March 2022

The Psychology Zone (psychologym22.imascientist.org.uk) ran from 7 March to 1 April and was funded by **The British Psychological Society**. The Zone featured psychologists working in a variety of roles providing students with a great insight into different careers.

Towards the end of the Zone, schools experienced staff shortages due to doubling numbers of Covid-19 cases. This caused disruption to the activity and a high number of unattended Chats.

Key activity figures

	Zone	March 2022 average
Schools	12	26
Students logged in	589	1,040
Students active	74%	73%
Psychologists	15	33
Questions asked	134	377
Questions approved	61	123
Questions duplicated	55	202
Answers given	274	413
Live Chats requested	49	74
Live Chats taken place	29	50
Lines of live Chat	8,805	14,284
Average lines per live Chat	294	318
Votes cast	177	359

Psychologists

14 psychologists created a profile in the Zone.

You can see who took part at psychologym22.imascientist.org.uk/scientists

The winning psychologist with the most votes from students was **Reece Bush-Evans**, Postdoctoral Researcher at Bournemouth University.

Students

589 students from 12 schools across the UK logged into the Zone.

92% of active students were from priority schools: 77% from underserved schools and 52% from widening participation schools.

Live Chats

49 live Chats were requested throughout the Zone with an additional 4 evening Chats available to all students.

29 live Chats were booked by teachers.

Out of the remaining live Chats, 13 were cancelled and in 7 the school did not attend and did not give notice.

It is also common for students to share login details or computers during live Chats. Therefore, the number of students reached will be higher.

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School activity

Students from 13 schools across the UK participated in the Zone. In addition to live Chats booked by teachers, there were 4 evening Chats for the students and their families.

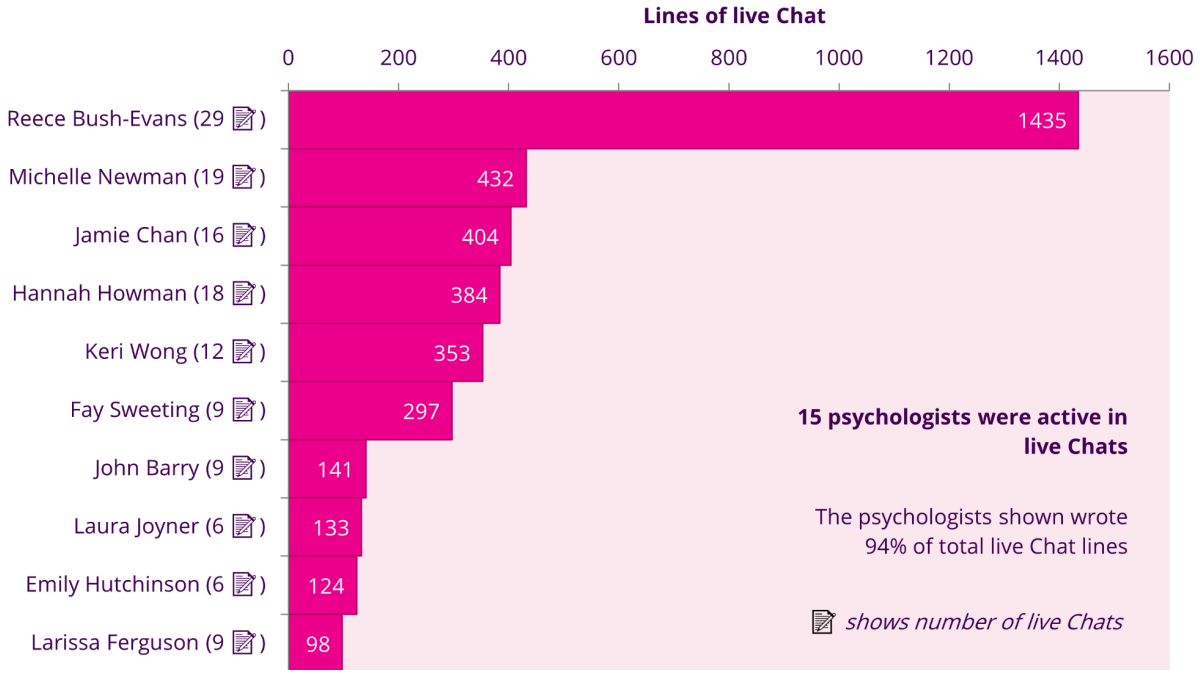
School	Active users	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Questions approved	Votes
Furness Academy, Barrow-in-Furness (WP/U)	119	6	1,199	10	6	66
Valley Park School, Maidstone (U)	90	5	680	8	4	1
Westquarter Primary School, Falkirk (WP)	47	3	529	11	41	40
Winterbourne Academy, Bristol	38	2	271	7	4	36
Great Baddow High School, Chelmsford (U)	35	3	261	8	0	0
Carluke High School, South Lanarkshire (WP/U)	28	2	351	13	3	18
Sir Herbert Leon Academy, Milton Keynes (WP)	21	1	198	9	0	0
All Saints Catholic Voluntary Academy, Mansfield (U)	20	2	129	7	0	12
Ridgeway Academy, Welwyn Garden City (WP/U)	20	1	199	10	0	0
Priestley College, Warrington (U)	13	1	65	5	0	1
Ormskirk School, Ormskirk (U)	12	2	91	8	3	0
Salisbury Sixth Form College, Salisbury (U)	8	1	47	6	0	3

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

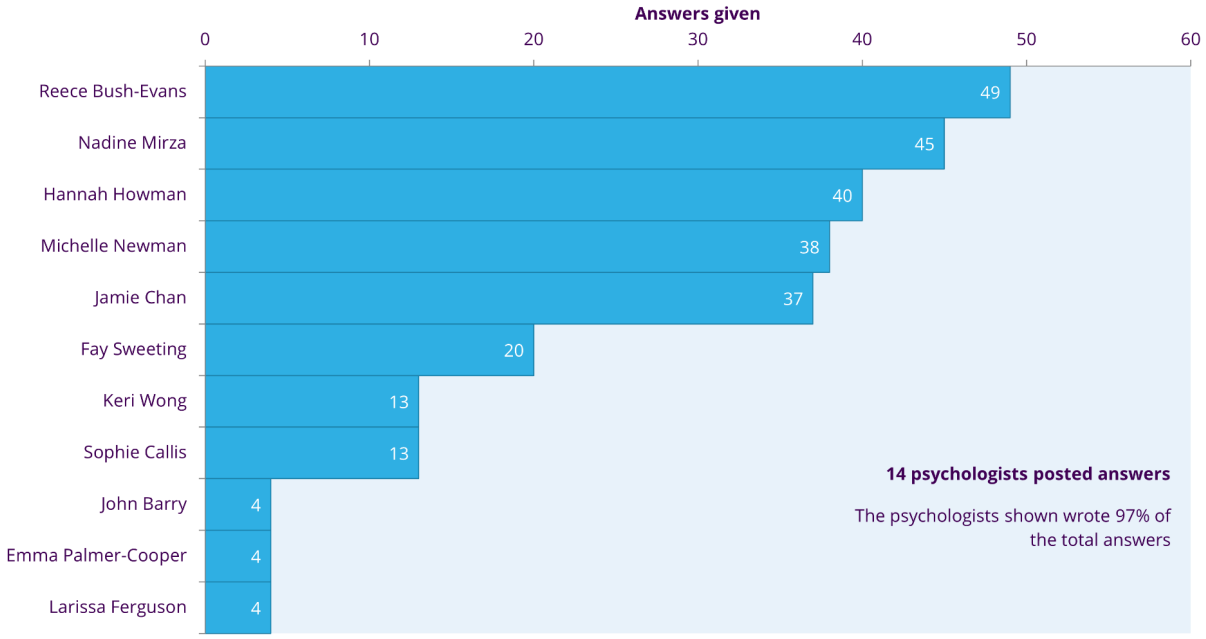
Psychologist activity

During the Zone the psychologists interacted with students by writing 4,044 lines of live Chat, and providing 274 answers to 61 posted questions. On average, 4 psychologists attended each live Chat.

10 most active psychologists in live Chats



10 most active psychologists in posting answers



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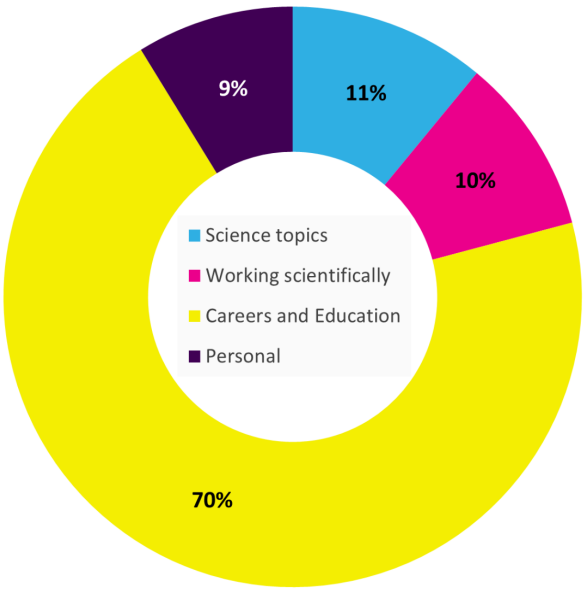
Live Chats

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

Questions in Ask section

The chart below shows an analysis of questions students sent to the psychologists. Questions are coded into overarching categories. The examples are coloured by category.



Do you think there will ever be a cure for all mental health, for example: a cure for ADHD?

What is psychology?

Have you ever used hypnotherapy?

Do you see any change in psychology from the past couple of years?

What is the hardest bit about being a psychologist?

What made you interested in dementia?

Why is psychology interesting to you and how did you discover it?

What's your favourite pasta dish?

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Good engagement

Subject specific questions about psychologists research can help generate interest in the topic. Additionally, it provides the opportunity to see how their learnt knowledge from the classroom applies to real life, supporting their science capital.

Student 1: We have been learning about hypnotherapy, it seems very helpful, why do Psychologists not use hypnotherapy?

John (psychologist): The history of hypnosis is littered with people who overhype it e.g. Mesmer, or turn it into a stage act for entertainment. This puts psychologists off taking it seriously unfortunately.

Student 1: Thanks for letting me know. Hypnosis has quite a bad picture but is very helpful. We have been learning about James Braid and he has seemed to make it better so have you started using it more now?

John (psychologist): Braid was great, but so long ago. Hypnosis is in a funny situation where no matter how much evidence there is that it exists and that it works, people still think 'oh, but will I start dancing like Mick Jagger next time I'm in Tescos'.

Student 1: How can you tell if someone has mental problems? Is it a test that they do or do you do a scan of some sorts?

Emma (psychologist): There are a number of questions we can ask people to understand what their experiences are, how they feel about them, and then try to understand what might be causing the experiences. This can help us decide if there is a diagnosis.

John (psychologist): I ask some questions to screen out people who might not be suitable for clinical hypnosis.

Student 1: What kind of behaviours do you see in corrupt officers?

Fay (psychologist): Great question Ella! Often I see behaviours linked to their work ethic - so things like cutting corners, not dealing with things properly or finding ways to get out of things they find "boring"

Student 1: Do other police officers report this behaviour?

Fay (psychologist): There is something researchers call 'the blue wall of science' this means that some officers are too frightened to report bad behaviour in case they get ostracised from their team. I have seen it both as a researcher and when I was a police officer.

Student 1: That's really interesting. Are there other ways corrupt officers get found out?

Fay (psychologist): Loving your questions! Yes - often they are reported by members of the public - through things like Crimestoppers.

Student 1: What is crimestoppers?

Fay (psychologist): Its an anonymous means of reporting a crime - there is a totally anonymous phone line or email so that people can make reports without giving their personal details

Student 1: Thank you! Are corrupt officers taking shortcuts and not doing the job properly from the beginning or does it happen overtime?

Fay (psychologist): Another fab question! Until recently, this had not been researched so I designed a project and had a look at this issue. Unfortunately, it can happen very early on - but be assured that it is very rare and most officers are great!

Information about psychologists careers and education is useful to show students the variety of opportunities and what they need to do to get there.

Student 1: What advice would you give to someone that wants to be a psychologist?

Chris (psychologist): If you want to become a psychologist, getting good grades is your first step. You don't have to be top in your class (I wasn't), but you have to be engaged and get the grades. After that, look into a Psychology degree and speak with your lecturers.

Student 1: To get into a career in psychology is a PhD needed?

> **Fay (psychologist)**: Not always - some of my clinical psychology friends have BSc or MSc qualifications rather than PhDs
>
> **Keri (psychologist)**: Not always. If you don't want to teach in academia, you can also do a lot with an undergraduate degree in psychology!

Connecting with psychologists over shared interests or opinions can help students see psychologists as "normal people" like them and build a rapport.

Student 1: What do you think about pineapple on pizza?

> **Reece (psychologist)**: a big NOOOOO
>
> **Hannah (psychologist)**: Pineapple never belongs on a pizza :P
>
> > **Student 1**: I agree

Student 1: What are your hobbies?

> **Reece (psychologist)**: I love reading, researching new ideas and carrying out research. How about you?
>
> > **Student 1**: I love to play videogames, build lego and play dungeons and dragons
>
> **Reece (psychologist)**: Awesome. I absolutely LOVE lego. Never got into D&D though, as I found it difficult to pick up.

Psychologists of the Week

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

The Psychologists of the Week were:

Emma Palmer-Cooper, Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Southampton

Michelle Newman, Brain injury PhD Researcher at City, University of London

Psychology Zone Winner

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

- **Reece Bush-Evans**, Postdoctoral Researcher at Bournemouth University

They receive £500 to spend on further public engagement projects.

"Taking part in I'm a Scientist has been an incredibly rewarding and enlightening experience. I have learnt a lot about myself and your questions have made me think about my research from a different perspective."

You can read their full statement at
psychologym22.imascientist.org.uk/2022/04/21/a-thank-you-from-your-winner-reece

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Feedback

Thank you all for your answers to the students' questions, and for being so patient. We appreciate your time today and the students now know a lot more about psychology than they did before. We will hopefully speak to you soon! The students loved talking to you all.

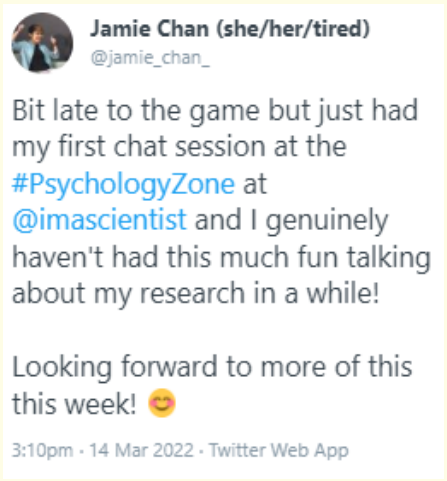
Teacher

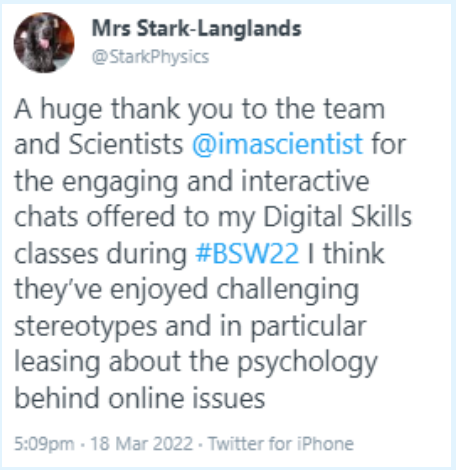
Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

Student

This has been one of the most wholesome and fun things I have done during my psychology journey and I'm truly sad it is over.

Michelle (psychologist)





My class loved every minute and received very insightful answers to their questions. I think I have a lot of pupils who want to be psychologists now!

Teacher

Thank you for this exciting experience.

Student

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