

November 2021

The Psychology Zone (<https://psychologyn21.imascientist.org.uk/>) ran from 1 to 26 November and was funded by the **British Psychological Society**, featuring psychologists from a wide variety of careers in psychology.

Throughout November, Covid-19 cases in schools remained at an all time high. This meant there was less activity within the Zone than expected.

Key activity figures

	Zone	November 2021 average
Schools	11	12
Students logged in	527	486
Students active	90%	87%
Psychologists	26	31
Questions asked	83	91
Questions approved	68	70
Answers given	156	264
Psychologist comments	13	19
Live chats	30	27
Lines of live chat	6,510	7,596
Average lines per live chat	217	288
Votes cast	277	213

Psychologists

26 psychologists created a profile in the Zone.

You can see who took part at

<https://psychologyn21.imascientist.org.uk/psychologists/>

The winning psychologist with the most votes from students was **Alex Baxendale**, PhD student at Bangor University.

Students

527 students from 11 schools across the UK logged into the Zone.

46% of active students were from target schools: 46% from underserved schools and 6% from widening participation schools.

Live chats

30 live chats booked by teachers for school classes took place during the activity. Additionally, there were 2 chats scheduled, open to all the students.

An additional 9 live chats were booked: 8 were cancelled and in one the school was unable to attend without cancelling

There was one live chat where teachers asked questions on behalf of their students. It is also common for students to share login details or computers during live chats. Therefore, the number of students reached will be higher.

School activity

Students from 11 schools across the UK participated in the Zone. In addition to live chats booked by teachers, there were two Thursday evening chats scheduled for the students and their families.

School	WP/U status	Active users	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Questions approved	Votes
Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, Leeds	-	245	12	1,395	6	15	135
Littleover Community School, Derby	U	59	3	471	8	1	62
The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe	U	43	4	293	7	34	30
Cleeve School, Cheltenham	U	42	3	166	4	9	29
Burford School, Burford	U	36	2	196	5	0	0
Cecil Jones Academy, Southend-on-Sea	WP/U	16	1	92	6	0	0
The Manor Academy, Mansfield	WP/U	14	1	149	11	2	9
Aylesbury High School, Aylesbury	U	13	1	20	2	0	12
Winterbourne Academy, Bristol	-	12	1	44	4	6	0
Teignmouth Community School, Teignmouth	U	3	1	43	1	0	0
The Academy at Shotton Hall, Peterlee	WP	1	1	47	47	0	0

* In these chats teachers typed questions on behalf of their students, with the chat displayed on a screen.

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

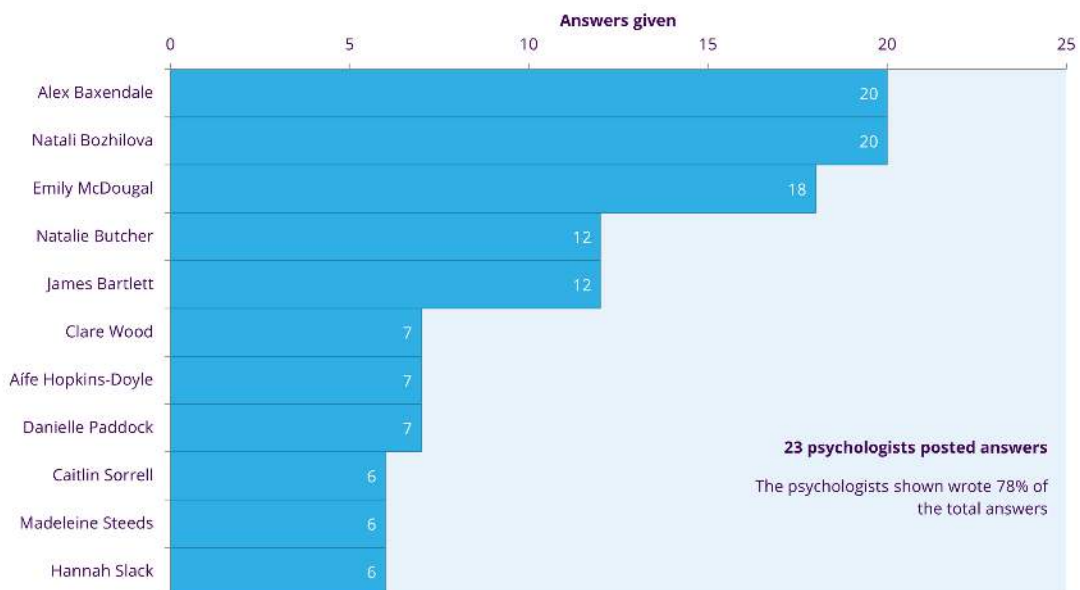
Psychologist activity

During the Zone the psychologists interacted with students by writing 3,594 lines of live chat, and providing 156 answers to 68 posted questions. On average, 6 psychologists attended each live chat.

10 most active psychologists in live Chats



10 most active psychologists in posting answers



Topic	Percentage
Science topics	29%
Working scientifically	33%
Careers and Education	29%
Personal	8%
Event/other	1%

Do you believe in free will?

Good engagement

Subject specific questions can help generate interest and knowledge about the scientific field.

Student 1: Do you do experiments on animals/people?

Birsu (scientist): I do experiments with young children (around 3 to 7). They are amazing to work with and so much fun!

Student 1: That sounds interesting! What is the most interesting thing you've discovered from an experiment?

Birsu (scientist): Everything they do can be quite surprising and interesting. I research children's creativity and got them to tell stories and do drawing. It was amazing how talented and creative young children were. They could put random pictures together and create a story, or complete an incomplete drawing.

Student 1: Would you say that social media has a large impact on a teenager's sense of agency?

Hannah (scientist): Great question! Yes I would say so, E.g. someone may see someone else post about an achievement online and that may make them reevaluate their own ability to achieve the same thing. They might then feel a greater sense of agency. Our sense of agency at the conscious level is made up of our thoughts, beliefs and previous experiences. I mainly look at sense of agency at the unconscious level though.

Student 1: What aspects make up our unconscious sense of agency?

Hannah (scientist): Essentially, when we plan to make an action, our brain makes a prediction about what it expects to see. After the actions, has happened, it then compares what it expected to happen vs what actually happened. If there is a match, then we experience a sense of agency. It is that little buzz feeling that says "I did that! I made that happen!"

And if there wasn't a match, we wouldn't experience an unconscious sense of agency. That is when our conscious sense of agency would kick in and we'd start thinking about who could have caused what we saw happen if it wasn't us!

Information on the scientists careers can provide insight into how variable careers can be and what students may need to do to get there.

Student 1: Did you always plan on studying psychology at university?

Danielle (scientist): No! When I started my A-levels I wanted to go to university to study dance - I soon realised this was more of a hobby for me though

Student 1: Ok thanks haha

Student 1: What advice would you give A-level psychology students?

Alex (scientist): Be patient with yourself, learning is all about making mistakes and figuring out what to do differently next time. Let yourself make those errors, and forgive yourself for not getting things right the first time

Nicola (scientist): You have to know sooo much detail for A Level psychology - try not to stress! As long as you know the general details, don't stress about minor things (you aren't expected to know it all off by heart when you're working as a psychologist!!)

Connecting with scientists over shared interest and learning that they are "regular people" can help students relate to them. This makes it easier for students to see themselves in science-related careers.

Student 1: What was your least favourite subject in school?

Alex (scientist): I was really bad at Music, so I'd say that was definitely my least favourite

Danielle (scientist): I'd probably say PE. I really disliked it. I do really enjoy exercise now though!

Nicola (scientist): Maths!!

Student 1: mine too!

Nicola (scientist): You can still do psychology even if maths isn't your best/favourite subject - psychology involves some statistics but I've found that totally different to school maths!

Psychologist of the Week

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

The Psychologists of the Week were:



Caitlin Sorrell, PhD student at Nottingham University and Advice Worker at NNRF



Hannah Slack, Research Psychologist and PhD student at Nottingham University



Danielle Paddock, Postgraduate Researcher at York St. John University

Psychologist Winner

The overall winner, with the most votes at the end of the Zone was:

- **Alex Baxendale**, PhD student at Bangor University.

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



"We're all a load of regular people just like you! I know that I have learned a lot from talking with you all, with some absolutely fantastic questions that made me really think about what it is I actually do and want to achieve with my work and my life. Some questions I even avoided asking myself, like whether I believe in free will, or what my favourite cereal brand is."

You can read their full statement at <https://ias.im/443.6417>

Feedback

It was interesting. We study psychology, but to actually speak to them in the Chats was really good!

Student



Nicola O'Donnell

@nicolaod_

Loved taking part in my first [@imascientist](#) event this morning - such a fab initiative to introduce school students to the potential of different careers in psychology...I wish I had had access to something similar when I was at school! [@BPSOfficial](#) [#imascientistgetmeoutofhere](#)



Danielle Paddock

@daniellepad_25

Just participated in my first [@imascientist](#) chat today. Absolutely loved it - what a great initiative to inspire young people to potentially consider a career in Psychology. Role on the next one. [@BPSOfficial](#)

I wanted to say a big thank you to the psychologists who took part in the live chat I held earlier. The student feedback was very positive and they hope that there will be further opportunities to chat to psychologists later in the year. Thanks.

Teacher

It's interesting to hear what everyone is researching and how they got there. It's inspiring.

Student

