

# Harvey's Lab Tours: Supporting young patients through laboratory engagement



# Why Harvey's Lab Tours matter



- Many young patients attend hospital regularly for tests and monitoring
- Procedures such as tests can cause anxiety and distress
- Laboratory testing is essential but often invisible to patients
- Lab tours help children understand their care and feel more confident about hospital visits



# About Harvey's Lab Tours



- Guided visits to hospital laboratories for young patients and their families
- Delivered locally by volunteer biomedical scientists and laboratory staff
- Supported nationally by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)
- Opportunity for young patients and their families to see where their samples go and learn how laboratory testing supports diagnosis and treatment



# How Harvey's Lab Tours work



- Small supervised groups of young patients and families
- Guided visits through selected laboratory areas
- Demonstrations and activities
- Opportunities for questions and discussion with biomedical scientists
- Delivered by volunteer laboratory staff



# Impact for young patients and families



- ✓ Helping children understand what happens to their samples
- ✓ Reducing anxiety around tests and hospital visits
- ✓ Helping young patients feel more informed and empowered about their healthcare
- ✓ Helping families understand how laboratory results support diagnosis and treatment decisions
- ✓ Supporting confidence and reassurance
- ✓ Helping children feel more comfortable during future hospital visits and procedures



# Impact for Laboratory teams



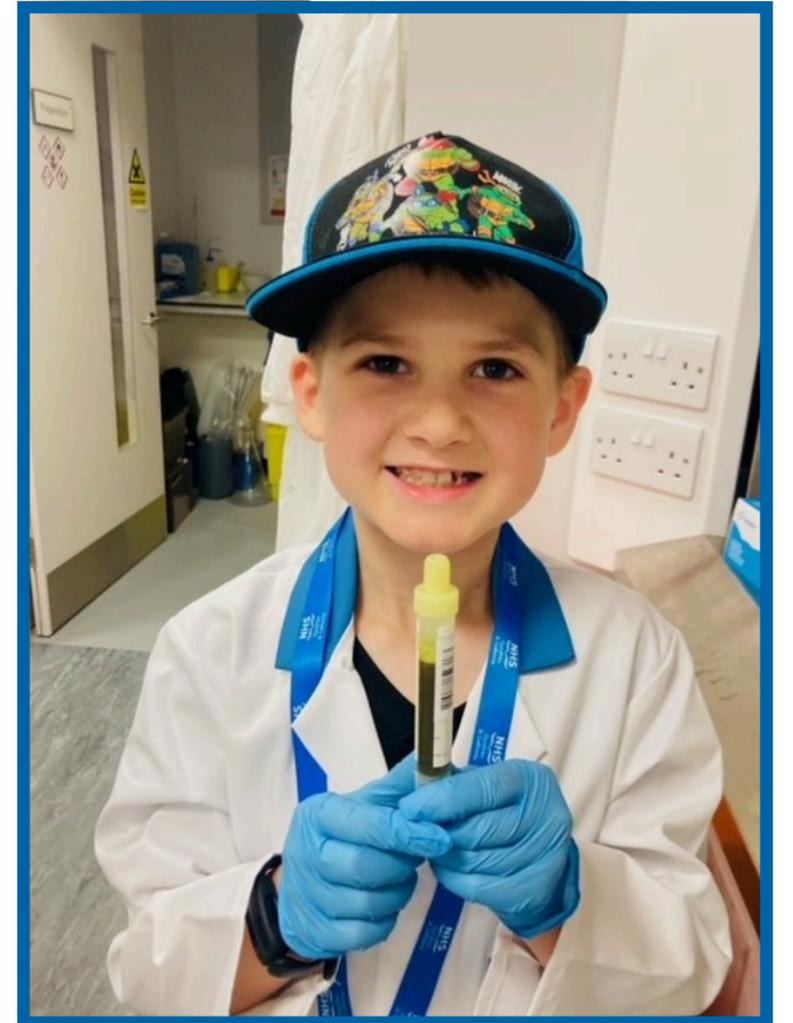
- ✓ Connecting laboratory work directly to patient impact
- ✓ Strengthening staff engagement and morale
- ✓ Supporting professional development and communication skills
- ✓ Building confidence in explaining laboratory science to non-specialist audiences
- ✓ Encouraging teamwork across laboratory disciplines
- ✓ Supporting collaboration with clinical colleagues and other hospital services



# Impact for hospitals



- ✓ Supporting patient-centred care
- ✓ Supporting patient experience initiatives
- ✓ Encouraging collaboration across hospital teams
- ✓ Raising awareness of biomedical science and diagnostic services
- ✓ Providing positive internal and external communications opportunities
- ✓ Helping procedures run more smoothly when children feel more confident during tests



# How tours support hospital priorities



## ✓ Patient experience

- Helps children and families better understand their care
- Reduces anxiety around hospital tests and procedures

## ✓ Patient-centred care

- Involves patients more directly in understanding their healthcare
- Builds trust between families and healthcare professionals

## ✓ One-team working

- Encourages collaboration between laboratory teams and clinical services
- Improves understanding of each team's role in patient care

## ✓ Staff engagement

- Connects laboratory work directly with patient impact
- Provides opportunities for communication and public engagement

## ✓ Raising awareness of biomedical science

- Highlights the role of laboratories in diagnosis and treatment
- Promotes understanding of diagnostic services across the hospital

# Safe delivery in working laboratories



Harvey's Lab Tours are designed to operate safely within working laboratories.

Key principles include:

- Clinical work always takes priority
- Tours planned to avoid disruption to laboratory operations
- Small supervised groups
- Risk assessments and infection prevention measures in place

The IBMS provides free-of-charge guidance, governance resources, activity materials, and goody bags for visiting young patients to support Lab teams in setting up and running tours.



# Why volunteer to run Harvey's Lab Tours



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Joining Harvey's Lab Tours is one of the highlights of my job. It builds real connections not just with the children and families we care for, but also between ward and lab teams.

Staff who've taken part come away with a deeper understanding of lab processes, and that insight has made a genuinely positive difference to how we work together.

Sharron McGarva, Paediatric Staff Nurse  
Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary

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I find it rewarding to help remove the fear of hospitals and see children relax and enjoy themselves. Bringing young patients into the department helps the team connect with the people behind the samples, a powerful reminder of the real impact our work has on treatment and care.

Ricky Figgins, Biochemistry Automated Sections Manager  
Southampton General Hospital

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# Feedback from families



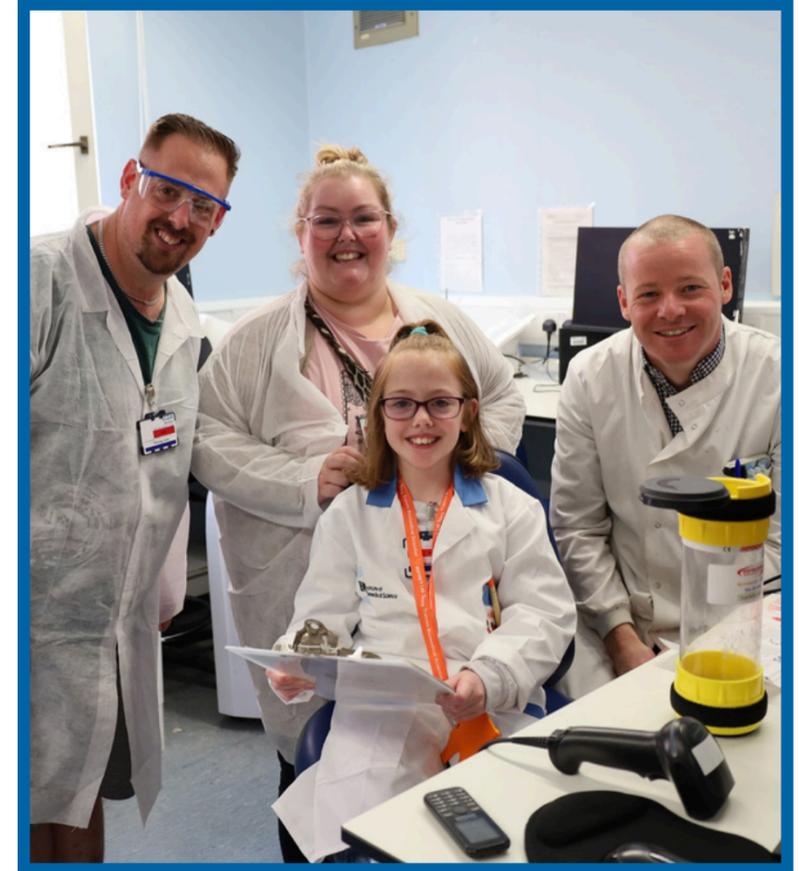
We used to dread blood test days. Now Finn walks in calmly and confidently. It's made such a difference – not just for Finn, but for all of us.



Amy, Finn's mum

Oscar got up at our school assembly and told everyone about his Harvey's Lab Tour adventure, something he's never done before. It just shows what a positive impact these sessions can have, even outside the lab.

Oscar's teacher





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