

September 2020

The Blue Zone ran from the 2nd - 25th September. This Zone was the first of the *I'm a Scientist*, On Demand zones. These zones ran throughout the Autumn 2020 term in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing schools to have flexibility in when and how they took part.

The Blue Zone was a general science zone.

- 30 scientists created profiles in the Zone. 21 of these scientists engaged with students in live chats and Ask.
- Scientists from a broad range of fields and career stages took part. For example, Fatma Salahoglu is a Forensic Scientist working in the pharmaceutical industry, Ashleigh Barron works as a Laser Technician in Glasgow, and Yueng Lenn is a Physics Oceanographer.
- 17 live chats took place during the activity. On average, 3 researchers attended each live chat session.
- 18 posted questions were approved and sent to the researchers who responded with 52 answers.
- 189 students from 9 schools all over the UK logged into the Zone.
- 24% of active students were from widening participation schools, and 42% from underserved schools

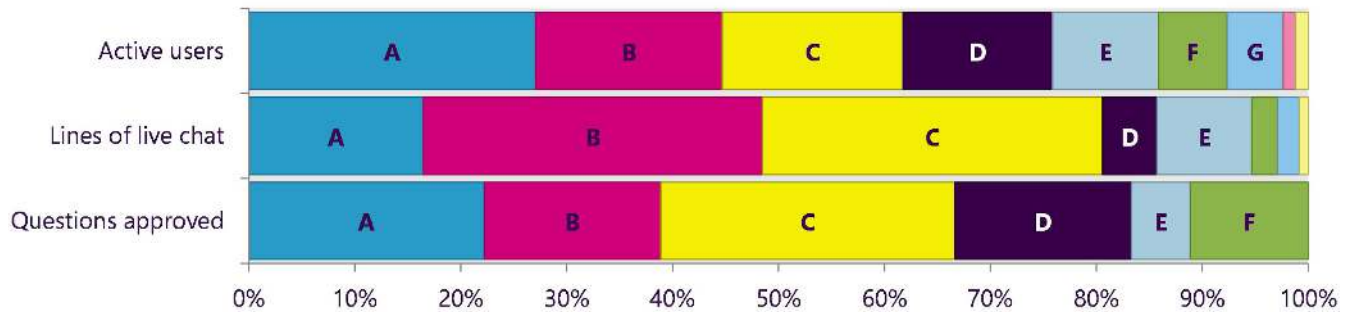
	Blue Zone
Schools	9
Students logged in	189
Students active	90%
Scientists logged in	30
Scientists active	21
Questions asked	22
Questions approved	18
Answers given	52
Scientist comments	11
Student comments	2
Votes	101
Live chats	13
Lines of live chat	4906
Average lines per chat	377

Key activity figures

The Blue Zone was the first Zone in *I'm a Scientist*: On Demand. It ran for the month of September, as schools reopened after the COVID-19 lockdown.

This was the first non Stay at Home megazone, compared to the previous *I'm a Scientist* zones with only 6 scientists. This Zone was quiet, with just over 20% of the chat capacity booked. 70% of the scientists who created profiles took part. The level of engagement by the students logged in was similar to the "typical" *I'm a Scientist* zones.

School activity



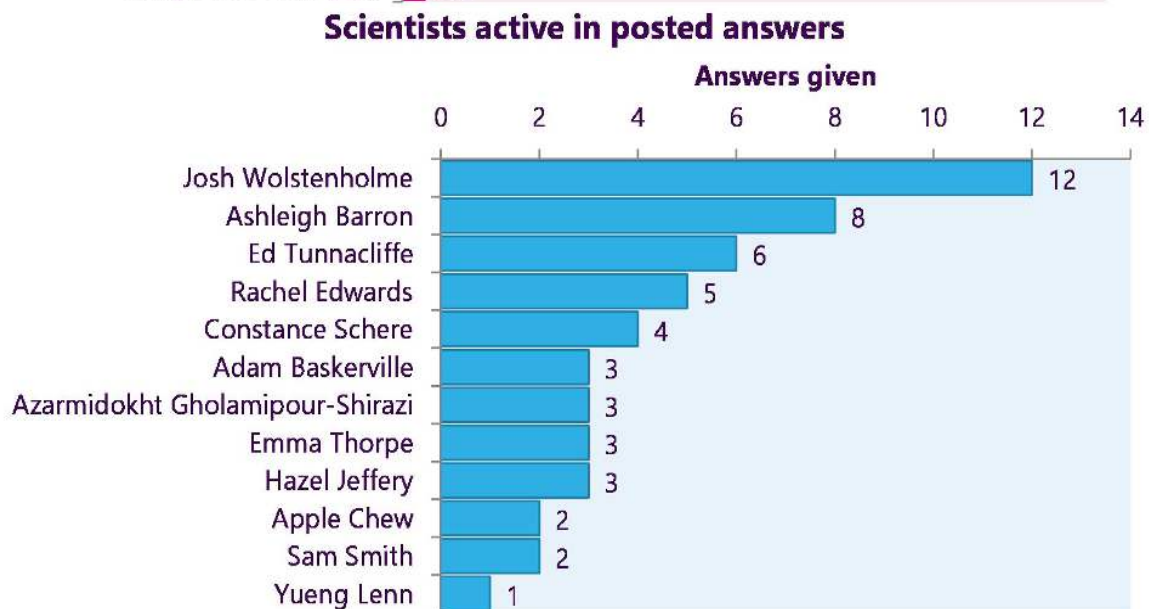
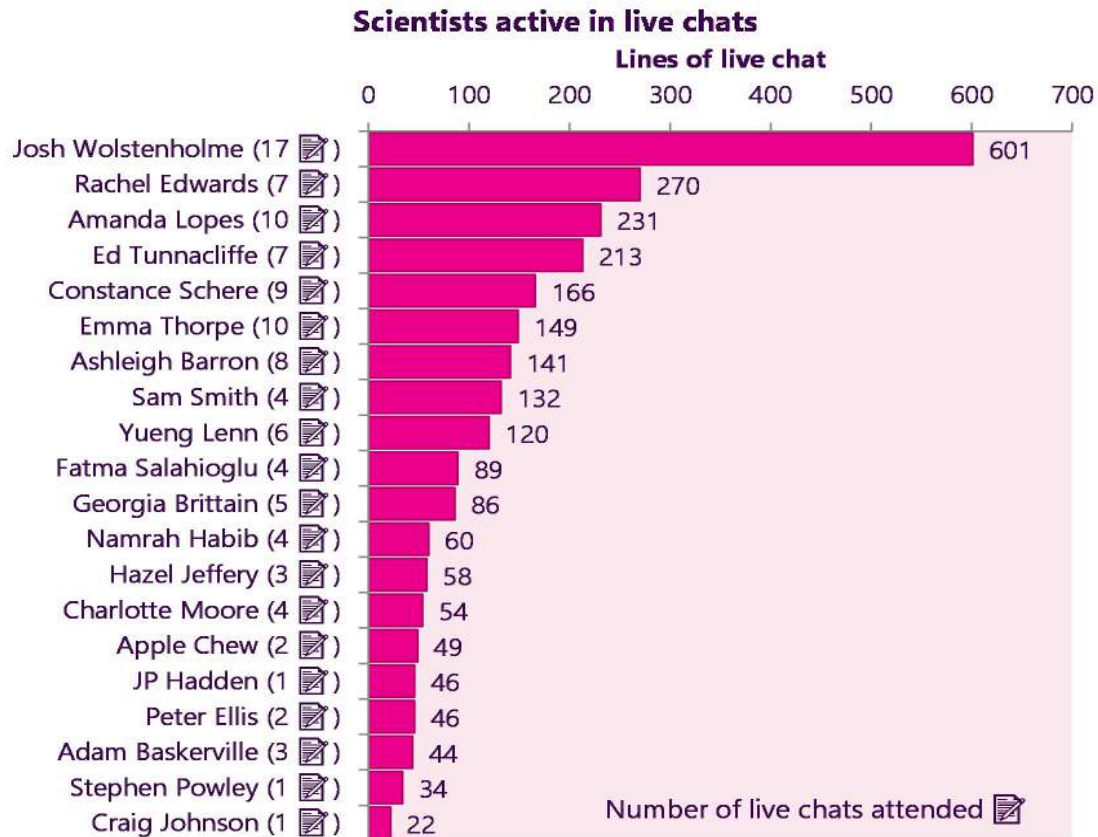
Label	School	Classes
A	Stirling High School, Stirling	3
B	Sandymoor, Runcorn (WP/U)	3
C	St John Bosco RC Primary School, Manchester	1
D	Weston College, Weston-Super-Mare (U)	1
E	Mallaig High School, Highland (U)	1
F	Yavneh College, Borehamwood	1
G	Dagenham Park CofE School, Dagenham (WP)	1
H	Rampton Primary School, Retford	1
I	Coltness High School, North Lanarkshire (WP)	1

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

21 scientists were active in the zone, writing 4906 lines of live chat, and providing 52 answers to posted questions.

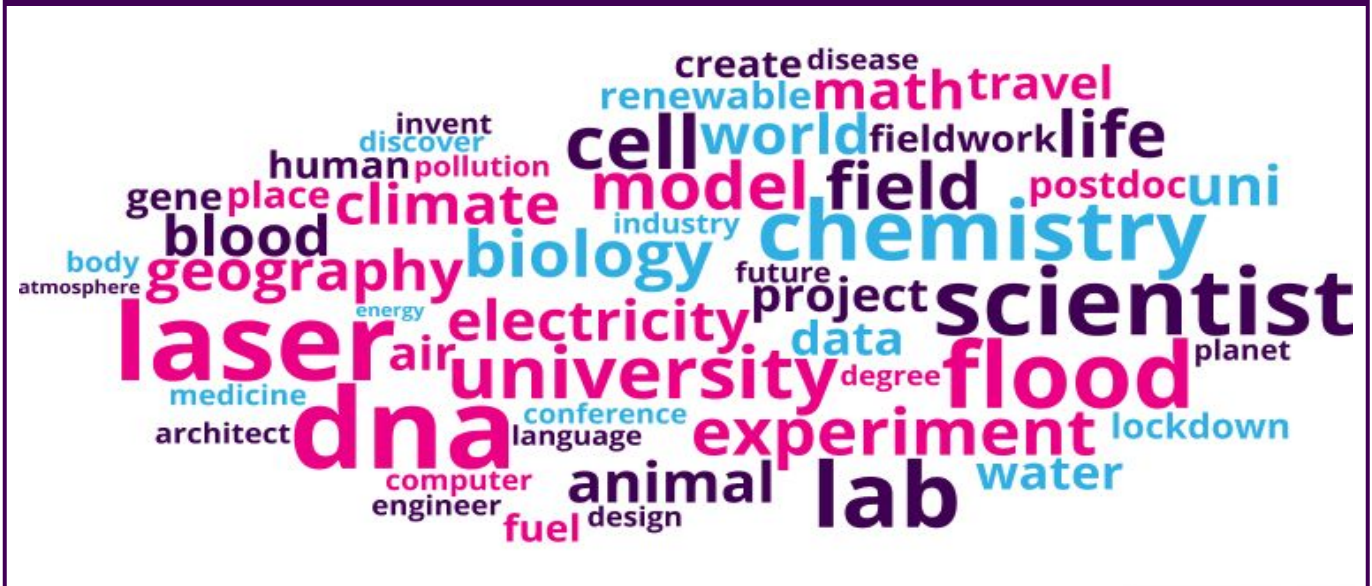
These graphs show the number of lines written by the 20 scientists who took part in live chats, and the number of answers posted by the 12 scientists who answered Ask questions.



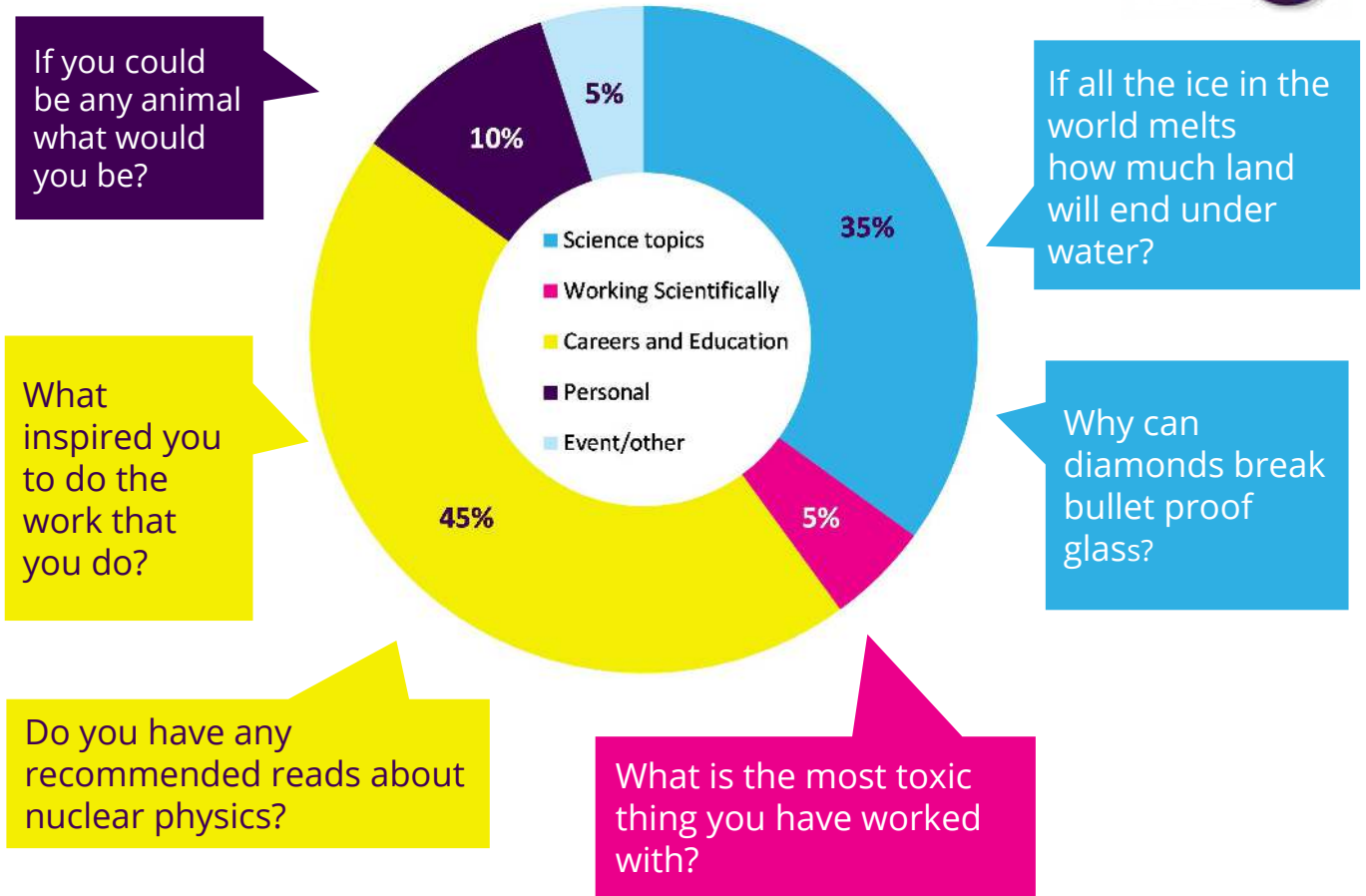
See all the participating scientists: blue20.imascientist.org.uk/scientists/

Popular topics

Words used frequently in live chats by students and scientists



Question themes and example questions



Examples of good engagement

Students discussed careers with the scientists, from the positive steps that they can take to encourage engagement within their schools themselves, to the flexibility of qualifications required to be a scientist.

In this conversation, a student had said they were unsure whether she would be able to pursue a career in science with her grades. The scientists were all very encouraging and explained that their career paths were made up of different subjects, which was clearly appreciated by the student:

Constance @PaigeB: I am also not great with maths! But fortunately I don't have to go further than understanding statistics

Constance @PaigeB: I actually did my undergrad in History, then moved to environmental science and marine conservation biology for my Master's

Rachel @Constance: That's very cool!

Constance @Rachel: Taught me how to write and think critically. I did my BA in the US so I had enough science credits from electives to move into a scientific field for my master's

Rachel @Constance: Ah - that's great :).

PaigeB @Constance: I am glad that i can still do the career i want to do even though i am doing one different A level. Thank you so much

Constance @PaigeB: The system isn't as rigid as it used to be. I know loads of people who have switched fields mid-academic career

Constance @PaigeB: Just make sure you choose a career path you enjoy, that's the most important bit!

PaigeB @Constance and @Rachel: Thank you so much! I am feeling hopeful for the future

The scientists also supported the students interest in science, and advice on how to further the students scientific interests, such as in this discussion about starting a science club at school:

Sam @Niamh T: Have you got a science club at your school? Gives you a chance to have these kind of discussions on a regular basis!

Niamh T @Sam: Unfortnatly not that i know of i just started school a few weeks ago:o

Ed @Niamh T: You could ask to start one!

Sam @Niamh T: Keep an eye out, or if you feel comfortable, starting one is a great option, I ran one for a while and we did some really cool stuff and had great discussions!

Niamh T @Sam: deffinatly will!

Sam @Niamh T: Guest speakers will always be willing to come and talk about stuff, so its a great chance to speak to unis, scientists, the whole range!

Niamh T @Sam: yeah totally!

Scientists of the Week

Students voted each week for their favourite scientist to be named *Scientist of the Week*.

The 3 *Scientists of the Week* were **Josh Wolstenholme**, **Emma Thorpe**, and **Fatma Salahioglu**. The overall winner in this zone was **Josh Wolstenholme**.



Feedback from the Blue Zone

"The *I'm a Scientist* sessions have provided me with the opportunity to discuss my work in a way that I haven't really done before ... If there is anyone out there who is thinking about participating in *I'm a Scientist*, do not hesitate. It is an absolutely amazing experience, and gives you time to step back, and to think about the fundamentals."

**Blue Zone Winner, Josh
Wolstenholme**

"I have been doing outreach for over 10 years now, and finding more difficult to get the time to do it in my current job, so this has been great."

Ashleigh Barron, IASUK scientist

owensj20 The pupils really enjoyed it

"They really enjoyed it! It was a great session as well. The children were so engaged and they really enjoyed talking to real life scientists."

Teacher

"I think this would have been amazing when I was in school."

Georgie Brittain, IASUK scientist

falcones20 @modem: This has been very useful; lots of interesting similarities and differences between workplaces for them to discuss and compare to the school environment.