



# EMMA MARCZYLO

*Industry: Government*

## CURRENT ROLE

- Principal Toxicologist, UK Health Security Agency

## EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **BSc Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, Lancaster University (3 years)
- **PhD Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, University of Leeds (4 years)
- **Postdoctoral Research Fellow**, The Leicester School of Pharmacy, De Montfort University (3 years)
- **Postdoctoral Research Fellow**, MRC Toxicology Unit (2.5 years)
- **Investigator Scientist**, MRC Toxicology Unit (3.5 years)
- **Senior Toxicologist**, Health Protection Agency/Public Health England (4 years)
- **Principal Toxicologist**, Public Health England/UK Health Security Agency (9 years)

## HOW HER PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- Originally, I expected to follow a traditional academic route toward a Professorship. Instead, my career has been much more varied—moving between academia and government—and has expanded my skills far beyond what I first imagined. Early on, this non-linear path fed my imposter syndrome, but over time, I learned that being versatile is a huge asset in government science. No two days are the same: I might be conducting experiments, presenting at conferences, collaborating on risk assessments, or training others. The variety keeps things exciting and challenges me daily.

## CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- I feel very fulfilled in my career. I rarely wake up dreading work, and overall, I still love what I do. Earlier in my career, I thrived on learning new scientific skills and techniques. Now, I find huge satisfaction applying scientific knowledge to real-world public health challenges, working with passionate, like-minded colleagues. Being a valued scientist in a positive environment is what keeps me motivated to continue growing and contributing.

## FUTURE PLANS

- I plan to stay at the UK Health Security Agency because the mission to apply science for public good strongly aligns with my values. The agency also offers stability, excellent benefits, and opportunities for leadership development, even if bureaucracy can be frustrating. Overall, the meaningful work and brilliant people make it an environment I want to continue growing in.

## ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ☒ Say yes to opportunities that push you outside your comfort zone.
- ☒ Learn when "good enough" is truly enough—and when to say no.
- ☒ Be proactive about your career development.
- ☒ Find support through mentors, peers, and networks.
- ☒ Embrace wiggly, non-linear career paths.
- ☒ Love what you do—and strive for work-life balance.