

Innovation and Research Team  
Strategy and Innovation  
NHS England  
Quarry House  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in my capacity as the National Clinical Lead for Innovation at NHS England and NHS Improvement in support of the 12-week trial to transport chemotherapy, medical equipment and supplies between Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth and St Mary's Hospital in Newport, Isle of Wight, using unmanned aircraft.

The benefits of this project extend beyond the patients on the Isle of Wight. It provides the NHS with the opportunity to investigate the impact of drones on the improvement of health outcomes, operational efficiency, economics and sustainability in the wider health service. It will help identify key issues and challenges of using drones in healthcare, providing us with evidence to inform policy development in this area. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the case for a more resilient logistics and supply chain all the more urgent to explore.

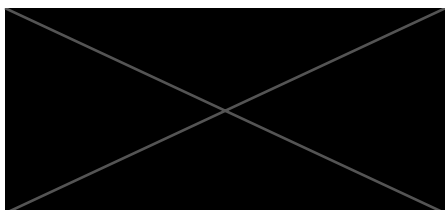
I have known two of the co-founders of Apian, the project's prime contractor and system integrator, for three years and encouraged them to apply to the NHS England Clinical Entrepreneur Programme (CEP), to which they were successfully appointed in 2019. NHS England established this programme in 2016 to help us bring a start-up mindset to unlock the intellectual capital of our workforce and empower them to transform the NHS through innovation. Since then, over 700 frontline clinicians have been supported to develop their innovations and the programme has provided a safe space to explore concepts that have the potential to transform healthcare and its delivery.

Autonomous drone transportation in the NHS is one such transformative opportunity. The potential for a NHS network of secure air corridors connecting sites across the system and how this might aid the NHS in its ability to respond to the current crisis and in potential future pandemics is currently under discussion at NHS England. I am grateful to and supportive of the Civil Aviation Authority in their work in prioritising COVID-19 drone deliveries under CAP 1915.

If there is anything further you wish to know please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



**National Clinical Innovation Lead  
NHS England & Improvement**