Education Report: Direct Access Pathway for Residential Special Schools

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education

CC: Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education

Date: 12 June 2018

Security Level: In Confidence

Drifter: Jill Ford

Key Contact: David Wales

Messaging seen by Communications team: N/A

Round Robin: No

Purpose

This Education Report informs you of the outcome from our recent engagement with Salisbury, Halswell and Westbridge, the three Residential Special Schools (RSS). The purpose of our engagement has been to discuss a direct access pathway for enrolment in a RSS, in addition to the current Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS) pathway. This report seeks your agreement to progress the proposed approach and high level implementation plan.

Summary

1. In December 2017 you advised the Board of Trustees for Salisbury School that the school would remain open. In earlier advice (METIS 1093370) we advised you that a key issue for keeping Salisbury open, sustainable and adding value within the network was ensuring that access pathways resulted in sustainable roll numbers.

2. In February 2018 you agreed to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) engaging with the Boards of Trustees of the three RSS on the proposed direct access pathway outside of IWS. All parties have committed to genuine dialogue and collaboration to discuss how the new pathway can be established.

3. We reached agreement on many of the issues discussed. This allows us to present to you the key elements of the direct access pathway, issues, risks, a high level implementation plan and recommendations in this paper.

4. The RSS Boards are committed to supporting the dual pathway approach and to further work with the Ministry to progress the detailed design of the new pathway, subject to your agreement.
The proposed direct access pathway retains the use of the current eligibility criteria for IWS to target the most intensive and expensive supports for those students with the most need. The current funded (notional) rolls guide the total number of enrolments through IWS or the direct access pathway. The maximum enrolment period of two years is consistent between both pathways. The application process will be managed by regional panels, with the addition of a post-panel discussion involving the RSS Principals, to identify the ‘best fit’ school for each young person.

The aim is to have the first young people enrolling at a RSS, under the direct access pathway, from Term 4 2018 onwards.

Not all issues have been agreed between the schools and the Ministry. Where this is the case we have presented individual Board perspectives to you. We have also included statements from each of the Boards.

The RSS have signaled that they will require additional resourcing to support the new pathway, particularly to support transitions.

We have previously advised you that the Resourcing Notices for each of the RSS will remain unchanged until at least the end of the calendar year 2019. Given the low numbers of students involved, and current resourcing based on funded (not actual) rolls, our expectation is that the RSS will manage the change from within current resourcing.

The RSS Boards will identify how many new enrolments they will be able to support within their funded rolls. Any changes to funding would be subject to a successful Budget bid and would apply in financial year 2020/21.

Given the past interest in Salisbury School from the media, and the risk of confusion about the changes, the implementation plan will include communication messages and online content. We have suggested that you release some initial media messages in June 2018.

We will continue to work on the residential funding review initiated in 2012 and report back to you by September 2019.
Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. note that at the end of our engagement process the RSS all confirmed their commitment to the dual pathway approach to enrolment (IWS and the direct access pathway);
   
   Noted

b. note that the RSS support the high-level design of the direct access pathway as described in this paper and that they are committed to further work with the Ministry, to implement the proposed approach;
   
   Noted

c. note that a range of issues have emerged relating to funding for transitions, the funding model for residential provision and future plans for school property at Salisbury and Westbridge;
   
   Noted

d. note that we have previously advised you that the Resourcing Notices for each of the RSS will remain unchanged until at least the end of calendar 2019;
   
   Noted

e. note that any changes to funding would be subject to a successful Budget bid and would apply in financial year 2020/2021;
   
   Noted

f. agree to the implementation of the RSS direct access pathway with the key elements set out in Annex 1, in addition to the IWS pathway;
   
   Agree/Disagree

g. agree that the timing for the first young people enrolling from Term 4 2018 onwards;
   
   Agree/Disagree

h. agree to make initial announcements about the direct access pathway in June 2018 (suggested messages are presented in Annex 2);
   
   Agree/Disagree

i. note that we expect the RSS enrolment numbers to rise slowly but steadily starting from Term 4 2018 and throughout 2019. We will report to you in July 2019 on RSS enrolments and state of funding, to enable time for decisions if you want to seek additional funding for RSS through Budget 2020;
   
   Noted

j. note we recommend that this report be proactively released after you have announced the establishment of the new direct access pathway; and
   
   Noted
s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Noted

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support
Ministry of Education

12/6/2018

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

9/7/18
Background

1. This report builds on previous Education Reports sent to you in December 2017 (METIS 1093370), February 2018 (METIS 1103454) and March 2018 (METIS 1116434).

2. In this earlier advice we noted that the key issue for keeping Salisbury School open, sustainable and adding value within the network was ensuring that access pathways resulted in sustainable roll numbers.

3. The current Residential Special Schools (RSS) enrolment pathway is through the Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS). The proposed pathway will establish a direct access option for RSS enrolment. Some young people would continue to enrol in a RSS through the IWS. Others would enrol through the proposed direct access pathway, without IWS involvement.

4. In February 2018, you agreed to the key elements of the proposed direct access pathway as the basis for the Ministry’s engagement with the Boards of Trustees of the three RSS, Salisbury, Halswell and Westbridge.

5. In our February 2018 report (METIS 1103454) we noted that there is likely to be maintenance and building work to accommodate students at Westbridge and Salisbury, and that these will be assessed and business cases prepared for internal Ministry consideration.

6. We provided a progress report on 28 March 2018 (METIS 1116434). This noted that discussions were progressing in a positive and constructive way, and that there were still aspects for further discussion and agreement.

7. On 18 April 2018, Emma Thompson, the Salisbury Board Chair, wrote to you seeking clarification if an alternative pathway, the Salisbury Solution, could be discussed instead of, or as well as, the proposed direct access pathway. Your response noted that you authorised the elements of the direct access pathway and that other alternatives are not under consideration in this process.

8. On 6 June 2018 we were notified that Salisbury School’s financial situation has been steadily declining. Sound financial management is a core responsibility of the Board. The Board has been advised that it is imperative that a sustainable financial plan is put in place immediately. We are monitoring the situation closely.

Engagement process with the three RSS

9. The Ministry and the three schools have held three face to face meetings, and one videoconference, between March and May 2018. Our engagement has been a constructive process.

10. Each RSS Principal has also visited a regional prioritisation panel to gain an understanding of their role and process. Feedback from these visits noted that the process was robust, panel members were well prepared and able to make effective decisions. Panel terms of reference (TOR) will be updated and further guidance and training provided to ensure panels understand the role of RSS and key elements of both pathways.
The RSS boards are committed to supporting the direct access pathway approach and to further work with the Ministry to progress detailed design, subject to your further agreement.

Confirming the key elements of the direct access pathway

The key elements of the direct access pathway agreed by the Ministry and the RSS, including roles and responsibilities, are set out in Annex 1.

In summary, the key elements are:

- RSS direct access enrolment offers another education support option for young people aged 8 years or over, where they meet the access criteria but do not need the level of support that IWS provides
- the intent is to increase RSS rolls (IWS and direct access pathways) up to the level of their funded (notional) rolls
- applications for enrolment are made by learning support providers in the home region i.e. Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), Ministry specialists, day special schools and fund-holder schools
- three access criteria relating to year level, need and previous access to local support, will target the most intensive and expensive resources to those who need them most
- the ten regional prioritisation panels will consider applications for both IWS and RSS direct access pathways
- once a RSS direct access application is prioritised the RSS principals will meet to discuss which school would be a ‘best fit’ for the young person
- a Section 9 agreement is completed after prioritisation and prior to enrolment
- the maximum period of enrolment in a RSS is 2 years.

Within the direct access pathway, some roles and responsibilities, particularly transitions, currently undertaken by the IWS, will be undertaken by others. These new or changed roles and responsibilities will sit with the referrer, the RSS, the Ministry and the regional prioritisation panels. These have been discussed and high level agreement reached.

Issues that have emerged during the engagement

Past resourcing issues

Both Salisbury and Westbridge have identified property issues.

All three of the RSS report a need for additional resourcing for residential provision (METIS1093370). A review of RSS residential resourcing was initiated in 2012. Additional funding has been provided in the interim, pending the conclusion of this review.

To mitigate the impact of falling rolls, current resourcing and staffing is based on funded (notional) rolls, not the actual numbers of young people enrolled in each school. Current actual rolls range from 38% to 41% of the funded rolls. The numbers are shown below.
Table 1 RSS actual and funded (notional) rolls 30 April 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Actual roll</th>
<th>Funded roll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halswell</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbridge</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 In addition, in 2014 a new staffing model increased the teacher to pupil ratios. This is based on one teacher to every five students on the funded roll.

19 Prior to 2014, transition (re-integration) funding was provided to RSS to support transitions. This was based on $2,250 each year for each young person on the funded roll. Transition (re-integration) payments and attached teacher staffing ceased in 2014, when IWS took on the lead for transition and specialist services.

Future resourcing pressures

20 The RSS have identified property issues at Salisbury and Westbridge, and future pressures related to residential provision and the new roles and responsibilities for RSS within the direct access pathway, particularly transitions.

21 In our February 2018 report to you (METIS 1103454) we noted that engagement would be based on the assumption that there will be no immediate change to the resourcing notices for RSS, until at least the end of calendar 2019. We also advised you that establishing a RSS direct access pathway is likely to lead to cost pressures.

22 The RSS view is that, without additional funding they will not be able to support all of the requirements for students on the direct access pathway, particularly when actual rolls are close to, or at, the level of the funded (notional) roll.

23 Giving that the RSS are currently funded for a significantly higher number of students than their actual enrolments, the Ministry’s expectation is that additional enrolments will be able to be made within the current total funding. However it is understood that because of the additional transition costs, not currently funded, and cost pressures with the residential service that they may not be able to get to their full funded roll within current funding.

24 We expect that each school will be able to meet the costs of some new direct access enrolments from within their current funding. The number of new enrolments on either pathway will be limited by the maximum funded (notional) roll. The Boards have each made a comment about resourcing in their statements below. The RSS Boards will identify how many new enrolments they will be able to support within their funded rolls. Any changes to funding would be subject to a successful Budget bid and would apply in financial year 2020/2021.

Support for transitions

25 High quality transition support is essential for the success of the new pathway. Transitions for most of the current (IWS) students are, and will continue to be, supported through the IWS with the possible exception of some Salisbury students who have been at the school for longer than two years. Within the direct access pathway the RSS have agreed to look at how to re-establish transition roles and responsibilities as a core part of their work.
26 Funding to support transition in the direct access pathway is a particular pressure point identified by the RSS. The RSS view is that additional resourcing for transition will need to be reinstated for young people on the direct access pathway.

27 As stated in paragraph 23, the Ministry view is that the RSS should provide transition support within their current funding.

The rate of increase in school rolls

28 It is difficult to anticipate the numbers of young people on the direct access pathway. The RSS advise that a stepped approach to roll increases is preferred so the Ministry suggests it may take up to two years to reach the funded rolls. Salisbury would like to increase their roll to the notional roll by the end of next year, given the number of current students due to transition out this year. The other schools would like to take a more staged approach to increases.

29 We will report to you in July 2019 on RSS enrolments and the state of funding, to enable time for decisions if you want to seek additional funding for RSS through Budget 20.

Issues and statements from the RSS schools

Other issues raised by the schools

30 The three schools held different views on some topics.

31 Salisbury discussed issues including:
   • concern that the pathway development would be rushed because success is the key, however this has been mitigated through the engagement process.
   • the risk of commencement date in Term 4, 2018, given the potential that the Salisbury school roll will drop below five at the end of this year.
   • a concern that students with complex autism and intellectual disability will miss out on RSS if behaviour is the primary focus of criteria and regional panels.
   • a concern that using the existing IWS criteria will not result in increasing rolls.
   • an interest in being involved in the prioritisation panels.
   • concern that the regional panels may not understand what RSS have to offer.

32 Halswell and Westbridge discussed points including:
   • the need for the schools to learn as they go and set the new pathway up for success
   • they do not want their principals to participate in the prioritisation panels.
   • the sense of maintaining a consistent approach between the two pathways wherever possible eg. the regional panels, the criteria
   • the need to ensure that students enrolled through the RSS direct-access pathway have a stable home environment and no need for intervention in the home. Where this is not the case an IWS application should be requested.

33 To ensure the views of the RSS Boards are reflected we have invited each school to contribute a statement for inclusion in this Education Report. These contributions have not been edited.
Salisbury
34 Emma Thompson the Salisbury Board Chair has reviewed relevant sections of this draft report and provided the following statements.

35 ‘Salisbury is supportive of a new RSS access pathway in addition to the current IWS pathway. We have expressed a view during engagement that the RSS pathway should be well considered, purpose-built and given the best possible chance of successes.

36 Therefore, our key concerns regarding success lie in the regional panel process and enrolment criteria remaining unchanged from the IWS pathway, rather than purpose-built for RSS. We have experienced the severe limitations of the IWS pathway to our enrolments, due to the criteria being slanted to local placement and behavior conduct disorder (displayed more overtly by boys). § 9(2)(g)(i) We proposed amendments to criteria two, or that a fourth criterion be added, but this was not supported1.

37 However, we have agreed to proceed in good faith with risk mitigation procedures and activities promised such as panel Guidelines, ToR and training. We have also suggested that the inclusion of RSS Principals on the panels initially would help determine the suitability of residential education in each instance, including whether residential education could benefit academic, social and life skills development.

38 We also look forward to commencing a property workstream with the Ministry to ensure our buildings are safe, fit for purpose and are cost effective to run.

Halswell and Westbridge
39 Dave Turnbull the Halswell and Westbridge Board chair has reviewed relevant sections of this draft report and provided the following three statements.

40 We thank the Ministry of Education (MoE) for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion around the proposed direct access pathway. Providing more students with access to RSSs is strongly supported by the Combined Board. However, the Board continues to have concerns around the ‘mechanics’ of how the new access pathway will operate, together with concerns around an initiative with no new or further resourcing’.

41 Resourcing and Funding: There is an expectation that the RSS will absorb all additional costs associated with the new pathway, within current funding levels. Both schools are currently operating a deficit budget that draws on reserves, because five years of outstanding funding issues have not been resolved, despite the MoE’s robust external professional analysis of RSS funding. Prior to IWS, the three RSSs provided students’ transition and were funded for this. When IWS began, this resourcing was removed as transitions were undertaken by IWS. For example, Halswell Residential College lost 2.3 teachers and $135,000 per annum in transition funding. Given the new access pathway requires RSSs to again manage transitions of their non-IWS students, the resource and funding needs to be returned’.

1 This comment arose during extensive discussions on the criteria and the potential impact on roll numbers. Following discussion the group agreed to keep the criteria consistent and to provide further guidance to the panels about how these can be interpreted for IWS and the direct access pathways. The Ministry considers that retaining the criteria and providing panels with additional guidelines on their use provides the best combination to increase roll numbers.
Mechanics We believe there is a risk that students with the most complex and challenging needs in New Zealand may be disadvantaged by accessing a RSS-only service that is not adequately funded and consequently not able to meet all of their needs. It is acknowledged in the report that 'young people with care and protection needs require a home environment prior to enrolment at a RSS and to return to. Given our lack of funding and no staff in the local area, we believe a criterion needs to be developed stating that 'students attending RSS-only need to have stable home environment and no need for intervention in the home'. Currently IWS do extensive work in the home that RSSs would find difficult to fully replicate. If work in the home was needed and not provided, students and families would not receive the required intervention, and this would likely impact on expected outcomes.

The high level implementation pathway

The initial time frame proposed for new enrolments was Term 3 2018. Based on our discussions, we recommend this start date is extended by one term, to the start of term 4 2018.

Subject to your agreement, the high level implementation plan for 2018 is shown in Table 2. We propose that all parties work towards:

- initial applications to the regional panels in Term 3 2018 onwards
- young people starting school within the direct access pathway from Term 4 2018 onwards.

Table 2 high level implementation plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2018</th>
<th>June July</th>
<th>August Sept</th>
<th>Oct Nov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel terms of reference and training</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication messages</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online information and application form</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First applications to panels</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First section 9s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First students start at the RSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Risks

This section covers risks identified within the engagement process.

The nature of the direct access pathway is not clearly understood, resulting in an expectation that enrolment is freely available or not for those it is actually intended for.

If the intent of the direct access pathway is not clearly communicated, parents, educators and other government departments may expect that enrolments will be automatically accepted, regardless of the access criteria and the section 9 process. Conversely, those who the pathway is for may not be aware of the new access pathway.
The schools and the Ministry both identify a potential risk of pressure for young people who do not have a stable home environment, to attend a RSS to resolve placement and/or care and protection issues. The schools note increasing numbers of enrolment queries from Oranga Tamariki and that some current students lack a stable home to go back to in the holidays and when they leave the RSS.

Another risk is that RSS enrolment is seen as an automatic choice for parents who want to send their young person to boarding school, or for schools to manage challenging situations by sending young people away, out of their region.

These risks will be mitigated by targeting communications for different audiences including young people, parents and whānau, schools, referrers, learning support providers and Oranga Tamariki.

We will continue to advise that a RSS enrolment responds to educational needs and that young people with care and protection needs require a home environment prior to enrolment at a RSS and to return to.

**Upholding the right to access a quality, inclusive education in the community in which a young person lives**

The direct access pathway is expected to increase the number of students receiving their education in a special school setting and living away from home. Increasing the numbers of young people in special schools is likely to be seen by some, including some of the disability community as contrary to the Government's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person's with a Disability and the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

This risk will be mitigated by leaving the current funded (notional) rolls unchanged, and ensuring placements are no longer than two years.

**The right of students to be fully informed and to have a voice in decisions that affect them is not protected**

Both access pathways need to protect the right of young people to be fully informed and involved in decision making. The RSS schools advised us that some students have not been well informed that they would be living away from home in a RSS for a period of time. The RSS and Ministry have reviewed relevant sections of the UNCRPD and prepared some key messages about Human Rights and residential special schooling.

This risk will be mitigated by preparing information to support parents and educators to uphold the rights of young people.

**Perceived competition between the RSS and IWS or between the three RSS**

There is a risk that the perception of a competitive situation may develop between RSS and IWS or among the three schools. This could result in conflicting information for parents, who may find it difficult to make decisions about which option is the best fit for their young person.

This risk will be managed through online information and termly Ministry meetings with the schools in 2018 and 2019 to build trust and develop collaborative practices.
Announcing the change

57 Once you have made decisions, based in the recommendations in this report, you may wish to make a media announcement about the new direct access pathway prior to our communications to referrers.

58 Suggested key messages are included in Annex 2.

Next steps

59 It is proposed that:
  o once you make decisions on the recommendations in this report, we work with the RSS on the high level implementation plan
  o we aim to have the first young people starting at a RSS, under the direct access pathway, from Term 4 2018 onwards
  o the Ministry will continue to engage with the RSS, each term, to support implementation ie October 2018 to December 2019
  o the Ministry will work to conclude the residential funding review as soon as possible
  o property matters will be progressed once you have made further decisions.

60 We recommend that this report be proactively released after you announce your decisions in relation to the direct access pathway. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information act 1982.

Annexes

Annex 1 The direct access pathway description
Annex 2 Key communication messages
Annex 1  The direct access pathway description

The name
1  The term, direct access pathway, is used to differentiate the new pathway from the current IWS access pathway into a RSS.

The pathway
2  A process map for the new pathway has been developed to show the key stages of the pathway for a young person, from:
   o  steps prior to referral
   o  referral and decision making
   o  transition into the RSS
   o  time at the school
   o  transition back to the home region.

The process map shows the roles of those involved at each stage including the:
   o  young person, parents, family and whānau
   o  referrer and services in the home region
   o  regional prioritisation panels and the RSS post-panel discussion
   o  the RSS
   o  Ministry of Education.

Who will access the new pathway?
3  The direct access pathway will support young people aged 8 years or over, where their needs meet the criteria, and whose parents would like them to access a RSS placement without IWS support.

4  Like IWS, the new pathway will respond to a wide range of educational needs, such as disability (including Autism and Learning Disabilities), disadvantage or difficulties (including needs associated with self-management, social communication, emotional regulation and mental health).

5  When a higher level of need or risk is indicated, including care and protection needs or need for intensive specialist support or parenting programmes, a RSS application can be made through the IWS pathway, rather than the direct access pathway.

Access criteria
6  Criteria are used to target the most intensive and expensive resources to those who need them most. The criteria are consistent across both access pathways.

7  Criteria are used by referrers, parents and schools as they consider an application, and by the regional prioritisation panels when they check eligibility and make recommendations.

8  Specific guidance will be provided for the regional panels to support them to interpret the criteria in each as the access pathways.

9  The same criteria are used for the IWS and the direct access pathway.
   o  Criteria 1: the student is in Year 3 to Year 10 at the time of referral. Within the direct access pathway the age range is 8 years and over.
Criteria 2: The student has social, behavior, and/or learning needs that are highly complex and challenging (and may have associated intellectual disability) and requires support at school, home and in the community.

Criteria 3: Local learning support services/support have been fully utilised for the student and are unable to meet the need.

Completing the application and risk assessment

A RSS application is made by a current service provider, including a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), Day Special School, fund-holder School or a Ministry specialist.

A decision to complete an application is based on consideration of the young person's current needs against the criteria and the wishes of the young person and family. This involves a conversation with the young person, parents and whānau, the current school and current (education) support providers.

The referrer is also responsible for developing the Risk Assessment\(^2\) at the same time as the referral. At a later time they will also complete the Section 9 application.

Regional prioritisation panels

Applications will be sent to the regional panel in the area in which the student lives. The panels review requests and decide:

- if each request is complete and if it meets the criteria
- on the priority order for requests.

Regional panels will maintain their current membership which includes people with decision making powers (a local principal, RTLB manager and Learning Support Manager) and advisory roles (Ministry Practice Advisors, an IWS Service Manager).

The terms of reference and panel name will be amended to reflect both pathways (IWS and RSS direct access). Panels will require training to support them to understand their new role and RSS contexts.

We proposed advisory roles for RSS on the panels. The schools noted that involvement in the 10 panels would be problematic in terms of time. Following consideration of a range of options, an alternative approach was supported by the schools and the Ministry. This is a RSS post-panel discussion process. Salisbury are keen to contribute to panel training to ensure the benefits of residential schooling is understood.

The role of the RSS in the application process

After each meeting, the regional panel will notify the RSS principals about prioritised applications, asking for a recommendation about which school would be a ‘best fit’.

The RSS post-panel process would be managed by, and involve the three principals, by phone or videoconference.

Subject to the consent of the parent within the application form, RSS post-panel discussions will cover the needs and preferences of the student and family, and each school’s capability and ability to manage any safety concerns. After the RSS principals have met, they will inform the referrer of their recommendation.

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\(^2\) Based on the Serious Risk Assessment and Management Practice Guidance, March 2018, Ministry of Education
If the RSS consider that they could not safely meet the needs of this young person, the referrer would be informed, and an IWS application should be considered.

Section 9 agreements
In line with the Education Act (1989), all special school enrolment decisions are based on a section 9 agreement.

Within the Section 9 process, the Ministry makes sure that parents and the young person understand the full range of options available in their home community and in special schools. They will also check that the young person is fully informed and their views are represented in the application process.

Duration of enrolment
A RSS direct access enrolment could be for a period of up to two years, including the transition period. This is consistent with the maximum IWS period of enrolment.

Access to specialist support
Young people attending a RSS currently access specialist support through their IWS plans. Those enrolled in the direct access pathway will access support from their home region, or where needed, from the region where the RSS is located.

Transitions
The IWS currently supports transition into and out of the RSS. This will not be available for direct access pathway enrolments. Key transition roles and responsibilities have been discussed and high level agreement reached. Further detailed planning will follow during implementation.

Additional roles and responsibilities
Additional roles for the referrer include:

- completion of the application form, the initial risk assessment and safety plan, and the section 9 agreement form
- ongoing involvement with the RSS including support for transition into and out of the RSS.

Additional roles for the RSS include:

- a post-prioritisation panel discussion
- leading transitions in, and out of, the school
- establishing and co-ordination of the team, IEPs and safety plans
- making requests for specialist support.

Additional roles for Ministry Teams include the list of referrer tasks above and:

- panel training
- risk assessment
- responding to requests for specialist support.

The regional panels will also have additional tasks associated with the new pathway including

- retraining
- higher numbers of applications.
Annex 2  Key communication messages

1 The Ministry of Education and the three RSS have successfully concluded an engagement to establish a direct access pathway to RSS enrolment from Term 4 2018.

2 The direct access pathway to enrolment offers another education support option for young people aged 8 years or over, where they meet the access criteria but do not need the same high level of support that IWS provides.

3 The intent is to increase RSS rolls (IWS and direct access pathways) up to the level of their funded rolls.

4 Applications are made by learning support providers in the home region i.e. Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), Ministry specialists, day special schools and fund-holder schools.

5 Three access criteria relating to year level, need and previous access to local support, will target the most intensive and expensive resources to those who need them most. A Section 9 agreement is still required.

6 The maximum period of enrolment remains the same, 2 years.