



# LUCY ANDERSON

*Industry: Environmental & Public Health Research*

## CURRENT ROLE

- SPHR Transdisciplinary Research Fellow, University of Bristol

## EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **BSc Biological Sciences**, University of East Anglia (3 years)
- **MRes Ecology & Environmental Science**, University of York (1 year)
- **PhD Environmental Science**, University of Leeds (3 years)
- **Research roles in the charity sector** (10 years)
- **Transdisciplinary Research Fellow**, University of Bristol (Present)

## HOW HER PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- My career has been far from linear! After my PhD, I moved into the charity sector, leading research for environmental and public health campaigns, most recently as Head of Research at Global Action Plan. I gained experience in policy-focused research, behavioral change campaigns, and science communication—skills I wouldn't have developed by staying solely in academia.
- Initially, I worried that being outside academia for so long would limit my ability to return. However, maintaining academic connections, publishing when possible, and collaborating across sectors helped demonstrate the value of transdisciplinary experience. In reality, my cross-sector background has been an asset.

## CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- I find my work deeply fulfilling. I love using research to tackle real-world challenges and generate evidence that drives change. My PhD gave me research skills that apply across disciplines, and I've worked on major environmental and public health issues—from air pollution to sustainable supply chains.
- Moving between the charity and academic sectors has shaped my perspective. In NGOs, I learned to work under real-world constraints and focus on immediate impact. Academia allows for deeper exploration of complex questions. My biggest motivation is ensuring my research influences policy and practice.

## FUTURE PLANS

- I aim to keep building my research career around air pollution, climate change, and public health. My current fellowship has given me a unique opportunity to bridge environmental and health research, and I hope to secure a long-term academic role. While academia has its challenges—slow funding cycles and bureaucracy—it provides a platform for meaningful work with real-world impact.

## ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ☒ Don't be afraid to step outside academia. My time in the charity sector gave me invaluable skills and perspectives. That said, maintaining academic links—through publications, advisory roles, and collaborations—can help keep doors open.
- ☒ Use AI and automation wisely. Automating routine tasks frees up time for deeper thinking and collaboration—just ensure it's used ethically.
- ☒ Prioritize clear science communication. Misinformation is rampant. Researchers must engage transparently, explain methods clearly, and tailor communication for different audiences.
- ☒ Engage with the public. There's a growing shift from seeing the public as passive recipients of research to recognizing them as key collaborators. Involving communities from the outset ensures research is relevant and impactful. Seek out opportunities to engage and learn from different perspectives.