Making the discoveries that defeat cancer

Careers in Science Policy
Dr Eva Sharpe

Making the discoveries that defeat cancer
Careers in Science Policy

1. My career path

2. What a career in policy involves

3. How to move into a career in policy
### My background

#### Career pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002 – 2005</td>
<td>BSc Biological Sciences at University of Edinburgh</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 – 2006</td>
<td>MRes in Biomedical Sciences at Imperial College London</td>
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<td>2006 – 2010</td>
<td>PhD at Imperial College London</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Policy Internship at the Royal Society of Biology</td>
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<td>2011 – 2013</td>
<td>HE Policy Officer at the Royal Society of Biology</td>
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<td>2013 – 2016</td>
<td>Science Information and Policy Manager at the ICR</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016 – 2018</td>
<td>Senior Policy and Engagement Manager at the ICR</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Six month secondment to the Greater London Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018- present</td>
<td>Head of Policy and Engagement at the ICR</td>
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What is science policy?

Policy that uses science as evidence base
Eg. Climate change, GM crops, breast cancer screening

Policy that affects how science is done
Eg. science funding, legal regulations and governance, reporting requirements

Policy that affects how scientific innovation is taken to patients
Eg. NICE processes, cancer drugs funding mechanisms
My role
Aims and objectives

To give the ICR a **strong and consistent voice** on research policy to **influence** the development of policy in high-priority **areas which affect our work**.
My role
Topics that I’m working on

- Patient data in research
- Gene patenting
- Big data
- Regulation of clinical trials
- Access to childhood cancer trials
- Animals in research
- Research funding
- How universities collaborate with industry
- How to speed up access to new drugs on the NHS
Working in policy
Day to day

- Meetings, networking and conferences
- Reading policy reports and articles
- Research and evidence gathering
- Working with expert groups
- Writing briefing notes
- Responding to consultations
- Organising events
- Blogging about policy
My role

Developing positions

Building a framework of policy positions to allow the ICR to take a consistent approach to communicating about policy
My role
Communicating our messages

Finding routes to communicate about our policy messages:

• Responding to Government consultations

• Providing evidence for Select committee enquiries

• Releasing reactive media statements
My role
Communicating our messages

Proactive Public Affairs work:

- Parliamentary events
- Meeting policy makers
- Briefing MPs and MEPs
Working with the media

The media team at the ICR arrange media briefings on policy topics and allow us to comment in the press on current issues and recent announcements.
Digital communication and social media

Communicating policy messages through blogging, online news stories, tweeting, and video interviews with researchers about policy
Working in policy
Careers in policy
Is it for you?

- Quite academic in process
- Work closely with science and scientists
- Always learning new things
- Lots of external meetings, conferences, seminars
- Meet lots of interesting people
- Making a difference

- Can be quite dry at times
- Office based
- Sometimes high pressure - expect a lot to do and with lots of deadlines
- Often working on things outside of your comfort zone
Careers in Policy
Where could you work?

**Government and Parliament**
- MPs and Peers
- Civil Service
- Special Advisor
- Select Committee clerk

**Scientists advising on Policy**
- Policy committee membership
- Advisory Committees
- Chief Scientific Advisers

**Policy professional specialising in science**
- Professional bodies
- Charities
- Think tanks
- Universities
Careers in Policy
Skills, knowledge and experience

- Writing formally and informally
- Presentations, speaking and networking
- Understanding how science and research work
- Understanding the policy making processes
- Data analysis
- Multi-tasking
- Explaining science to lay audiences

Demonstrable interest is essential
Experience and qualifications are helpful
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What sort of salary to expect

Policy Officer
£25,000-£35,000

Policy Manager
£35,000-£45,000

Head of Policy
£45,000-£55,000

Director of Policy
£?
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How to find out more?

Masters courses in Science Policy

Newton’s Apple Introduction to Science Policy Workshop

Professional Development Policy Seminars at Centre for Science and Policy

NERC Science to policy training workshops

Other training listed on Campaign for Science and Engineering website
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Where to get experience?

Lots of opportunities for paid policy internships
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Keeping up to date with the latest issues

- **Policy newsletters** from Royal Society of Biology, Campaign for Science and Engineering, Medical Research Council
- **Policy briefings** from the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology
- **Policy blogs** see the Campaign for Science and Engineering website for recommendations
- **Policy events and lectures** eg Policy Lates, Talk Science, Science Question Time
- **Policy magazines and journals** eg Research Fortnight, THE
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Choosing where to work

Work on a subject you care about

Is it a big or small team? You’ll try more things in a small team

What are the opportunities to progress?

Are you doing policy or public affairs or both?
Top tips for moving into policy

- Follow organisations you’re interested in through social media to find out what is happening
- Keep up to date with current affairs
- Find out what it's like through work experience or placements
- Attend events (even invite yourself along!)
- Gaining experience of other types of science communication is useful too.