

November 2022

The Psychology Zone (psychology22.imascientist.org.uk) ran from 7 November to 2 December 2022 and was funded by the British Psychological Society.

The Zone featured 17 psychologists working in a variety of fields. They connected with **363 students** from across the UK. **330 students (91%) actively participated** by writing Chat lines and asking follow-up questions.

Key activity figures

	Zone
Students logged in	363
Students active	91%
Schools	11
Psychologists	17
Live Chats booked	30
Live Chats occurred	24
Lines of live Chat	5,085
Average lines per live Chat	212
Questions asked	91
Questions approved	61
Answers given	100
Psychologist comments	10
Votes	174

Who took part?

Students from 11 schools across the UK logged into the Zone.

23% of active students were from schools considered priority, as they were located more than 30 min away from HEIs.

A total of 174 votes were cast by students. The winning psychologist with the most student votes was **Liz Halstead**, Lecturer in Psychology at UCL.

Activity

30 live Chats were booked. 24 took place.

Out of the remaining 6 Chats booked, one was cancelled and in 5 the school did not attend and did not give notice. All schools were chased and invited to rebook.

There was one live Chat where the teacher 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 engaged will be higher.

Students asked 91 follow-up questions of which 61 were approved and 26 were duplicates.

School activity

Students from 11 schools across the UK participated in the Zone.

School	Student logged in	Active users	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Questions approved	Votes
Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, Leeds	215	200	10	1,336	7	7	119
Burford School, Burford (U)	33	32	3	131	4	3	25
St John Rigby RC Sixth Form College, Wigan	33	28	2	275	10	39	3
Bay House School, Gosport (U)	22	22	2	130	6	7	20
Colchester County High School for Girls, Colchester	21	19	2	106	6	3	0
St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy, Stoke-on-Trent	10	11	1	172	16	0	0
Aylesbury High School, Aylesbury (U)	8	9	1	78	9	0	2
Teignmouth Community School, Exeter Road, Teignmouth (U)	7	8	1	33	4	1	5
Sir Harry Smith Community College, Peterborough (U)	9	8	1	35	4	1	0
Salisbury Sixth Form College, Salisbury (U)	5	4	1	26	7	0	0
The Crypt School, Gloucester* (U)	0	1	1	22	22	0	0

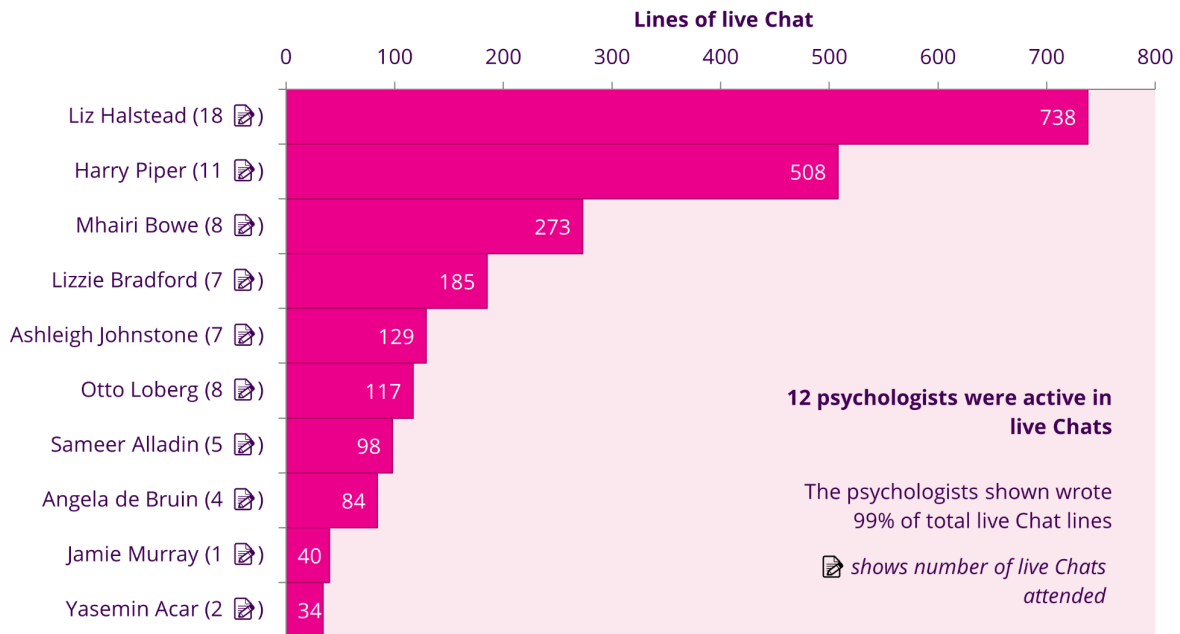
* In these chats teachers typed questions on behalf of their students, with the chat displayed on a screen.

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

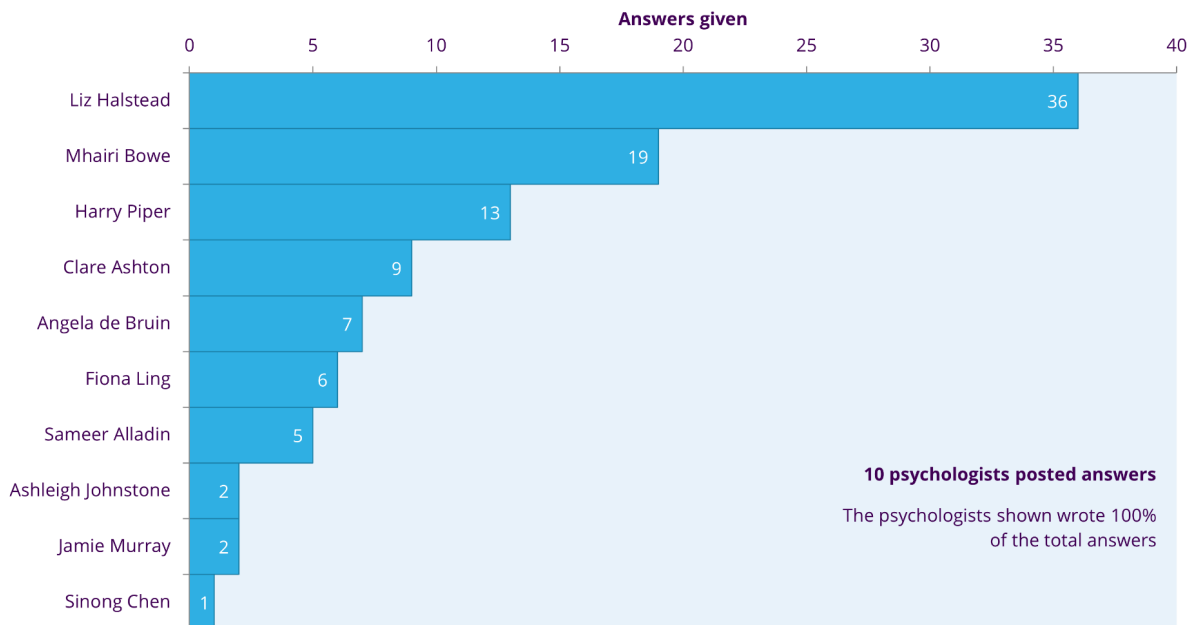
Psychologist activity

During the Zone, the psychologists interacted with students by writing 2,237 lines of live Chat, and providing 100 answers to 61 posted questions. On average, 3 psychologists took part in each live Chat.

10 most active psychologists in live Chats



10 most active psychologists in posting answers



Good engagement

Asking questions they find interesting helps students see science/psychology as relevant to their everyday lives. These interactions support the students' science capital and makes them more likely to see STEM as something 'for them'.

Student 1: What is the optimal amount of sleep teenager should be getting?

Liz (psychologist): Teenagers certainly need more sleep than adults. Typically the older you get the less sleep you need. Typically teenagers need between 8 and 12 hours sleep but it could be more depending on growth, hormones or even how much you learn

Student 1: In school I studied french for 9 years, how will this benefit me?

Angela (psychologist): It will hopefully help you in situations where you have to use French :). But it might also help you to learn new languages in the future, especially to recognise words in languages close to French.

Student 1: My french teacher used to tell us it would also come with health benefits.. Have you done any research into this? If so, what?

Angela (psychologist): There are some studies that suggest bilingualism might be associated with later onset of diseases like dementia, so this is a possibility. However, the research findings in this area are mixed (not all studies show this) and it is not clear whether this is causal (does learning a language actually cause those health benefits)

Subject specific questions are good to generate interest in the subject area.

Student 1: What is an overview of social identity?

Sameer (psychologist): Great question! Social identity is the part of the self that is related to our group memberships. These memberships can be things that we may not always recognize as groups, like race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation. But it can also be opinion groups, like political ideology and political parties. It could even be about being in a family or friend group.

Student 1: Is there a link between improved mental health and longer sleep time?

Liz (psychologist): Not necessarily longer sleep but definitely sleep quality and getting the right amount of sleep for you, so making sure you wake up feeling refreshed (this could be 5/6 hours for some people or 14 hours for another)

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 qualifications would you need in order to be a forensic psychologist or to study why people kill?

Liz (psychologist): You would do a Masters in forensic psychology after doing an undergraduate degree

Mhairi (psychologist) You would do stage 1 and 2 training. Stage 1 is an MSc in Forensic Psychology (you can find out which courses are BPS accredited on their website) and then Stage 2 can take various forms but the BPS route is handy if you want to be chartered

Student 1: What's the highest paying profession in psychology?

Liz (psychologist): Probably organisational psychology, you can work in big corporate firms

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 psychologists like to do in their freetime or day off?

Sameer (psychologist): For me, I enjoy playing violin and piano, attending concerts, cooking (trying out different recipes), I also like walking sometimes when the weather is more pleasant

Student 1: what's your favourite song/genre of music to relax with?

Liz (psychologist): I love fleetwood mac, they seem to be the music I can always put on, and work to, helps me relax. I have a broad music taste depending on my mood and if I want to sing along!

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:



Lizzie Bradford, Lecturer in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Dundee



Harry Piper, PhD student at Bangor University

Psychologist Winner

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

- **Liz Halstead**, Lecturer in Psychology at University College London

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



"I have rarely shared my story of how I got into academia and becoming a Psychologist or owned up publicly that I didn't do well in my A levels. However, through talking to students in the chats it seemed important to share this side of my journey and I hope it provided some students with some comfort in knowing there are many different routes to get to where you want to go"

You can read their full statement at psychology22.imascientist.org.uk/2022/12/07/a-thank-you-from-your-winner-liz-halstead

Feedback

I really like giving Year 12 students an opportunity to learn and ask questions beyond the A-Level specification. It helped them to realise that Psychology as a science and research discipline is broader than the A-Level specification.

Teacher

Thank you everyone! This was super insightful

Student

Thank you for answering us; it was really helpful and enjoyable :)

Student

Such a joy to take part in @imascientist again. I've already enjoyed two great sessions with secondary school pupils with great questions & looking forward to more. Highly recommended for outreach & fun!

Mhairi (psychologist)

Thank you so much for your time today. My students really enjoyed a deeper insight into your field of psychology

Teacher

Thank you all ... Lots of useful things for the students to think about!

Teacher

Thank you very much for answering our questions and providing us with information and advice! Much appreciated.

Student