**Semi-structured interviews with NHS practitioners**

*Background*

A series of interviews were undertaken as part of the E-Drone research project (<https://www.e-drone.org/>). The E-Drone project investigated the potential for drones to be integrated into logistics systems. It used NHS case studies to understand the energy saving potential and the practical and regulatory implications of transporting time-sensitive medical items by drone. The interviews sought to develop an understanding of existing NHS transport practices associated with the movement of time-sensitive medical products (e.g., diagnostic samples, blood, medicines) alongside an initial exploration of the role of drones with practitioners.  Pre-defined questions were identified with respect to the practitioner’s role and the evolving needs of the project with flexibility to further adapt in response to the developing discussion. For example, questions prepared for pathologists in the early stages of the project included:

* Do all hospitals in the study areas all have labs? Is there a requirement for movement of samples between hospitals/hospital labs (different equipment levels?)
* Are samples also collected dentists, care home staff, District nurses?
* GPs taking samples during home visit sometimes deliver sample directly to the lab – why and how often?
* What does the future of pathology sampling look like? Will there be more self-testing? (Note recent trial of home smear test kits – these are to be returned in the post)
* Will the progress of ‘New Models of Care’ change where and how samples are taken? (e.g. more home sampling or more localised services?)
* Who supplies/controls the packaging?
* Does the Courier service call even when there are no samples?
* Do staff at the GP practice communicate with the courier directly on whether they still need to call?
* What is the process for transferring the samples from the GP surgery to the courier?
* Does the courier sign for the samples?
* Are the samples packed together for each surgery?
* Is the courier performing other tasks for the NHS?
* Is there flexibility in the route/timings?
* Are GP surgery staff scheduling appointments around the collection time for the samples?
* How does the GP appointment scheduling affect sample numbers/types?
* Do all the samples need to go on the same day, are some less time-dependent?
* How do practice staff identify/categorise less urgent samples?

*Sample*

23 interviews were undertaken between June 2021 and December 2022. One NHS Trust requested that data was not shared and 2 interviews were conducted with 2 participants, therefore 17 transcripts deposited here). Participants whose role related to the supply or processing of time sensitive medical items were initially identified through local collaborators within the NHS Trusts taking part in the study, participants subsequently recommended further relevant participants. 19 interviews were undertaken online each lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. Four interviews were undertaken in person as they were combined with site visits. Details of participant job role and the date of the interview are summarised in the ‘Data Directory for archive’ file.