



Livia



Laura



Kristi



Georgina



Chris



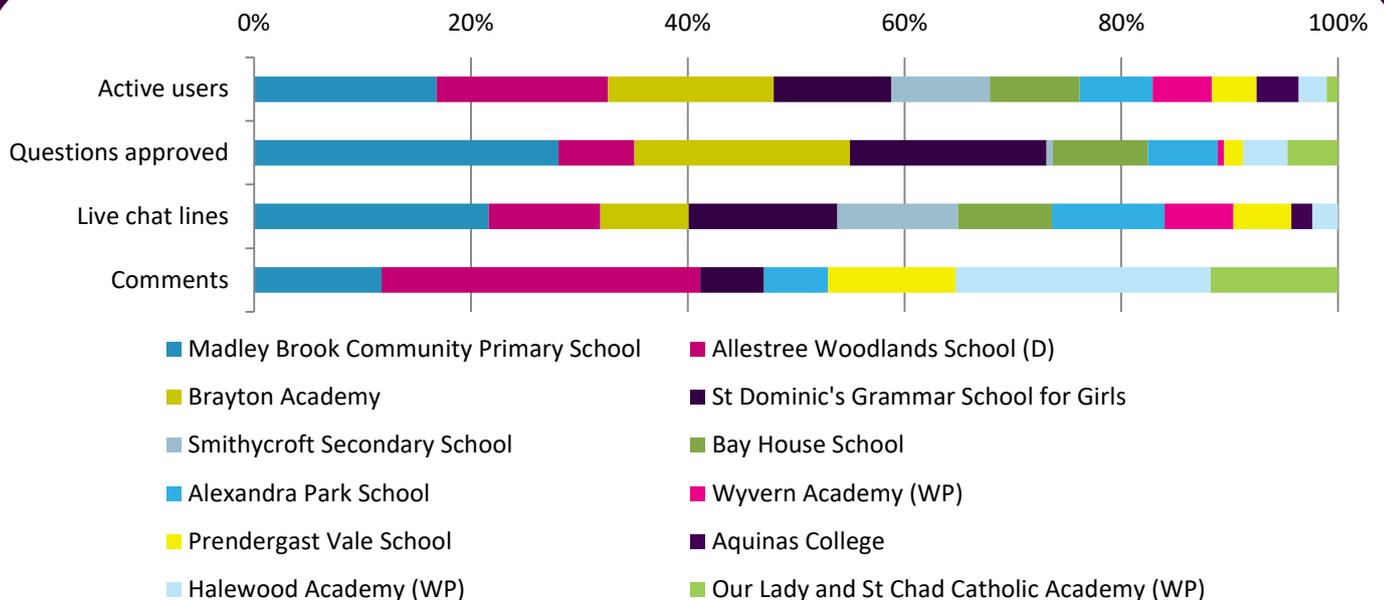
November 2017

The Stress Zone is a themed zone funded by the Physiological Society, with five scientists studying different areas of stress and how it affects us. Livia is studying how we can prevent and treat mental illnesses, Laura is a part-time lecturer in physiology researching the bad effects of stress in the workplace and Kirsti is a PhD student studying how stress during pregnancy can affect the development of a baby. Georgina, the winner of the Zone, is researching the hormone cortisol and why it is released into the body when we are stressed and Chris is looking at how extreme environments can affect how humans perform during exercise or cognitive tasks.

This Zone was relatively quiet compared to the other Zones in November's I'm a Scientist, although it was very on topic with some interesting and well thought out questions from students. There were lots of conversations about how stress can affect the students during exam times, for example, and all the scientists were good at dealing with sensitive subjects such as wellbeing and mental health, often relating their own experiences.

All of the scientists answered an even amount of questions in Ask, and Georgina, the winning scientists in the Stress Zone, accounted for 63% of all Live Chat lines by scientists. It was difficult to achieve a gender balance in this Zone, and in the future we will work with partners to promote applications more regularly.

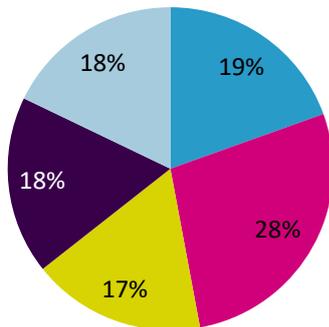
School data at a glance



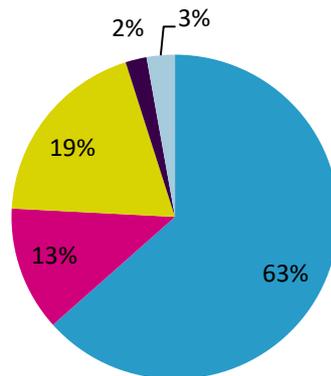
We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups going into STEM careers. Find out what we mean by our Widening Participation (WP) and distant from a major research HEI (D) schools, and how you can support us in working with more of these at about.imascientist.org.uk/widening-participation.

Scientist activity

Answers



Live chat lines



SCIENTIST	PROFILE VIEWS	POSITION
Georgina Hazell	777	Winner
Laura Ginesi	660	2nd
Kristi Sawyer	622	3rd
Chris Tyler	508	4th
Livia Carvalho	655	5th

Key figures from the Stress Zone and the averages of the November zones

PAGE VIEWS	STRESS ZONE	NOV '17 ZONES AVERAGE
Total zone	16,347	23,372
ASK page	1,055	1,777
CHAT page	1,564	1,997
VOTE page	1,433	1,892

	STRESS ZONE	NOV '17 ZONES AVERAGE	IAS 2012-17 AVERAGE
Schools	12	13	10
Students logged in	426	483	385
% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE	91%	87%	85%
Questions asked	348	588	705
Questions approved	171	273	305
Answers given	359	569	544
Comments	40	68	75
Votes	336	378	302
Live chats	17	19	16
Lines of live chat	5,831	7,384	5,394
Average lines per live chat	343	398	350

Popular topics

Students were interested in the scientists' individual research areas, with Kristi's work on stress during pregnancy being a popular topic. They asked Kristi how the baby could be affected if the mother is stressed, whether the mother should eat anything in particular to relieve this and why Kristi wanted to work in this area. Georgina was asked about cortisol and how it affects people differently, and whether the hormone differs between men and women. Laura was asked whether different jobs can cause people more stress.

There were lots of great questions on the topic of stress. Students asked about how much stress a human can take, the problems that could arise from not dealing with stress and how we can manage or prevent it. There was interest in mental health disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Aside from questions about stress, students asked the scientists about their careers and education experiences. They were interested in different experiments and whether they do the same research every day, and if they find that boring.

Chat

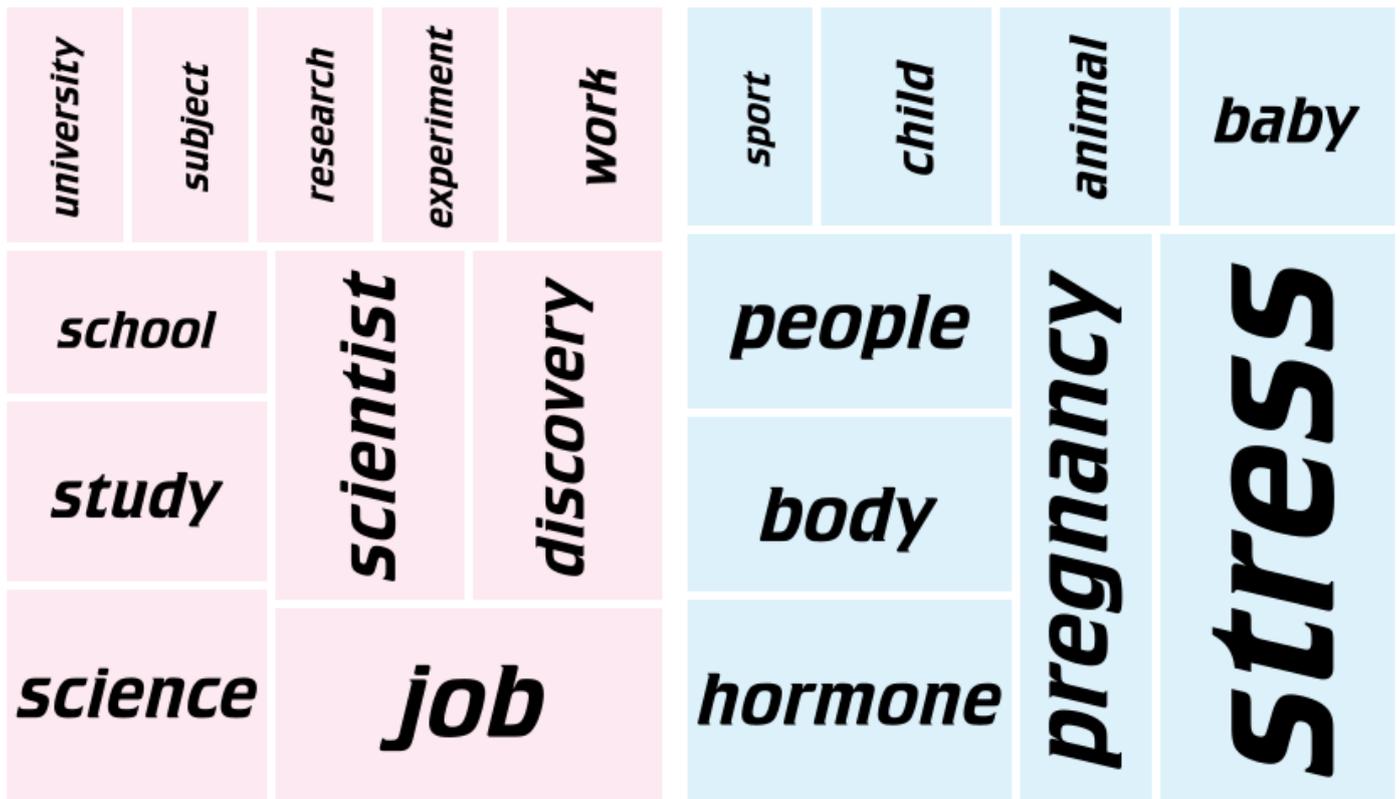
Keywords from live chats in the zone, size of the word represents its popularity



Ask

Top Keywords of questions approved in the Zone

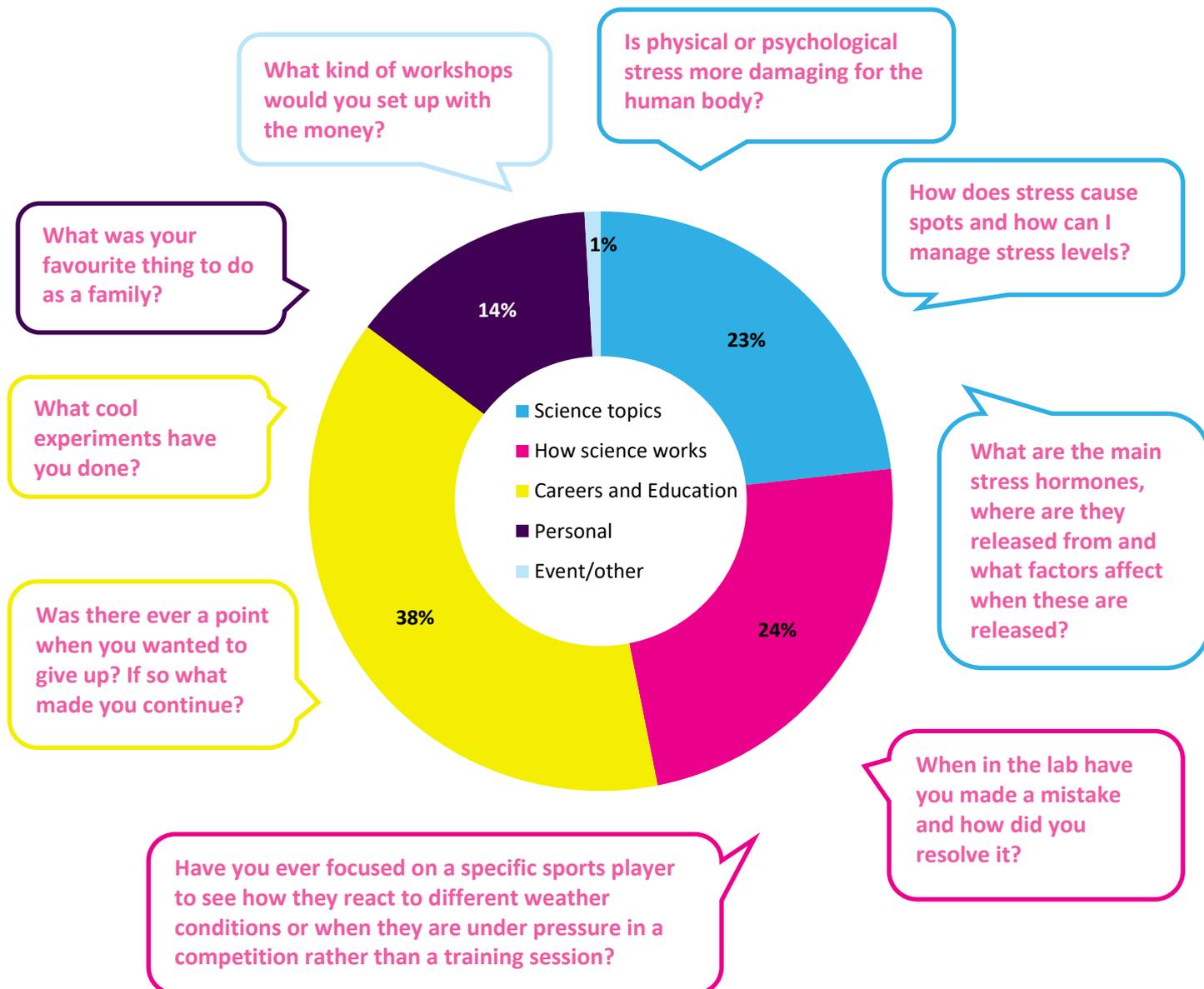
Area represents frequency of use



■ Being a Scientist ■ Science

Question themes and example questions in the Zone

Click for links



Find out about how we've coded the questions at about.imascientist.org.uk/2017/student-question-coding

Examples of good engagement

Students were interested in the work of the scientists, especially Kristi's research into how a mother's mood can affect her baby during pregnancy:

"How can you tell that the mothers mood changes the growth of the baby?" – Student

"You can compare different mothers who had different moods while they were pregnant." – Kristi, scientist

"Can the mother be in any type of mood when the babys growing and does it affect the growth?" – Student

“Mothers will probably go through lots of moods while she is pregnant! It can affect growth, but once the baby is born their environment also has a big effect.” – Kristi, scientist

“After the baby's born does the mother have a big mood change?” – Student

“Sometimes! A baby is a huge life adjustment so some women do get stressed or feel low just after” – Kristi, scientist

There were lots of conversations about managing stress and other mental health conditions:

“What is the best way to deal with stress?” – Student

“Everyone is different, but for me a bit of exercise and/or laughing will release some happy hormones!” – Georgina, scientist

“Have you heard of mindfulness? There's quite a lot of research that now shows that it is one of the best stressbuster! - slowing down, focusing on one thing at a time and on breathing calmly, going outdoors for a walk.” – Laura, scientist

“Can stress be beneficial in some circumstances?” – Student

“Yes! I need stress to get me motivated” – Georgina, scientist

Scientist winner: Georgina Hazell

Georgina's plans for the prize money: *“I do quite a lot of public engagement activities. It would be nice to have some fun tools to help me explain how the stress hormone system affects the body and how my research helps us to understand the system better. For example, I would like to make an interactive model to demonstrate 1) how the body responds to stress and the hormone cortisol; and 2) how I stimulate adrenal cells with light to release the hormone cortisol.”* Read Georgina's [thank you message](#).



Student winner: Katelyn and Adam

For great engagement during the event, these students will receive a gift voucher and a certificate.

Feedback

We're still collecting feedback from teachers, students and scientists but here are a few of the comments made during the event...

“It's really good getting to speak to real scientists who are doing real research to benefit mankind” – Student

“Taking part in these events are just as important for the scientists as the students, as it allows us to take a step back from our day-to-day work and look at our research in a very different way.” – Georgina, scientist