

April–July 2020

In March 2020, schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, creating uncertainty in education. Many STEM enrichment activities for students were cancelled.

I'm a Scientist, Stay at home was launched to allow school students to stay connected with STEM from April to July. Students could log in and take part whether they were at school or at home, reconnecting with their teachers and each other.

An amazing 2,500 STEM professionals signed up to take part and inspire students across the UK. Over 800 schools registered for their students to stay engaged with science, engineering and maths.

The Psychology Zone ran over 12 weeks as part of the *Stay at home* activities, instead of the usual two. This Zone was funded by the British Psychological Society with additional funding from UKRI.

- 46 psychologists created profiles in the Zone, and 41 engaged with students in live chats and answering questions. 23 of these psychologists were new to the *I'm a Scientist* activities.
- Psychologists from a broad range of areas and career stages took part. For example, Alan Winfield is a Professor researching the ethical impact of robots on society, Lara Quartel is a PhD student studying how young people's brains work in those with mental health problems, and Abbie Jordan does research helping young people who are affected by pain. On average, 5 psychologists attended each live chat session.
- 581 students from 31 schools all over the UK logged into the Zone. 26 of these schools had taken part in a previous *I'm a Scientist* activity.
- 27% of active students were from Widening Participation schools, and 61% from Underserved Schools.

Key activity figures

Conversations and questions in this zone were very on topic, with students interested in many areas of psychology and the individual work areas of the psychologists.

Popular discussion themes were about the nature/nurture debate, the effect of COVID-19 on mental health, and the different research methods used by the researchers.

Students were also interested in sleep and memory, as well as mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and dementia.




























































	ZONE	STAY AT HOME AVERAGE
Schools	31	32
Students logged in	581	682
% of students active	54%	57%
Questions asked	123	178
Questions approved	116	151
Answers given	253	421
Scientist comments	56	95
Student comments	14	18
Votes	233	350
Live chats	44	55
Lines of live chat	9,235	13,374
Average lines per chat	210	227

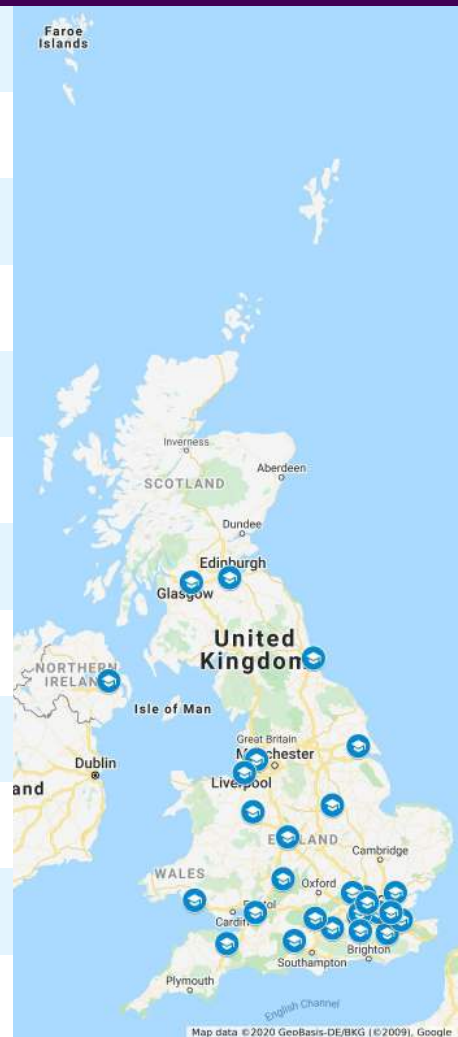
Fewer students than anticipated took part in the activities, likely due to difficulties teachers faced with remote teaching and online learning.

28% of non-participating teachers told us they had been too busy to fit in a live chat due to an increase in workload. Others shared that their students were particularly struggling with online curriculum learning, and were unable to offer extra-curricular activities.



A majority of students took part from home. This led to a lower average percentage of active students (57%) due to challenges faced by teachers to engage classes and issues with access to technology at students' homes.

School activity

Kingsmead Academy, Taunton [U] (31  14 	Kingston Grammar School, Kingston upon Thames (8  7 
Southmoor Academy, Sunderland [WP/U] (31  7 	The Thomas Adams School, Wem [U] (5  25 
Robert May's School, Hook [U] (27  19 	Plumstead Manor School, London [WP] (5  19 
Dame Alice Owen's School, Potters Bar (24  3 	Lady Eleanor Holles School, Hampton (4  14 
The Holmesdale School, Snodland [U] (21  11 	St Dominic's High School, Belfast [WP] (4  7 
St Bartholomew's School, Newbury [U] (20  6 	Gumley House RC Convent School, Isleworth (4  6 
St John Payne Catholic School, Chelmsford [U] (18  5 	The Boulevard Academy, Kingston-upon-Hull [WP] (4  6 
St John Wall Catholic School, Birmingham [WP] (17  63 	St John's Church of England Primary School, Dorking [WP] (4 
Weald of Kent Grammar School, Tonbridge [U] (17  10 	Toot Hill School, Nottingham (3 
Chaulden Junior School, Hemel Hempstead [WP/U] (15  10 	Liverpool College, Liverpool (1  1 
Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh (15  5 	The Gateway Academy, Grays [WP/U] (1 
Cleeve School, Cheltenham [U] (14  5 	Woodhouse College, London (1 
St John Rigby RC Sixth Form College, Wigan (12  8 	
Trinity CE School, Belvedere (11  9 	
Beech Hill Community Primary School, Wigan [WP/U] (10  21 	
Rainham Mark Grammar School, Gillingham [U] (10  1 	
St Bridget's Primary School, Glasgow City [WP] (9  12 	
St Katherine's School, Bristol (9  7 	
South Wilts Grammar School for Girls, Salisbury [U] (8  14 	
Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, Abertawe (8  8 	



Map (above) and table (left) show schools with students who actively participated in the zone.

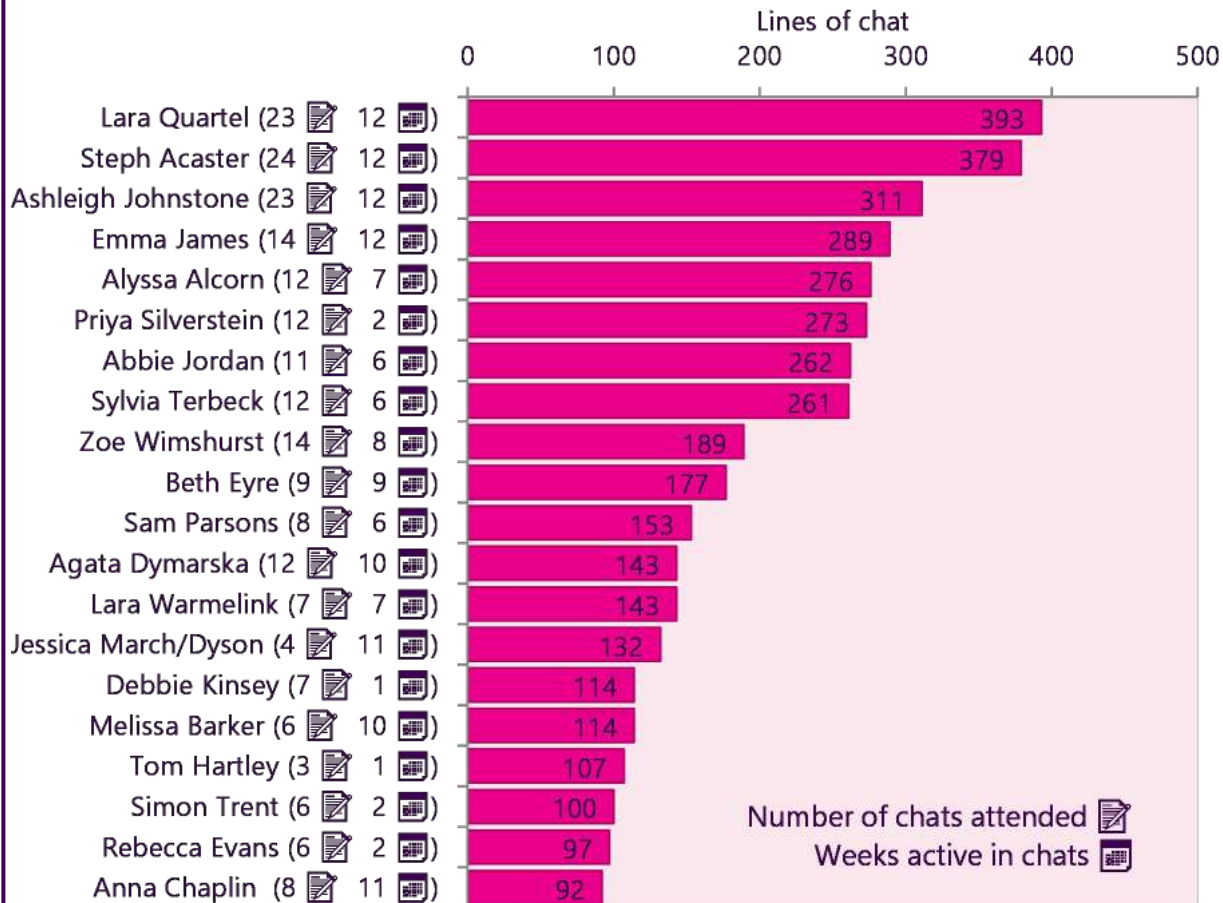
Numbers next to schools represent the number of active users [] and if they took part in a live chat, the average lines of live chat per active user [].

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

41 psychologists were active in the zone, writing 4826 lines of live chat and providing 253 answers to posted questions.

20 most active scientists in live chat



83% of chat lines were written by 20 most active scientists

10 most active scientists in posted answers



63% of answers were written by 10 most active scientists

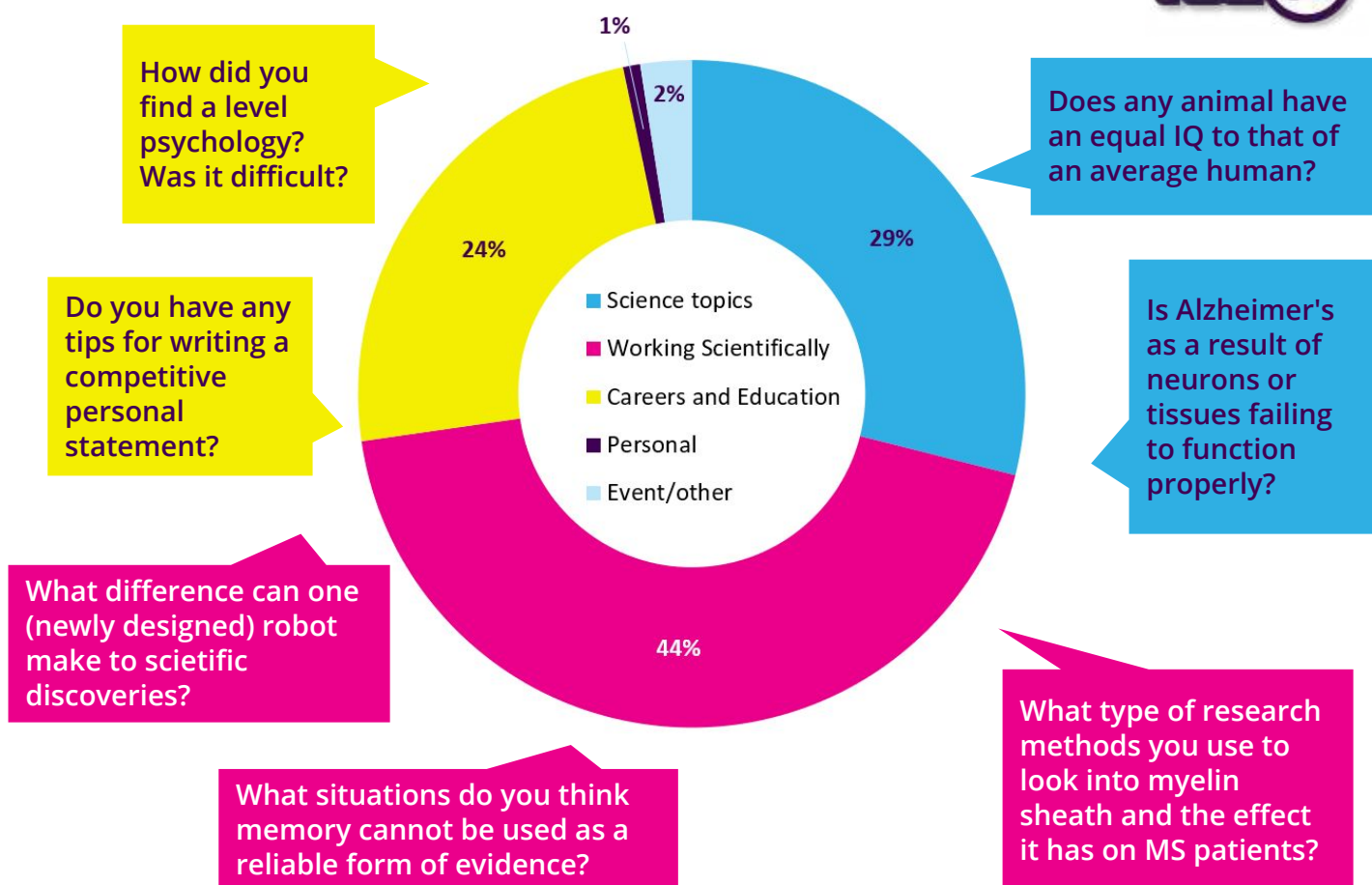
See all the participating psychologists: psychology20.imascientist.org.uk/psychologists/

Popular topics

Frequent words used in live chats by students and psychologists



Question themes and example questions



Examples of good engagement

Within the chats there were discussions about the links between psychology and different STEM disciplines. In this conversation Sylvia explains the use of VR to a student and how psychology and engineering can work together:

Nilomi Does engineering and psychology merge in any areas?

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: yes. i collaborate with lots of engineers. we are looking at using virtual reality

Nilomi @Dr Sylvia Terbeck: that's super interesting! What are you looking to use virtual reality for?

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: thank you :D i was looking at how people make moral judgments. do you know the trolley dilemma?

Nilomi @Dr Sylvia Terbeck: yes I do :)

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: we re-created that in virtual reality. The one about the large man on the bridge. And you know what we found?

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: found that lots of people said that they would not push him, but then they actually did it in the VR :0

Nilomi @Dr Sylvia Terbeck: wow that's really cool!

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: yes, thanks. it shows that people don't always do what they say. so one might say they would donate to charity, but then don't do it really if no one is looking.

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: so you can use VR to look at how people behave in those situations. and that combines engineering and psychology :D

Nilomi @Dr Sylvia Terbeck: thank you!

Dr Sylvia Terbeck @Nilomi: you're welcome :)

There were great exchanges in chats where students and psychologists to share experiences. This conversation about dreams helped to build rapport between the student and Jessica, allowing the student to see psychologists as normal people and contributing to their Science Capital:

Jessica Hi everyone - does anyone have some psychology questions? Or any questions? How have you all been sleeping at the minute?

LilyB @Jessica: I have been having some really vivid dreams at the moment actually.

Jessica @LilyB: More than usual? Hopefully they are nice dreams?

LilyB @Jessica: They differ ahah but i can remember them more than i used to be able to.

Jessica @LilyB: We don't often remember our dreams much, I don't study dreams, but anecdotally, I dream more when I am stressed or overheating! That's just personal and not scientific at all though from my knowledge!

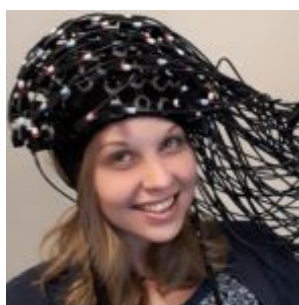
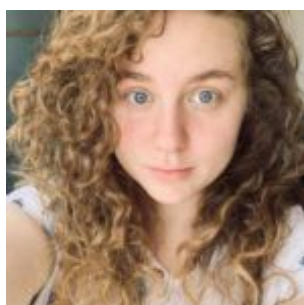
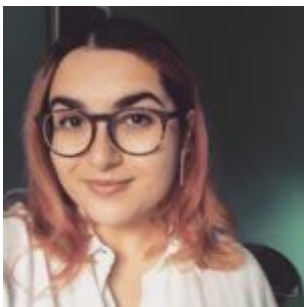
LilyB @Jessica: I've found i have nightmares more when i'm hot!

Jessica @LilyB: Me too! I haven't read much about it, so not sure if it is anything scientific to it, or just our personal experiences - but now I know it's not just me :)

Scientists of the Week

Students voted each week for their favourite psychologist to be named *Psychologist of the Week*.

The 8 *psychologist of the Week* were **Priya Silverstein, Pizza Ka Yee Chow, Zoe Wimshurst, Zoe Haime, Lara Quartel, Amber Cronin, Emma James, and Ashleigh Johnstone**. The overall winner in this zone was **Zoe Haime**.



Feedback from the Psychology Zone

I think a highlight for me was one student asking about the effect of Covid on my research, specifically how stress could play a role in the results. It is something that I would like to now incorporate into my research. -- Lara Quartel, Psychologist



SJR Psychology
@Sjr_Psychology

Thank you to @imascientist for an amazing opportunity for our year 12 students to take part in an insightful discussion with 7 psychologists, as part of their online enrichment. Excellent responses to fantastic questions. @Sjr_Psychology @StJohnRigby

It's so interesting how psychology can be linked to so many careers! -- Student



Ashleigh Johnstone
@_ajohnstone

Today I was part of a @imascientist chat where the teacher asked if there's enough BAME representation in A Level/introductory psychology courses.

A thought-provoking question that's made me carefully consider the introductory psychology course I've just finished teaching.



Ashleigh Johnstone @_ajohnstone 20m

I'll definitely be doing some research and finding ways to include more diversity in my course the next time I run it.

It's also great to see teachers thinking about this kind of thing and looking for ways to change the lack of representation!

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Feedback from across the Stay at home activity

Was just as much a benefit for me as for students. Isolated working from home, the chats were just what I needed to lift my spirits and get excited about science! -- Elena Maters, Scientist



Lucie Evans ▶ I'm a Scientist, Get me out of here
22 mins · 🌐

Just had the most wonderful 40 minutes of live chat with 9 of your scientists and 22 of my year 8 students. The scientists were superb and the students absolutely loved their chat time. They're scrutinising all the answers now and deciding who to vote for! Thank you so much for running this during lockdown, it's really helped to keep them motivated and engaged.



🔄 I'm a Scientist Team Retweeted
 **_DHSPHysics**
@_DHSPHysics

Thank you @imascientist for providing our pupils with the opportunity to talk to scientists today. They thought it was "so cool" and we were very impressed by their questions! 🧠 🗣️ 🧐

1:32 PM · May 27, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Thank you scientists very interesting answers loved this might be a scientist for my job! -- Student

I was just so impressed by what I think is a huge effort by all involved to support and inspire young students (many of whom are struggling to keep motivated during these uncertain times). Much thought and care was clearly given to each answer and my students have all contacted me since to say that they had "the best time!" -- Teacher



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