



GARY FULLER

Industry: Academia/Clean Air Champion

CURRENT ROLE

- Senior Lecturer, King's College London, now Imperial College (15 years)
- Clean Air Champion
- Science Contributor, The Guardian (15 years)

EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **BSc Physics** – University of Sussex & Uppsala Universitet (3 years)
- **Temporary jobs** in warehouses & finance (2 years)
- **Analyst** in an occupational hygiene consultancy (3 years)
- **Self-employed analyst** (3 years)
- **Air quality technician** & team manager in public sector/university (15 years)
 - Diploma in **Environmental Pollution** Control – Open University (2 years, part-time)
 - **PhD in Environmental Science** – King's College London (9 years, part-time)
- **Senior Lecturer**, King's College London (15 years)
- Contributor to **The Guardian** (15 years)

HOW HIS PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- I always wanted to do applied science and later applied environmental science, but I never had a career plan.
- In my 20s, I moved in and out of fragile jobs, taking opportunities as they came but feeling frustrated that I couldn't contribute as I wanted. I never imagined I'd end up in my current role.
- I started academia late, earning my PhD at 43 while already in a university science role, making my path quite different from most researchers.

CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- Throughout my career, I've focused on applied research for national and local governments, driven by my ambition to provide scientific evidence for practical and policy applications. As a Clean Air Champion, I now represent a broad portfolio of world-class research rather than just my own.
- Writing for The Guardian is one of the most enjoyable parts of my career. It gives me an excuse to explore a wide range of scientific studies and highlight important new findings. I love being able to tell stories about science and amplify the work of researchers at all career stages.

FUTURE PLANS

- I'd love to continue in my current role, but funding is finite. Retirement will come, but I still have a strong desire to learn, contribute and explain science. Maybe late-career researchers could benefit from their own networking events and workshops?

ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ☒ Engage with others – Talk to people about their work, share your own, and attend conferences, seminars, and meetings.
- ☒ Support & collaborate – Helping others will strengthen your network and create opportunities through expert panels, working groups, and conferences.
- ☒ Recognise academia's challenges – The time demands and work culture can be overwhelming. Work-life balance matters.
- ☒ Be kind to yourself – Set boundaries, take breaks, and give yourself permission to step away. Your work will be more productive as a result.