

## March 2021

The Pink Zone ([pink21.imascientist.org.uk](https://pink21.imascientist.org.uk)) ran from 1 to 26 March 2021 and was partly funded by the **Science and Technologies Facilities Council (STFC)**.

The Zone featured 27 scientists from a broad range of fields. 5 of these were either funded by STFC, or worked at, or used data from, an STFC facility. A further 3 STFC-linked scientists were invited, but were unable to take part on this occasion.

### Key activity figures

	Pink Zone	March 2021 IAS average
Schools	23	22
Students logged in	864	896
Students active	92%	83%
Scientists	27	28
Questions asked	289	458
Questions approved	170	218
Answers given	541	609
Scientist comments	57	68
Student comments	11	12
Live chats	66	56
Lines of live chat	17,451	13,868
Average lines per live chat	264	246
Votes cast	424	429

### Scientists

27 scientists created profiles. They included:

- **Lizzie Pendlington**, Science Communication student at STFC
- **Geraint Evans**, PhD student at the University of Southampton
- **Karen Burstow**, microscopy scientist at Reading Scientific Services Limited

### Students

864 students from 23 schools across the UK logged into the Zone.

63% of active students were from target schools: 50% from underserved schools and 26% from widening participation schools.

### Live chats

66 live chats took place: 60 were school classes booked by teachers and 6 were additional chats, open to all the students.

In a third of live chats (18), teachers asked questions on behalf of their students. Therefore, the number of students reached will be higher by about 350.

On average, 5 scientists attended each live chat.

## School activity

Students from 23 schools across the UK participated in the Zone. In addition to live chats booked by teachers, there were Thursday evening chats for the students and their families.

School	Active users	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Questions approved
Hexham Middle School, Hexham (U)	153	8	1695	11	11
The Becket School, West Bridgford	142	3	1131	8	29
The Richmond upon Thames School, Twickenham	104	5	1107	11	89
Litcham School, King's Lynn (U)	88	5	1003	11	1
St Bridget's Primary School & Nursery Class, Glasgow City (WP)	62	4	863	14	0
Harrow Way Community School, Andover (WP/U)	52	2	336	6	4
Mill O'Forest School, Aberdeenshire (U)	46	1	340	7	30
Orley Farm School, Harrow	39	2	419	11	0
Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School, London (WP)	31	2	434	14	0
The Holmesdale School, Snodland (WP/U)	24	2	237	10	2
Thorpedene Primary School, Southend-on-sea (WP/U)	23	3	432	19	0
Sir Harry Smith Community College, Peterborough (U)	11	1	95	9	2
Ark Elvin Academy, London (WP)	6	1	88	15	0
Furness Primary School, Harlesdon *	5	5	146	29	1
The City of Leicester College, Leicester (WP)	4	1	44	11	0
Northholmes Junior School, Horsham (U) *	3	1	45	15	0
Denbigh Primary School, Luton	1	0	0	0	1
Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Bilston (WP) *	1	3	133	133	0
Kenmont Primary School, London (WP) †	1	4	151	151	0
Alexandra Park Primary School, Stockport (WP) *	0	3	104	104	0
Harrowbarrow School, Callington (U) *	0	1	38	38	0
Orrell Newfold Community Primary School, Wigan (U) *	0	5	153	153	0
St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Aylesford (U) *	0	1	39	39	0

\* In these chats teachers typed questions on behalf of their students.

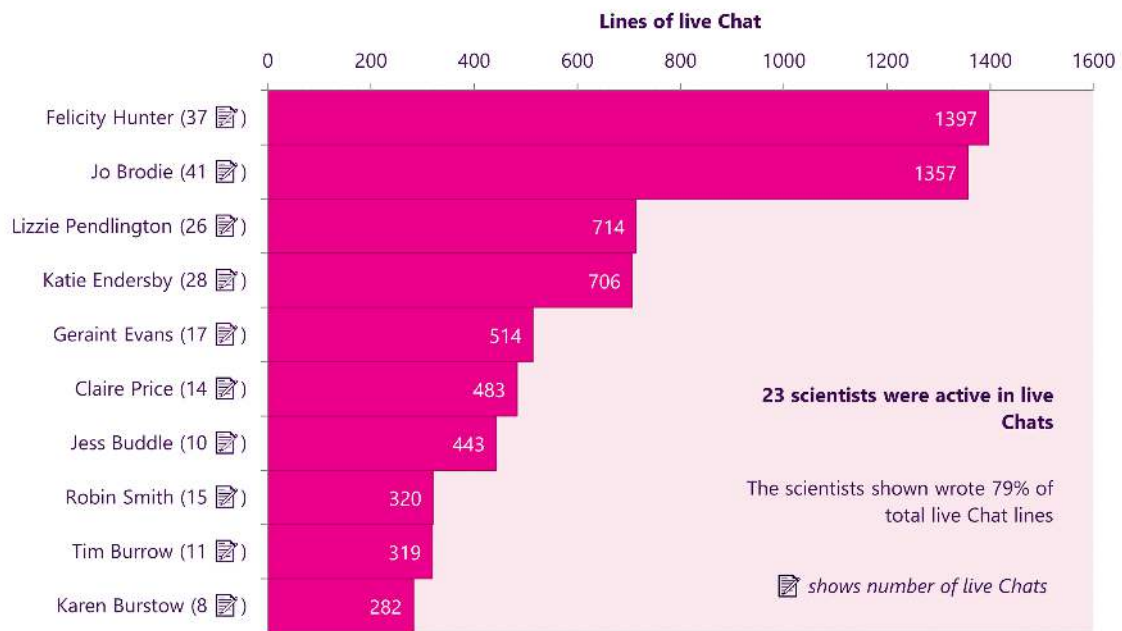
† Students from these schools attended open chats only.

We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups. Find out what we mean by under-served (U) and widening participation (WP) schools, and how you can support us in working with more of these: [about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp](https://about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp)

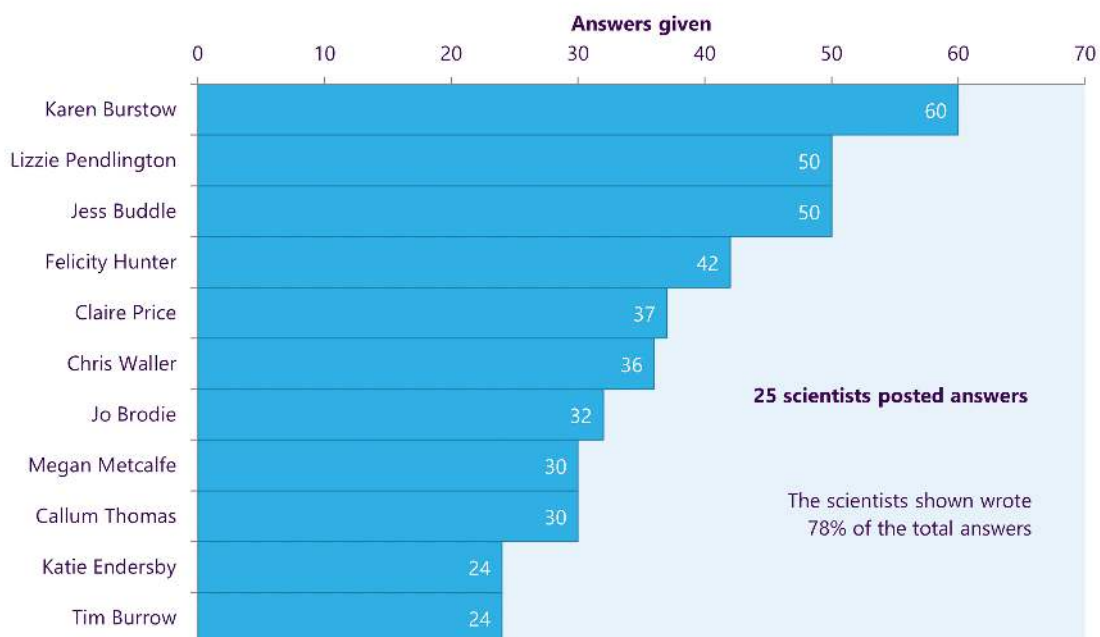
## Scientist activity

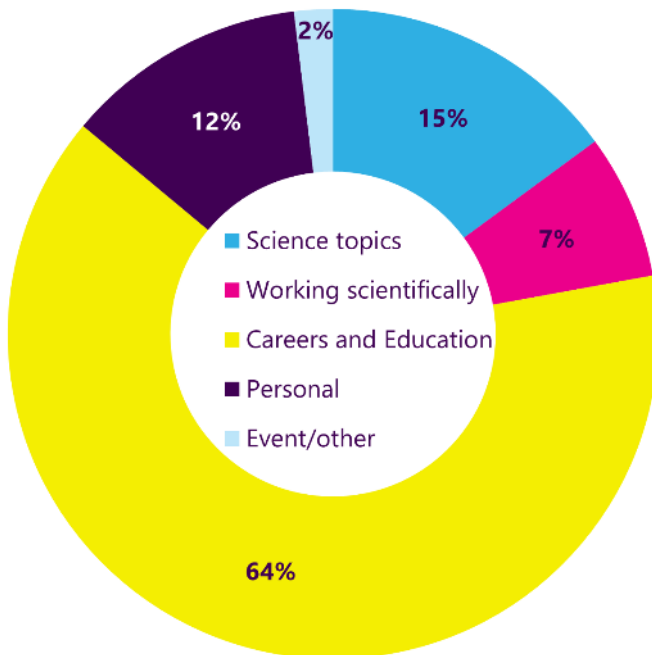
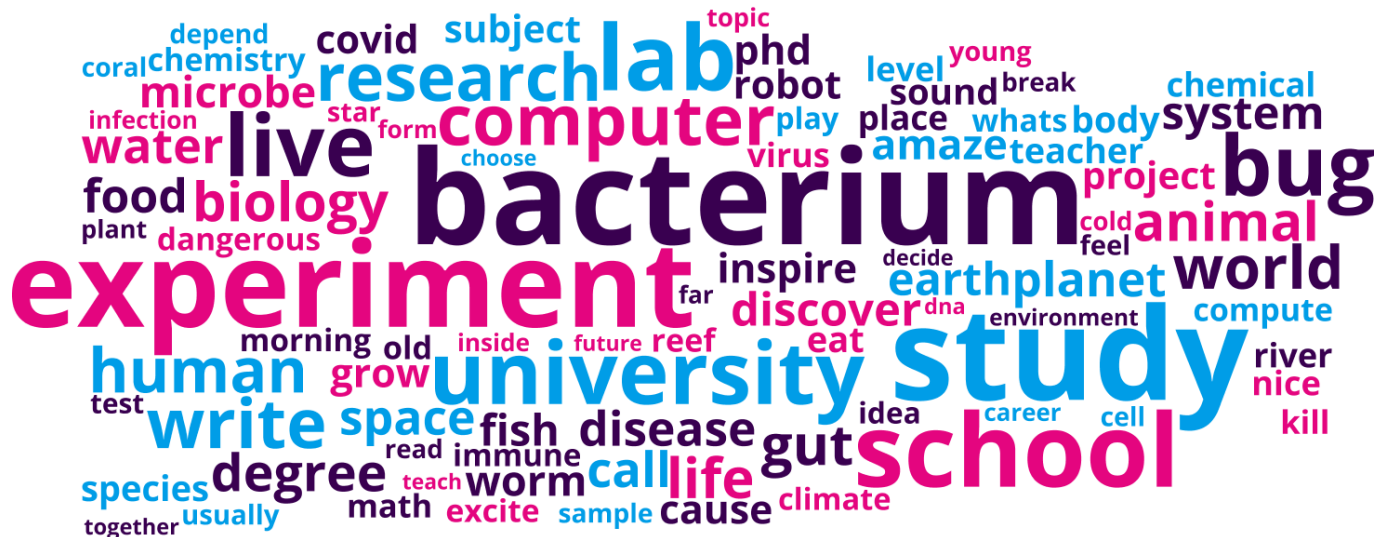
25 of the scientists interacted with students, writing 8,414 lines of live chat, and providing 541 answers to 170 posted questions. See all the scientists at: [pink21.imascientist.org.uk/scientists](http://pink21.imascientist.org.uk/scientists)

### 10 most active scientists in live Chats



### 10 most active scientists in posting answers





What is the best animal that you have ever seen

## Good engagement

Students learnt that science is about the things we don't know, and there is still plenty to find out.

**Student:** What is one thing you cannot figure out???

**Claire (scientist):** So microbes make something called omega hydroxy fatty acids and I can't really understand the importance of them. They seem to play a small role, but why would the microbe have so many enzymes that make them?! It makes no sense

**Student:** i 100% do not understand all that but cool!

**Claire:** you've got that it is cool so it is fine by me! Fatty acids are the chemicals that make fat in our body. Enzymes can add an oxygen to them, but why is this so important! I have no idea!

This student learnt that science plays a role in other jobs too:

**Student:** is being a crime investigator link in with being a scientist / [ since you take samples, observe the samples e.t.c ]

**Jo (scientist):** Very much so, Forensic Science is all about correctly gathering, handling and analysing crime samples and sharing the findings to be used in Court. Relevant subjects would be chemistry and biology in particular.

**Student:** ohhhh - thats so cool ! i always thought forensic science was different to biology /chemistry e.t.c . but they are actually really similar !

**Jo:** Very similar, and forensic scientists will also learn (while working) about the legal system, because they have to work within it. A very important job.

**Student 1:** do you like football if you do what team do you support

## Student 2: leeds suck

[illegible]

**Student 2:** england leister scotland rangers

**Geraint (scientist):** I'm more of a rugby fan myself...

**Jo:** I'm not a fan of football but the nearest team to where I live is Charlton Athletic (I live in Blackheath, in London's South East).

**Student:** what is the hardest question you've ever being asked

Eg facial recognition technology means the police might be able to spot a criminal's face in a crowd - which is generally a good thing, BUT, everybody else is being scanned too and this can reduce their privacy.



## Scientist winners

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

The first and third Scientists of the Week were:

- **Katie Endersby**, life sciences PhD student at the University of Warwick
- **Jo Brodie**, Public Engagement Coordinator at Queen Mary University of London



The second scientist of the week was also crowned Zone winner, with the most votes at the end of the Zone:

- **Felicity Hunter**, medical science PhD student at the University of Manchester

As Zone winner, they receive £500 to spend on further public engagement projects.



"I'm [...] very grateful to the awesome *I'm a Scientist* team for organising and managing the chats as well as to STFC for funding the Pink Zone.

Engaging with [students] has been a very rewarding experience for me. It has reminded me how much I love being a research scientist and how important my work is. It has also helped me to realise how much I enjoy interacting with young people.

I am motivated to use the generous prize money to continue participating in STEM outreach activities and raising awareness about our fantastic gut microbes and all the amazing things they do for our health."

You can read their full statement at

[pink21.imascientist.org.uk/2021/03/30/a-thank-you-from-your-winner](https://pink21.imascientist.org.uk/2021/03/30/a-thank-you-from-your-winner)

## Feedback

Thank you everyone! We have really enjoyed asking questions - thank you for taking time out of your day to answer them!

**Teacher**

thank you for all your answers, i really enjoyed this!

**Student**

Really love the scheme, been good fun, no pressure, and easy to work into my routine! [The] Pink Zone has been great fun, and [I've] met some really enthusiastic people too! Thank you for the opportunity.

**Tim** (scientist)

Thank you so much all scientists, my students are truly inspired.

**Teacher**



**katie endersby**

@\_katieendersby

I would really recommend [@imascientist](#) to any other PhDs that want to get some great science questions thrown their way and have a chat with students about their research! Plus, I was told reliably that my science was interesting AND cool, who knew?!

#IASUK 🧐 🧠 📧