



MARYAM'S CAREER TIMELINE

Name: Maryam

Agency: MI5 and MI6

Time in agencies: Over 25 years

Current role: Senior Scientist

Entry into agencies: Experienced hire

Maryam obtained a PhD in Chemistry and worked in a Research and Development role prior to joining MI5. Maryam started at MI5 as an Operational Scientist, and although she has not used her STEM skills in the traditional sense, she has had an extremely fulfilling and rewarding career. During her time at the agencies, Maryam has taken two career breaks on maternity leave and currently works part-time as a Senior Scientist alongside raising her children.

We asked Maryam about how she has put her technical skills to use in an innovative way, how she was supported whilst taking a career break and what skills she has learnt along the way...

1998: I joined MI5 as an Operational Scientist. Whilst I wasn't using my STEM background in the traditional sense, having a knowledge of chemistry really helped me understand some of the current techniques that were deployed in my team and enabled me to offer new ideas.

2003: I took a career break to have my first child. The maternity leave offered by MI5 was very generous and allowed me to re-join my team when I was ready. Thanks to parental catch up days, I still felt in the loop of what was going on and was able to bring baby in for some team cuddles!

2005: To develop my skills, I applied to be a Tech Team Lead on promotion, and completed some management training to support me. In this role, I had the exciting opportunity to represent the office to overseas partners, building relationships to help us share technical knowledge. It was such a great experience, and still can't believe that I got to do this.

2006: I took a second career break to have my second child. Upon my return, I re-joined my previous team. This time, I was working on a part-time basis as a Team Leader introducing policies designed to safeguard technical staff

when deployed in the field. I now had two teams to manage, which helped develop my leadership skills further.

2010: I undertook a placement with MI6 as a Project Manager training STEM teams. I gained valuable project management skills and obtained accredited risk management and change management qualifications. I feel very proud that MI5 invested in my career and supported me whilst I was undertaking the training.

2019: I returned to MI5 as a Strategy Advisor which involved designing EDI initiatives, workforce planning, and policy creation. It was an entirely new type of work for me, and I found it interesting to see a new side of the business. As a busy mum, I realised the importance of looking after your health, so became a Wellbeing rep, where I helped promote positive wellbeing in the office.

2022: I went back to my STEM roots and joined my current team as a Senior Scientist where I have been involved with creating the STEM strategy for MI5. I am also involved in some really innovative work involving new and exciting (and secret!) technologies.