

## November 2018

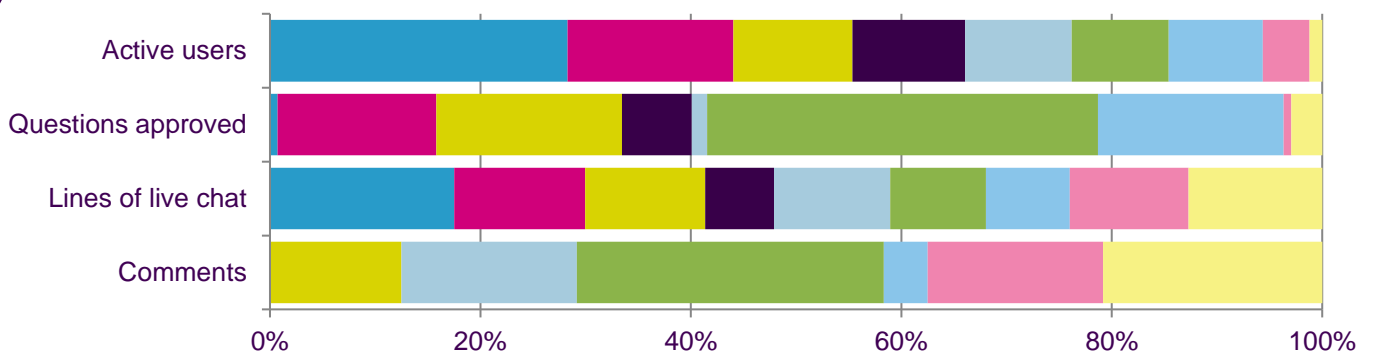
The Sustainability Zone was a themed zone for primary schools, supported by Wellcome. There were six scientists participating:

- Matt Bower works at the Scottish Government to maintain safe drinking water
- Maia Elliott writes at Global Food Security about how our food system could be made healthier and more sustainable
- Lyndsay Christie is a PhD student researching the diseases that infect fish and how we can control these to improve the health of fish
- Liam Taylor, the zone winner, studies how climate change affects the icy regions of our world
- Dionne Turnbull studies plant diseases and how plants can defend themselves from these infections
- Brendan Marrinan is a geo-environmental consultant where he assesses the contamination of land before someone can start building on it

Students in this zone showed great awareness of the current issues surrounding sustainability and the environment, and there were lots of discussions in ASK and CHAT about climate change, pollution and health. There were also a large number of questions about the scientists' lives outside of work, their hobbies and families.

Fetlar Primary School on the Shetland Islands took part in this zone with a class of four students, who were all very engaged throughout the activity. Two of these joined both the evening chat and the 3hr open live chat from home.

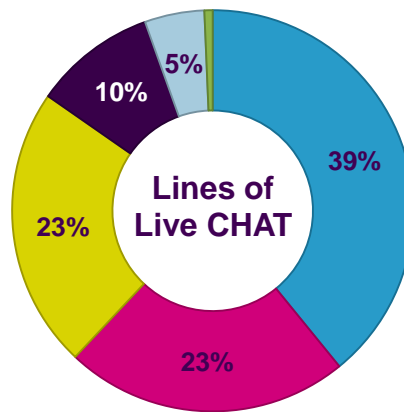
### School data at a glance



- Lark Rise Academy, Dunstable (U)
- St Mark's Cofe Primary School, Manchester
- St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, Mitcham (U)
- Irchester Community Primary School, Wellingborough
- Fetlar Primary School, Shetland Islands (U)
- St Bridget's Primary School, Glasgow (WP)
- New Town Primary School, Reading (WP)
- Shaldon Primary School, Teignmouth (U)
- Gillespie Primary School, London

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](http://about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp)

## Scientist activity



SCIENTIST	PROFILE VIEWS	POSITION
Liam Taylor	707	Winner
Maia Elliott	657	2nd
Dionne Turnbull	364	3rd
Matt Bower	636	4th
Brendan Marrinan	351	5th
Lyndsay Christie	461	6th

## Key figures from the Sustainability Zone and the averages of the November zones

PAGE VIEWS	SUSTAINABILITY ZONE	NOV '18 ZONES AVERAGE
<b>Total zone</b>	16,100	18,272
<b>ASK page</b>	1,399	1,482
<b>CHAT page</b>	1,107	1,443
<b>VOTE page</b>	546	742

	SUSTAINABILITY ZONE	NOV '18 ZONES AVERAGE	IAS 2012-18 AVERAGE
<b>Sustainability Zone Schools</b>	9	10	10
<b>Students logged in</b>	407	471	391
<b>% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE</b>	83%	87%	86%
<b>Questions asked</b>	634	711	690
<b>Questions approved</b>	272	337	302
<b>Answers given</b>	498	585	539
<b>Comments</b>	34	57	74
<b>Votes</b>	301	378	307
<b>Live chats</b>	20	21	16
<b>Lines of live chat</b>	8,123	8,300	5,642
<b>Average lines per live chat</b>	406	395	358

## Popular topics

As expected, there were a lot of questions about climate change and pollution in this zone. 'Earth' was a popular topic, used for questions both about Earth as a planet and regarding nature and living things. Students often talked about 'plastic', showing awareness of current worries surrounding sustainability.

'Water' was a common word in both ASK and CHAT, relating to Matt's work and questions about ice aimed at Liam. In ASK, Liam answered a lot of these questions with his own photographs of treks he had been on, which, judging by their comments, the students really appreciated.

'Disease' and 'plant/s' were also popular topics, with questions often directed at Dionne because of her work with plant infections. Students wanted to know "Why do you want to save plants?" and "What plants are less likely to not get disease?"

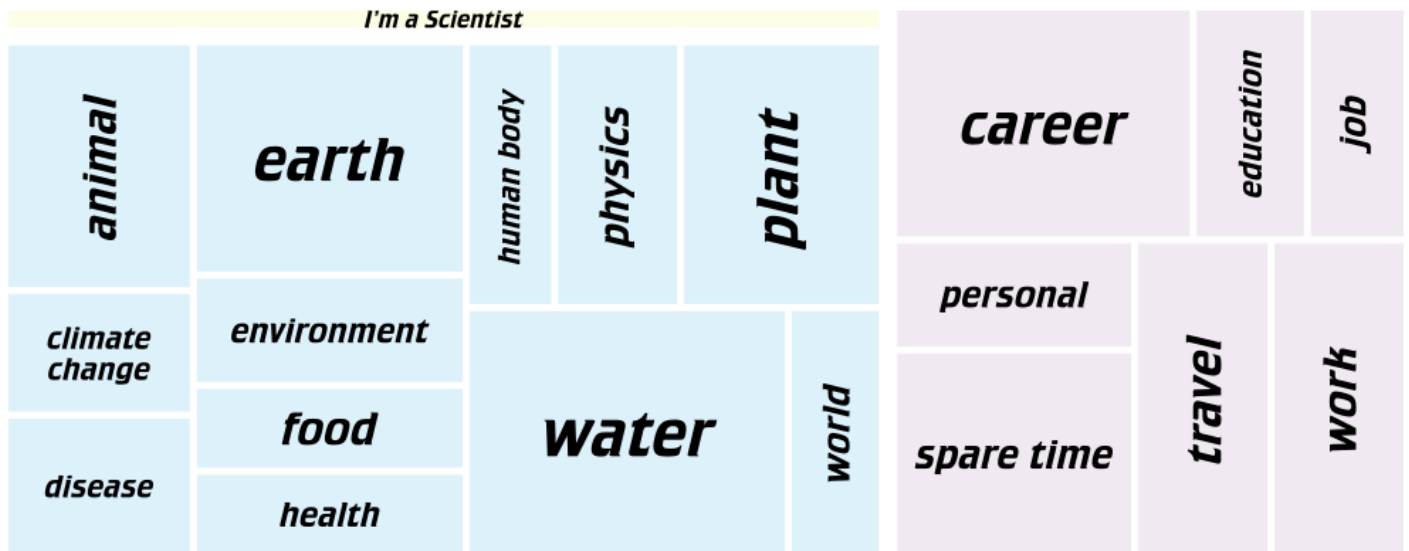
'Food' and 'drink' were discussed in both ASK and CHAT, including questions such as "Where in the world does our food come from?" and "How much drinkable water is in our oceans?"



Keywords from live chats in the zone. Size of the word represents its popularity



### Top Keywords of questions approved in the Zone

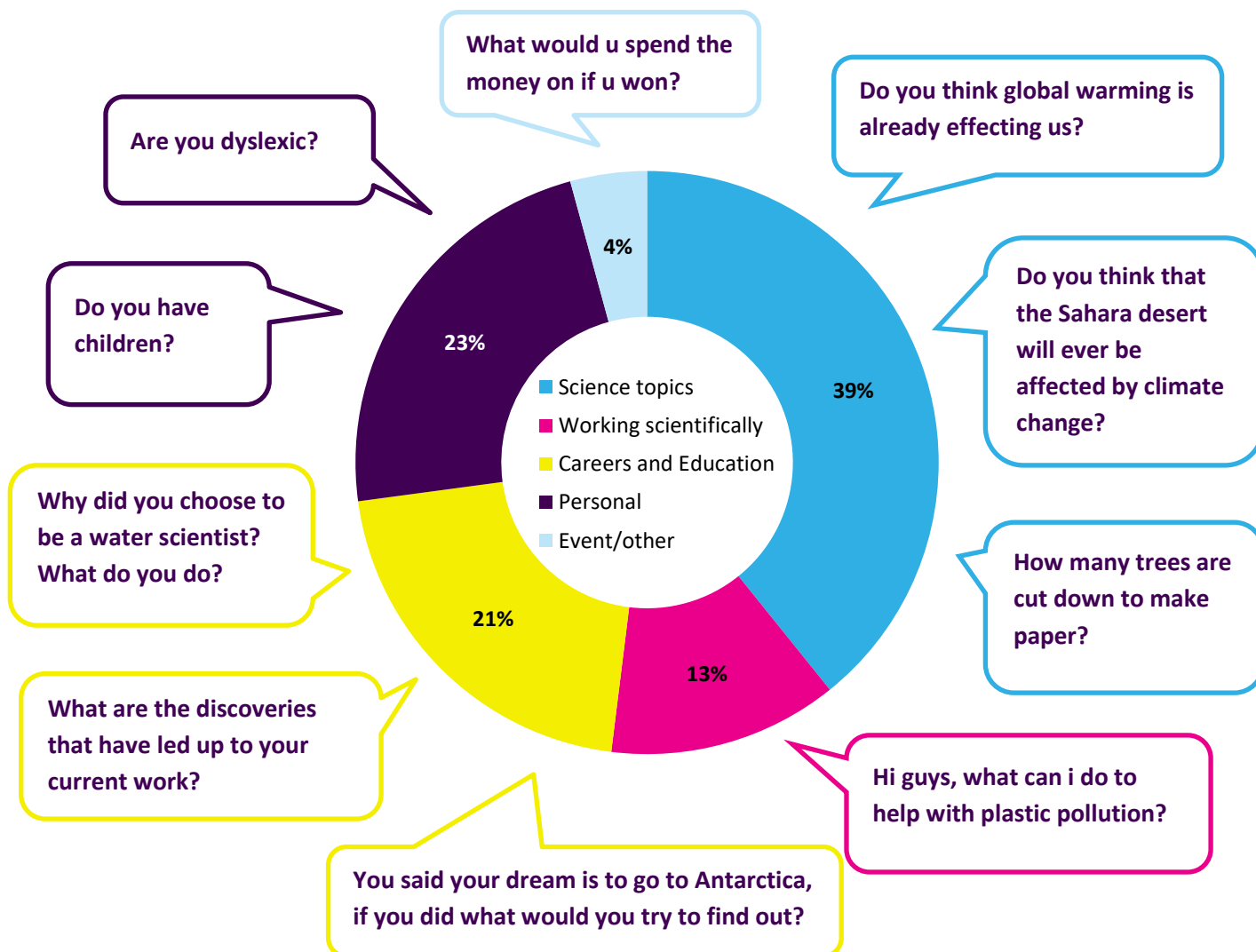


■ Event/other ■ Science ■ Being a scientist



## Question themes and example questions in the Zone

Find out about how we've coded the questions at [about.imascientist.org.uk/student-question-coding](https://about.imascientist.org.uk/student-question-coding)



## Examples of good engagement

Students were often interested in the scientists' motivations behind their research, which then led to questions about the research itself:

*"@Maia what made you want to study the food system and how to make it be healthier and more sustainable?" – Student*

*"I was researching people can change their diet to grow old healthy, but then I realised that a lot of people dont have those options because of our food system isn't healthy! that made me want to help change the food system" – Maia, scientist*

*"What would a unhealthy diet do to you ????" – Student*

*"An unbalanced diet can make us sick! In fact, it's making loads and loads of people in Britain sick every single day! That's why we need to make the food system healthier" – Maia, scientist*

*"how do you get a healthy system" – Student*

*"For a healthy foodsystem we need healthy foods to be cheaper, and unhealthy foods to be more expensive!" – Maia, scientist*

As this was a zone for Primary Schools, there was a higher than average number of chats where the teacher account was used to ask all of the students' questions, rather than the class all logging in individually. This didn't affect engagement, though, as the scientists were keen to ask questions in return:

*"Have you ever invented anything? from Leo"* – **Teacher**

*"No, sorry! in my area of science I try to understand how things work, rather than inventing new things."* – **Dionne, scientist**

*"Hey Leo, afraid I'm not that kind of scientist either! My job is still quite creative though - I get to write about science and create workshops"* – **Maia, scientist**

*"Ask Leo what they would like to invent if they could!"* – **Dionne, scientist**

*"Leo would like to invent a sweet machine!"* – **Teacher**

### **Scientist winner: Liam Taylor**



Liam's plans for the prize money: *"My idea is to partner with a project at Exeter that is developing virtual reality and help bring their work into schools. This project would mean we could do events about climate change where students in the classroom could actually see the glaciers melting or the coral reefs dying in front of their eyes."*

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

### **Student winner: Pigganator333**

For great engagement during the activity, 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 about the Sustainability Zone...

This has genuinely been a career-changing event to be part of. I now feel super inspired to work closer with outreach and science communication, and make my PhD more focussed on this. Chatting with the kids was without a doubt the highlight of my day every day. – **Liam, zone winner**

Once again the pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the whole event. They are totally engaged during the live chat and several took part in the live chat in the evening. They love getting the opportunity to ask questions of real scientists to explore their understanding. There's always great excitement waiting for the winner to be announced. – **Teacher**

I didn't know scientists liked games like Fortnite! – **Student**

## Feedback

Here are a few of the comments made about November's *I'm a Scientist* activity...

The whole event probably involved more students from a wider variety of backgrounds than any single real-life event. – **Scientist**

The students were actually cheering when the first scientist answered a question. It was a fantastic moment. – **Teacher**



St. Bridget's Primary  
@StBridgetsPS

Following

P7 waiting patiently to hear the winner @imascientist it's home time but we're not going home until we hear! 😊



3:03 PM - 16 Nov 2018

I have learnt about other scientists' lives and that even if they are scientists they have the same life as us. – **Student**

I would like to say thank you. Friday when our children went on the live chat, there was so much excitement with the children when they saw the scientist replying. The buzz they got from it was fantastic. It is a long time since I've seen children buzzing from science. – **Teacher**

I have learned that science isn't just sitting with some test tubes pouring them into a big pot and that they are real, rather interesting jobs that I could consider going into. – **Student**

I have learnt that many scientists did not have any clue as to what they wanted to be when they left school. – **Student**