

April 2021

The Red Zone (red21.imascientist.org.uk) ran for 3 weeks, from 12 to 30 April 2021.

The activity was 1 week shorter than a typical *I'm a Scientist, Get me out of here* Zone, due to the Easter holidays.

The Zone was general science-themed, featuring 28 scientists working across the UK, in a broad range of fields.

Key activity figures

Schools	13
Students logged in	725
Students active	92%
Scientists	28
Questions asked	333
Questions approved	187
Answers given	551
Scientist comments	150
Student comments	5
Live chats	34
Lines of live chat	13,570
Average lines per live chat	400
Votes cast	501

Scientists

28 scientists created a profile in the Zone.

You can see who took part at red21.imascientist.org.uk/scientists

Students

725 students from 13 schools across the UK logged into the Zone.

87% of active students were from target schools: 69% from underserved schools and 37% from widening participation schools.

Live chats

33 live chats took place during the activity: 31 were school classes booked by teachers and 2 were additional evening chats, open to all the students.

On average, 6 scientists attended each live chat.

School activity

Students from 13 schools across the UK participated in the Zone. In addition to live chats booked by teachers, there were 2 Thursday evening chats for the students and their families.

School	Active users	Chats attended	Lines of chat		Questions approved	Votes
			(total)	(per user)		
Stranraer Academy, Dumfries & Galloway (U)	129	8	886	7	8	79
The Arnewood School, New Milton (U)	102	6	1514	15	65	95
Litcham School, King's Lynn (U)	72	3	680	9	1	63
Denbigh Primary School, Luton (WP/U)	68	3	314	5	9	60
Cathedral Academy, Wakefield (WP)	54	3	535	10	0	36
Hassenbrook Academy, Stanford-le-Hope (WP/U)	54	2	376	7	0	41
St Bridget's Primary School, Glasgow City (WP)	53	2	829	16	1	22
Denny High School, Falkirk	53	3	388	7	6	37
Allerton High School, Leeds	31	1	376	12	87	26
Aylesbury High School, Aylesbury (U)	30	1	462	15	9	29
Forster Park Primary School, London (WP)	14	1	279	20	1	13
Sir Harry Smith Community College, Peterborough (U)	6	1	71	12	0	0
[Redacted School], London (WP) †	1	2	104	104	0	0

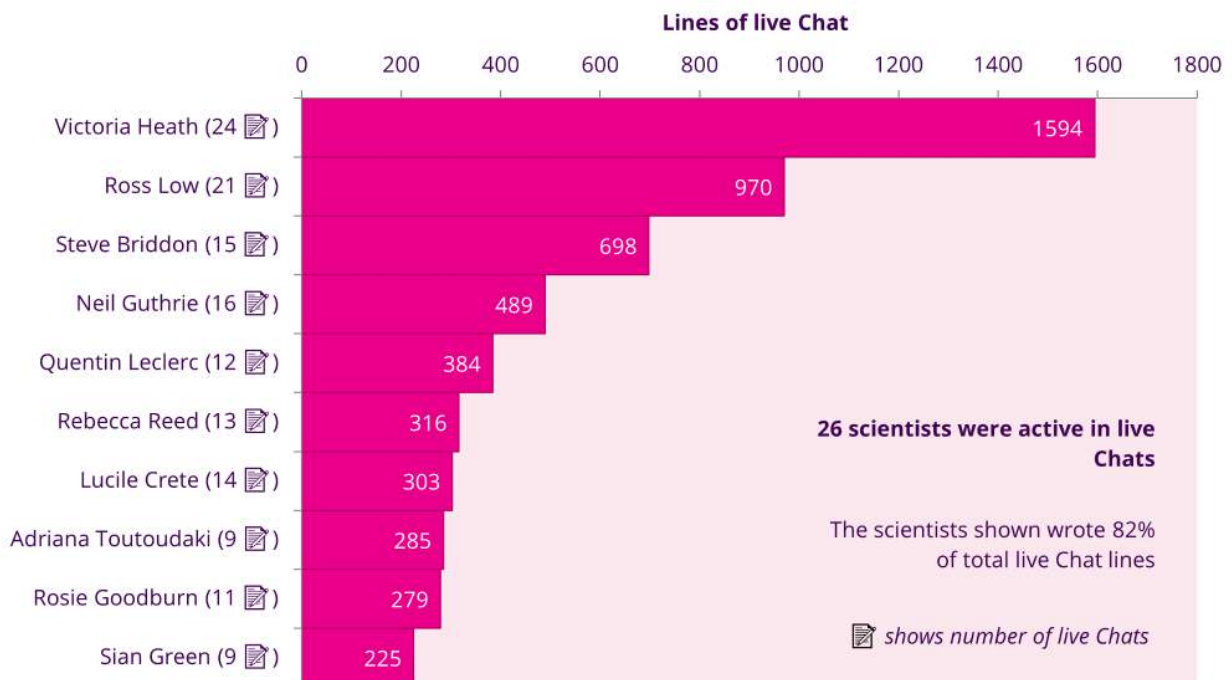
† One student from this school attended the Thursday evening chats. There was no class chat booked by a teacher. The name of the school has been removed for safeguarding purposes.

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

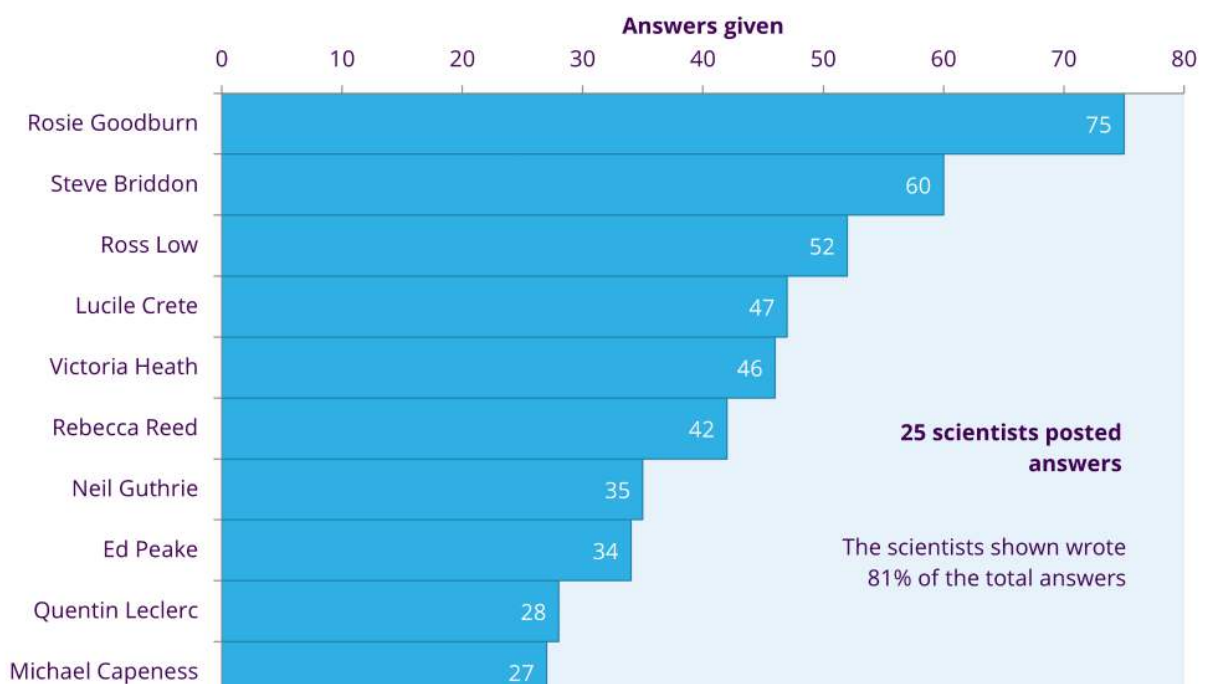
Scientist activity

During the Zone the scientists interacted with students by writing 6,756 lines of live chat, and providing 551 answers to 187 posted questions.

10 most active scientists in live Chats



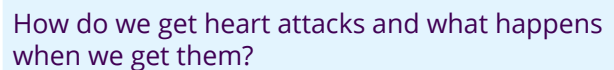
10 most active scientists in posting answers



The word cloud below demonstrates what students and scientists talked about in live chats. The bigger the word, the more frequently it was used.



The chart below shows a breakdown of questions students sent to the scientists. Examples are coloured by category.



is the y chromosome actually going extinct?

Do you think some animals that are protected shouldn't be?

How often do people get the wrong diagnosis and how serious can it be if people get the wrong diagnosis?

What inspired you to choose this career and what do you enjoy about it?

What would you say to someone who wants to be an archaeologist when they grow up?

If you could have any one of your own questions about science answered then what would it be?

How long did your 'Animal Crossing' island take to build?

Good engagement

Students were interested in what the scientists do outside of work. Understanding that scientists are “regular people” helps students relate to them.

Dylan (Student): What is your favourite thing to do when you are not doing science?

Quentin (Scientist): My biggest hobby is video games! I have a nintendo switch, and I spend quite a lot of time on it haha

Kaileb123 (Student): what's your favourite video game

Quentin: Currently, I'm spending a looooooot of time playing a game called Monster Hunter Rise, have you heard about it? Otherwise, I'm always happy to play some Mario Kart!

Kaileb123: cool

Lisa (Scientist): Being at home with my family and playing with my young son. :)

Sian (Scientist): I like cooking and baking cake, and I like to travel (when we are not in a pandemic!) and to go hiking and bouldering

Discussing shared interests builds connection between the students and scientists. This helps students feel more comfortable and confident picturing themselves in science-related roles.

Abi (Student): who's your favourite avenger

Ross (Scientist): Iron man!! you?

Abi: Captain america or Balck widow

Ross: they are very different!!

Abi: yes, they are

Ross: why those two?


Abi: Captain America because he always tried to do what's right even if it didn't benefit him, he also cared and protected his friend even though he was technically still an assassin

Ross: the best of best friends!!

Even if that connection is based on a fear of spiders...

Alana (Student): what inspired you to study animals

Sian (Scientist): Even when I was little I loved animals, but I also find them so interesting to watch. They have so many personalities and little behaviours, and there is so much we still don't really understand about many animals

Chloe (Student): I love animals to I'm just a little bit afraid of spiders 

Sian: I don't like admitting it, but I'm a little bit afraid of spiders too. It's annoying because I know I shouldn't be but I can't help it!

Chloe: I can't help it either they just make me a bit afraid to see and the fact they can be so fast sometimes doesn't help ! Although I do try to put my fear aside and get over it but it is just a bit creepy. I hate to admit it to because it sounds a little bit silly sometimes

Sian: Sometimes you can't help it! I am getting better. I don't mind them outside, and I do think they are interesting. I just don't want them on me, or to be surprised by one

Chloe: yeah! They are quite interesting and their are so many different types that makes them more interesting to but I wouldn't like to have any on me at all 😊

The scientists' honest answers in this exchange go towards tackling the misconception that scientists are a super-smart elite. Understanding that it's possible to become a scientist even if the school experience is a struggle will be a powerful message for some students.

sandra (Student): did you like school ?

Kip (Scientist): Honestly? No.

Rosie (Scientist): I preferred university!

Carmen (Scientist): Not really, but maybe that is to do with growing up while being there.

Sian (Scientist): No, not until I went to college when I was 17

Rebecca (Scientist): Not really, not until around 6th form I think

Adriana (Scientist): I enjoyed school but only specific subjects. I went to sports school so I trained playing basketball during school three times a week

Scientist winners

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

The first Scientist of the Week was Angela Mwape, second year PhD student researching antibiotic resistance, at the University of Warwick.



The second Scientist of the Week was also the overall winner, with the most votes at the end of the Zone: Kip Heath, healthcare scientist in the NHS.

As Zone winner, Kip received £500 to spend on further public engagement projects.

Here's what they said about their victory, and what they'll spend the prize money on:



"It was an incredible experience and I'm really grateful for having had the chance to take part. My fellow scientists in the Zone were all wonderful people that I am glad to have had the chance to work alongside.

The last year has been really difficult for most people, and that has certainly been the case for NHS staff. I am really glad that I had support from my team to take some time and share the important work of NHS healthcare scientists with you all, and hopefully given at least one or two students a new career idea.

I'm going to use the prize money to support the work I do in schools. It will let me buy some pieces of equipment that I can take into schools that schools wouldn't normally be able to afford."

You can read Kip's full statement at red21.imascientist.org.uk/2021/05/04/a-thank-you-from-your-winner

Feedback

Once again we have another stage of students who love taking part in *I'm a Scientist*! They really look forward to the live chats and I'm always impressed with the standard of questions they ask. One part to highlight is the range of experiences and roles that the scientists bring to the discussion - there's something to interest and excite all of the students. - **Teacher**

Something unexpected was that this experience gave me a confidence boost in talking about my work with my colleagues and supervisors.

Rosie Goodburn (scientist)

Thanks to this chat im now thinking about being an archaeologist or a vet!

Student



Denny High STEM

@DennyHighSTEM

Had a fabby time again with @imascientist - our S2's were amazed by the idea that scientists are real people, just like them!
#PrideinDennyHigh #STEMforall



Steve Briddon 

@Hebdomadian

Can't tell you how much of a buzz the @imascientist chats have been the last 10 days. They are SO fun and frantic (and my typing has been sooo embarrassing) - but the Qs are awesome - as are the other scientists. Favourite today: Could we create a glow-in-the-dark human?
#IASUK

An amazing resource with such enthusiastic scientists.

Teacher

I both found it more relaxing [compared to other public engagement activities], it was easier to set up, and not having to travel made the events all the simpler to take part in. The fact that it's done at your own pace [allows] you to fit it around working schedules and experiments.

Michael Capeness (scientist)

you have inspired me to hopefully become a scientist thank you so much ☺

Student

Excellent opportunity to chat to those who are changing the world we live in. Pupils really enjoyed chatting to the scientists about their work but also about their favourite movies!

Teacher

I'm a Scientist was my first form of public engagement. I found it a really nice introduction to public engagement and had a fun time talking with the students.

Scientist

thank you for answering all of my questions and given me an insight into your work and what you do

Student



@forsterparksch

@Forsterparksch

This afternoon, Chaffinch class are live chatting with scientists across the UK with @imascientist . We are really interested by all of the scientists responses and are amazed by their range of experiences! #inspiration #primaryscience #sciencecaptial #TeamY4

