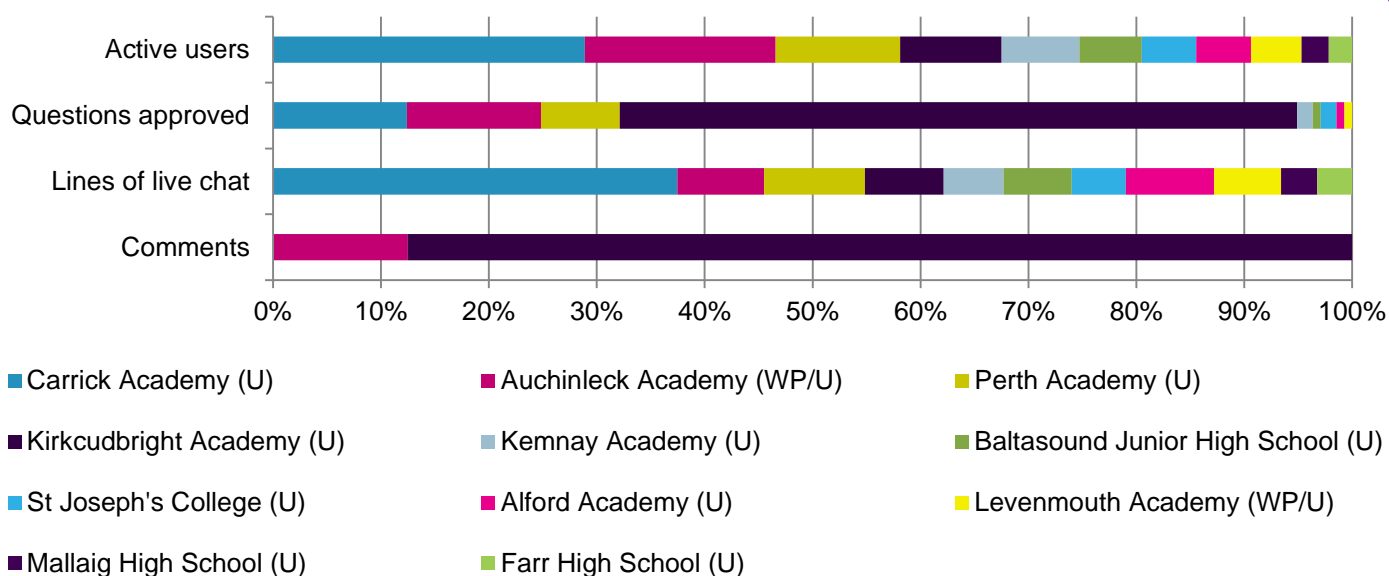


March 2018

The Molecule Zone was a chemistry themed zone funded by ScotCHEM to provide places for schools in remote parts of Scotland and the north of England. Seven scientists took part from the seven major Chemistry research universities in Scotland. Shuo is a PhD student creating artificial human tissue, Neil (the winner of the zone) is a teaching fellow and researcher creating new functional molecules, Martin is an Astrochemist looking at how molecules control the universe and Leonie is a PhD student finding cheaper ways to create new compounds that can be used in medicine. Lauren is finding new ways to tackle diseases, Ciorsdaidh is a lecturer in organic chemistry who specialises in cancer research and Alan uses catalysts to make chemicals in an environmentally friendly way.

This was a quiet zone compared to the rest of the zones in March, with a lower than average number of students logging in (318). This could be because school sizes are generally smaller in remote areas, resulting in a smaller number of students in a class. There was also disruption for many schools in the area due to heavy snowfall the week before the event. We received confirmation of funding at short notice, meaning we weren't able to fill the zone in such short time frame so two class spaces went unallocated.

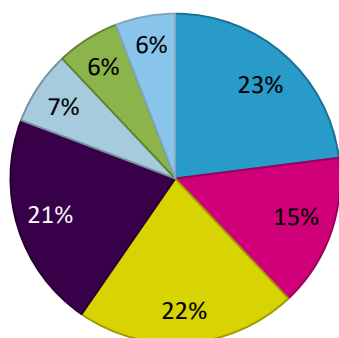
School data at a glance



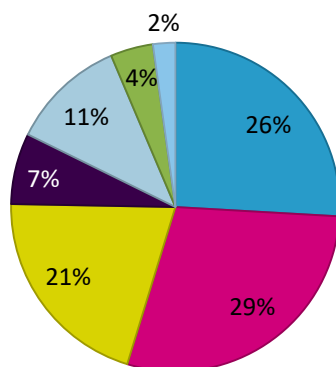
We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups going into STEM careers. Find out what we mean by our under-served (U) and WP schools (WP), and how you can support us in working with more of these at about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp/

Scientist activity

Answers



Lines of chat



SCIENTIST	PROFILE VIEWS	POSITION
Neil Keddie	557	Winner
Lauren Webster	504	2nd
Alan McCue	322	3rd
Martin McCoustra	418	4th
Ciorsdaidh Watts	286	5th
Shuo Zhang	463	6th
Leonie Bole	310	7th

Key figures from the Molecule Zone and the averages of the March zones

PAGE VIEWS	MOLECULE ZONE	MAR '18 ZONES AVERAGE
Total zone	14,099	19,571
ASK page	693	1,625
CHAT page	1,206	1,691
VOTE page	1,187	1,422

	MOLECULE ZONE	MAR '18 ZONES AVERAGE	IAS 2012-18 AVERAGE
Schools	11	14	11
Students logged in	318	437	387
% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE	90%	89%	86%
Questions asked	227	529	697
Questions approved	137	258	303
Answers given	374	469	541
Comments	34	62	75
Votes	264	348	304
Live chats	20	19	16
Lines of live chat	6,019	7,268	5,472
Average lines per live chat	301	388	354

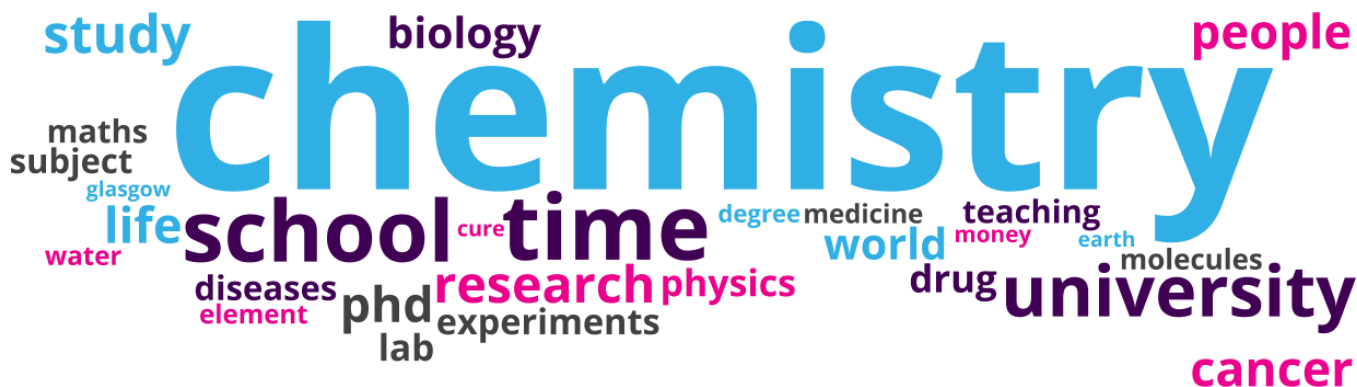
Popular topics

There were some great conversations in the live chats about careers, with students making the most of the opportunity to get advice from the scientists about their subject and University choices. As students were from remote areas in Scotland, some students expressed frustrations at not being able to take all of the science options they need for a particular degree, and the scientists were all extremely encouraging with practical advice. Students were aware this was a chemistry-themed zone and many asked about the different jobs and areas of science that use chemistry.

Students asked about how chemistry can relate to their everyday lives, raising their science capital. For example one student asked how his science teacher is able to run his car on chip pan oil, and whether the scientists think this is a good idea. They also asked about being a scientist, salaries, day to day tasks and if they have any regrets about their career choices.

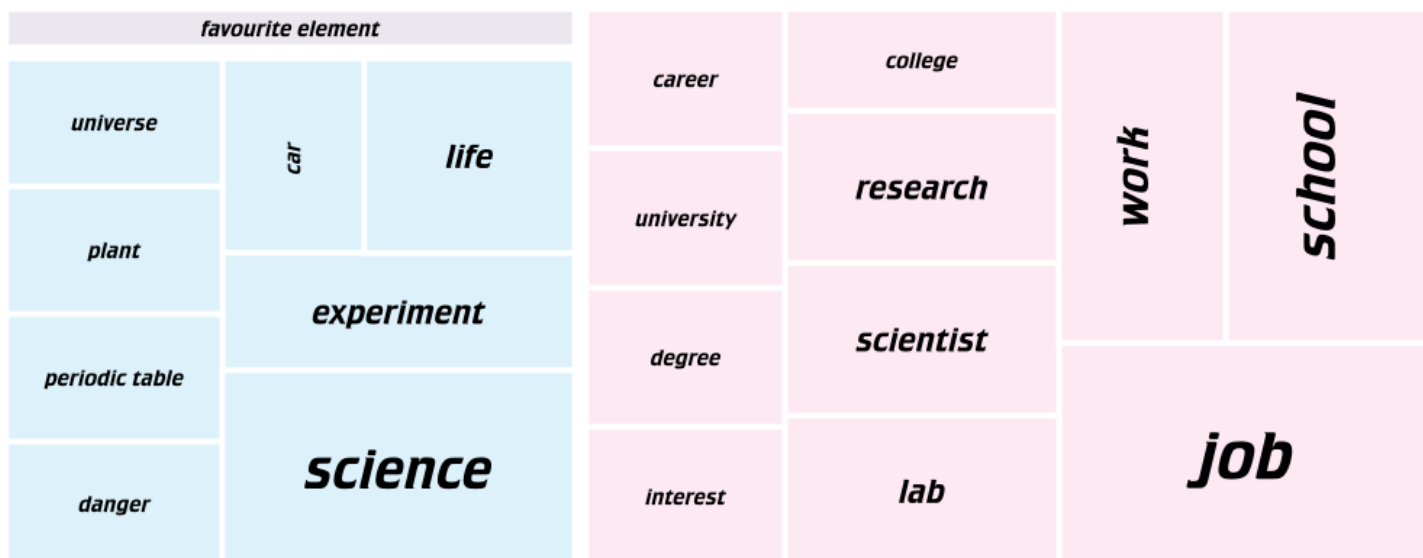


Keywords from live chats in the zone, size of the word represents its popularity



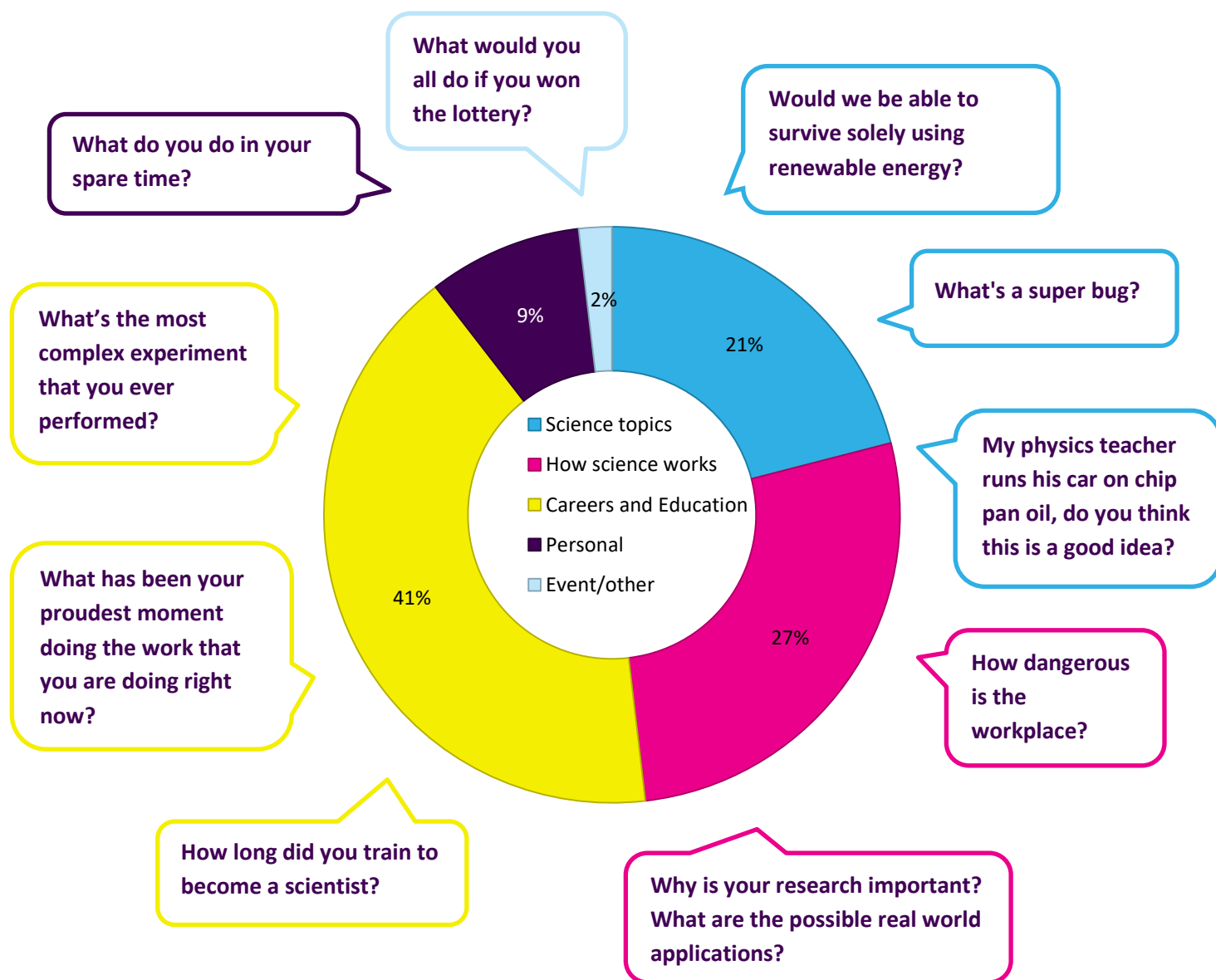
Top Keywords of questions approved in the Zone

Area represents frequency of use



Being a scientist (pink) Science (blue) Other (grey)

Question themes and example questions in the Zone



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

Examples of good engagement

Lots of students made the most of the opportunity to discuss career options with the scientists, asking for advice on which courses to take and about the different Universities in Scotland.

"What jobs do you need to use certain parts of chemistry in?" – Student

"Chemistry is needed for the likes of pharmacy, medicinal chemistry, even some medical professions like you to have chemistry. Because chemistry is involved in so much, all sciences learn chemistry" – Lauren, scientist

"Loads and loads of different jobs have chemistry...from polar explorers to pharmaceuticals. If you study chemistry you could work in a lab afterwards or work in patent office, publishing, education...almost never ending possibilities" – Ciorsdaidh, scientist

"@Lauren @Ciorsdaidh Thank you! I plan on being a primary teacher and specialise in sciences. Do you recommend any good universities in Scotland?" – Student

"That's great! Sounds like you have a plan and having good science teachers is essential! There are lots of great teaching courses at universities in Scotland to choose from...I know the Glasgow course is good but that's because I work there" – Ciorsdaidh, scientist

"Wow that is fab!!! You will love it :) It depends on what science you want to specialise in or area of focus as all universities have their own strengths in science :). What do you prefer?" – Lauren, scientist

"I plan on specialising in Biology and Chemistry :)" – Student

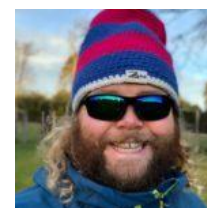
"Aw fab!!!! Love the two subjects, the best two :) I have a PhD in biochemistry which means I did both when becoming a doctor" – Lauren, scientist

"Thanks for helping me think about my options!" – Student

Scientist winner: Neil Keddie

Neil's plans for the prize money: "I want to put it all into an outreach programme called ChemBus. We want to extend the number of schools we can visit each time we run ChemBus and to develop a new hands-on experiment for our 2018-19 visits."

Read Neil's [thank you message](#).

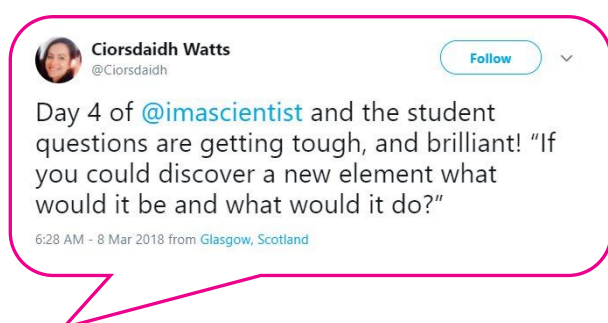


Student winner: Steve

For great engagement during the event, this student 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 a great way of getting pupils more engaged with scientists and all the different jobs that are open to them" – Teacher

"I have learnt about the route to a career on science and how science knowledge can help in my career. I have also learned new science related things to research or try at home, which I found fascinating" – Student