



SOPHIE MORRIS

Industry: Public Health

CURRENT ROLE

- Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Project Manager

EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **Education & Career Path**
- **BSc (Hons) Physical Earth Science** – 3 years
- **MSc Environmental Dynamics and Climate Change** – 1 year
- **Air Quality Public Health Specialist** – 4 years
- **MPH Master of Public Health** – 2 years (part-time while working)
- **Transition to HDRC Project Manager**

HOW HER PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- "I initially planned to work in a traditional environmental science role, but my career took a different turn."
- "My first air quality position was in a Public Health directorate, during the peak of COVID-19. This led me to work in outbreak management and health protection, which sparked my interest in public health."
- "I pursued an MPH at the University of Birmingham part-time while working to gain a deeper understanding of public health methodology and global health."
- "My current focus is on the wider determinants of health, blending my scientific background with public health strategy."

CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- "I really enjoy my current role and the work that the NIHR-funded HDRC Sandwell does in increasing the role of evidence and data in local authority decision-making."
- "I collaborate with a variety of partners across academia and the voluntary community sector on research projects related to the wider determinants of health."
- "Every day is different, involving engagement with diverse stakeholders and academic partners from over five universities."

FUTURE PLANS

- "I really like the ethos of the HDRC and the culture change the programme aims to bring about."
- "I am passionate about bridging academia with policy and decision-makers, so I plan to stay with the programme for the duration of the funding."

ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ✓ Be flexible – Careers can take unexpected but rewarding turns.
- ✓ Demonstrate impact – Focus on how your research can drive real-world change.
- ✓ Listen to stakeholders – Understanding their needs will make your work more relevant and actionable.
- ✓ Think beyond research – Ensure your findings translate into practical recommendations for decision-makers.