

June 2018

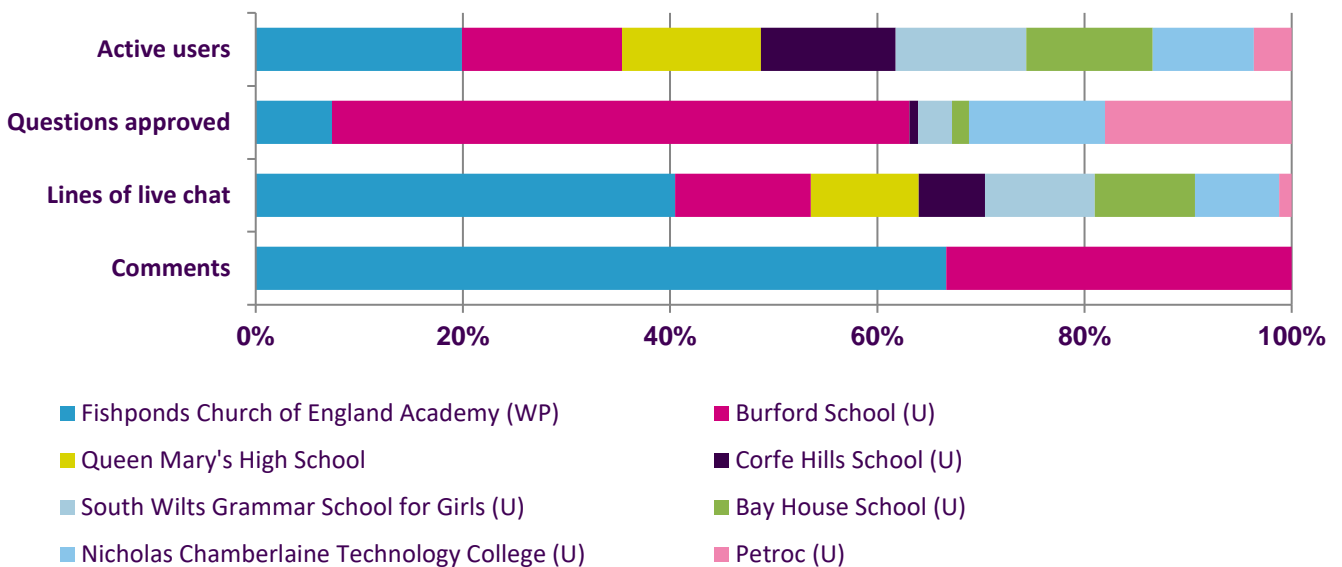
The Society Zone was a themed psychology zone, funded by the British Psychological Society, with six psychologists taking part.

- Stephen is a PhD student looking at the biases that people tell themselves, and how to encourage happiness from rational thoughts
- Maria is interested in how words are organised and divided into categories in our brains
- John is a lecturer and forensic psychologist working in a secure hospital to treat mentally unwell offenders
- Daniel, the winner in this zone, researches why some people believe in conspiracy theories
- Claire is studying language for her PhD, specifically the way we talk about alcoholism and drinking
- Amy is a lecturer interested in the differences in how Autistic and Neuro-typical people see the world

This zone was very on topic with students engaging really well with the theme. They could easily relate a lot of the psychologists' research to their own lives, such as Amy's work with autism and Stephen's research into happiness.

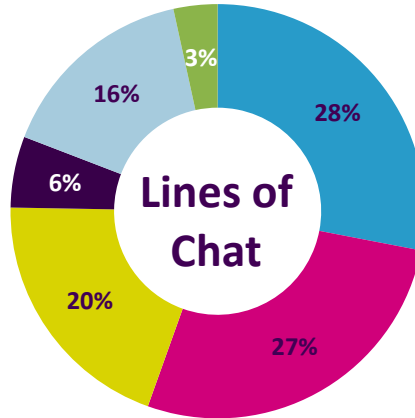
This zone had a higher number of sixth form classes than normal, and as these have smaller class sizes the chats and Ask were quieter than expected. In the future, we will be over-filling psychology zones to compensate for having fewer students.

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/

Psychologist activity



PSYCHOLOGIST	PROFILE VIEWS	POSITION
Daniel Jolley	690	Winner
Amy Pearson	608	2nd
Claire Melia	511	3rd
John Atkinson	419	4th
Stephen Baillargeon	638	5th
Maria Montefinese	520	6th

Key figures from the Society Zone and the averages of the June zones

PAGE VIEWS	SOCIETY ZONE	JUNE '18 ZONES AVERAGE
Total zone	15,891	19,125
ASK page	565	1,307
CHAT page	1,038	1,422
VOTE page	778	1,252

	SOCIETY ZONE	JUNE '18 ZONES AVERAGE	IAS 2012-18 AVERAGE
Society Zone Schools	8	9	10
Students logged in	292	393	387
% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE	84%	91%	86%
Questions asked	187	461	689
Questions approved	118	225	300
Answers given	194	400	536
Comments	9	68	74
Votes	217	300	304
Live chats	19	18	16
Lines of live chat	3,901	6,513	5,509
Average lines per live chat	205	357	354

Popular topics

Conspiracy theories — especially the flat earth theory — were very popular in this zone, stemming from Daniel's research, and students wanted to know the weirdest theory he studied, whether he has ever found any legitimate proof for a theory and about the psychology behind why people would believe in them.

There was also interest in mental health conditions, with questions about how we can improve our mental health, as well as specific questions to John about his work with mentally unwell prisoners.

The tone of the psychologists in this zone encouraged the students to open up and share their personal experiences, such as in [this Ask question](#) where a student with autism tells Amy how a metaphor she used helped their family understand the spectrum. Amy was great at explaining the psychology behind these types of conditions, helping to raise the students' Science Capital* by making science personally relatable.

*Science Capital is a measure of someone's engagement or relationship with science, how much they value it and whether they feel it is 'for me'. More info at imascientist.org.uk/science-capital



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



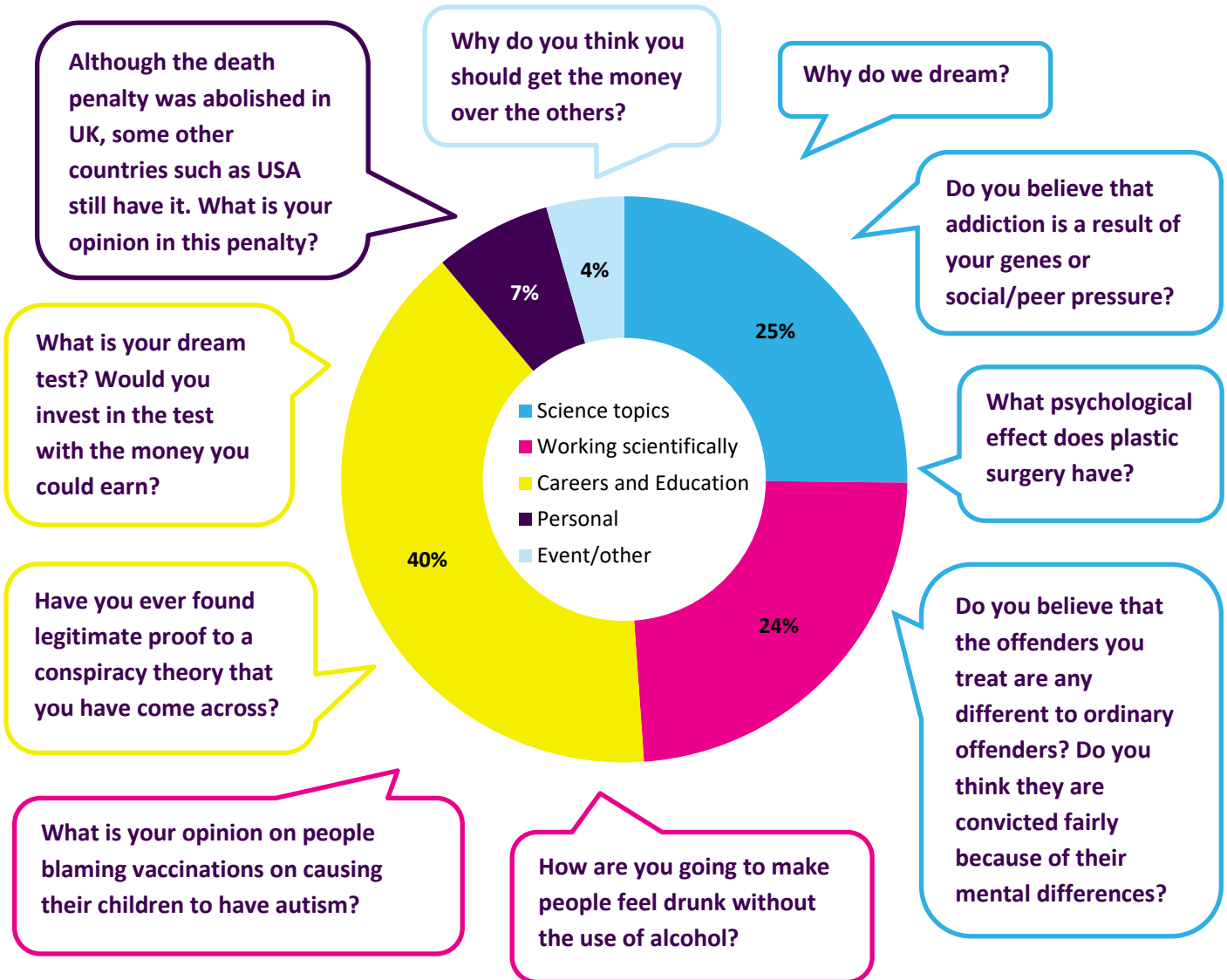
Top Keywords of questions approved in the Zone



Psychology Being a psychologist

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

Students were really interested in the psychologists' work. Older students, such as those studying psychology at sixth form, often came to the chats with good prior knowledge and were able to ask in-depth questions, such as in this conversation with Amy about autism:

"Amy what are the psychological symptoms of autism?" – Student

"Hey! Great question. Autistic people tend to have differences in several different areas. Their language use, ability to focus and switch attention, the sensory processing, and their social communication all tend to be a little bit different." – Amy, psychologist

"thank you :) from what age do people start showing signs of autism? Can you recognise it from birth or is there a significant point in which you can tell?" – Student

*"It's not *usually* easy to tell from birth, because autistic babies often show similar responses to neuro-typical babies (i.e. smiling, gurgling). There is some evidence to suggest that they look less at faces than NT babies. Mostly, it's from around 2 years." – Amy, psychologist*

“So if a baby wasn't showing any signs of social releasers (Bowlby's theory of attachment) would that be a link to autism or would that be something else?” – Student

“That's an excellent question! It could be autism, but it could also be several other developmental differences. Usually, people often notice their child not responding to their own name (many autistic children are tested for hearing difficulties before)” – Amy, psychologist

“Thank you, that is very interesting” – Student

There was a lot of interest in psychology as a career path and the different things you could do with a psychology degree:

“Is it hard to get into the forensic psychology industry?” – Student

“The route is quite long. So if you want to be a forensic psychologist like me you have to do a BSc, then a specialist MSc then at least 2 years supervised practice. The market is quite competitive too. We advertised for a psychological assistant last year where I work and there were 90 applicants!” – John, psychologist

“What other things can you do with a psychology degree?” – Student

“You could go into a range of careers! I have friends who are teachers, or work in data analysis, or marketing. A friend of mine from University works for the company that makes the John Lewis Christmas adverts- Who better to work out how to tap into emotions than a psychologist!” – Amy, psychologist

“Parts of the psychology industry are very competitive. PhD positions in psychology are pretty competitive, but there is also an option for a PsyD, which is basically the same thing but you don't have to do as much research and there's a stronger focus on therapeutic skills. I'm working toward being a professor, which is another pretty competitive field.” – Stephen, psychologist

Psychologist winner: Daniel Jolley

Dan's plans for the prize money: *“I will curate a short animation that will highlight the darker side of conspiracy theories, which will be freely accessible. I will then plan a workshop using the animation where during school visits young people will become a ‘Conspiracy Theory Psychologist’ for the day.”* Read Dan's [thank you message](#).



Student winner: Sarah

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 psychologists but here are a few of the comments made during the event...

“The idea they can speak to a real psychologist kinda blows their mind. They read about studies in books but don't see those researchers as actual people.” – Teacher

“I learnt a lot about criminal psychology and how conspiracy theories directly affect our daily lives.” – Student

“Taking part in I'm a Scientist has been so much fun. The chats were so lively, but also so addictive! 30 minutes went by so quickly.” – Dan, winner