseline.
- Future budgets should then be 'poverty-proofed' to ensure that children and young people are not unfairly targeted by cuts.



Ensuring Policies and Legislation Respect Children's and Young People's Rights

- All children and young people should be confident that Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIAs) will be carried out for all new policies and legislation likely to affect them.
- These assessments should be published so that the positive and negative effects on children and young people can be recognised and any problems addressed as early as possible.
- Scotland should work towards the full incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Scots law.



Ensuring all Children and Young People Have a Voice

- All children in Scotland should have the right to contribute to decision-making processes.
- Almost all barriers to communication can be overcome. Adults should not make assumptions about who can and can't contribute.
- Children should have the right to feedback and to know how their views have been taken on board.