



*I'm a Geographer,
Get me out of here:*

Pilot Activity Summary Report

November to December 2026

Report: January 2026

Background

I'm a Geographer, Get me out of here (IAG, imageographer.uk) is an online, student-led, public engagement project that gives school students across the UK real interactions with geographers.

Geographers create profiles on the website and engage directly with school students through real-time, text-based chats, and answering posted follow-up questions. Students ask questions about whatever they want; questions about careers, research, as well as their wider interests and lives outside of work.

Through taking part, students engage with professionals from a diverse range of backgrounds, disciplines, and industries. They learn about careers using geography and opportunities in higher education, while seeing how what they learn in school relates to the world around them.

The activity was designed and ran in partnership with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS, rgs.org). RGS provided advice on themes, challenges for Geography in schools, and promotion to teachers and geographers.



IAG is a part of the long-running *I'm a... Programme* (IAP) also including *I'm a Scientist* (IAS, imascientist.org.uk), *I'm a Mathematician* (IAM, imamathematician.uk), *I'm a Computer Scientist* (IACS, imacomputerscientist.uk), and *I'm an Engineer* (IAE, imanengineer.org.uk).

This report looks at activity during this pilot period (November to December 2025). IAG is currently running for selected schools.

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Summary

- 81 Geographers were given access to the site; **37 have taken part to date**
- **9 schools took part in 22 chats**
 - Hazards and Responses was the most popular chat theme
- We estimate that more than **500 students have taken part in the activity** to date
- Early feedback suggests that **teachers find the activity effective for developing student awareness of careers that use Geography**, and in **supporting students in choosing Geography at the next stage of their education**
- Geographers report the programme to be **enjoyable and effective**, and that it **supports development of communication skills**

Themes

Participating geographers are invited to select the themes appropriate to their work and research, and are then invited to take part in chats on those themes.

On launch a limited list of 3 broad themes were made available for teachers to book: **Cities**, **Hazards and Responses**, and **Landscapes**. More themes may be made available to book as the project develops.

Complete list of Geography themes¹

Cities

- *Infrastructure*
- *Placemaking and Marketing*
- *Planning*
- *Property Development*
- *Regeneration*
- *Sustainable Cities*
- *Transport*

Hazards and Responses

- *Extreme Weather*
- *Flooding*
- *Tectonics*
- *Wildfires*

Mapping and GIS

Landscapes

- *Coastal Management and Protection*
- *Flooding*
- *Geomorphology*
- *Glacial Landscapes and Deposits*
- *Rivers*

Resources

- *Energy*
- *Food*
- *Green Skills*
- *Soils*
- *Sustainability*
- *Waste*
- *Water*

¹ As shown on the Geographer registration form

Participants and activity

Summary of activity

Geographers given access ²	81
Geographers active	37
Schools active	9
Student accounts active	363
<i>Estimated true number of students reached³</i>	<i>508</i>
Chats booked	25
Invites sent to geographers	365
Chats took place	22
Geographer interactions ⁴	93
Lines of chat	5,691

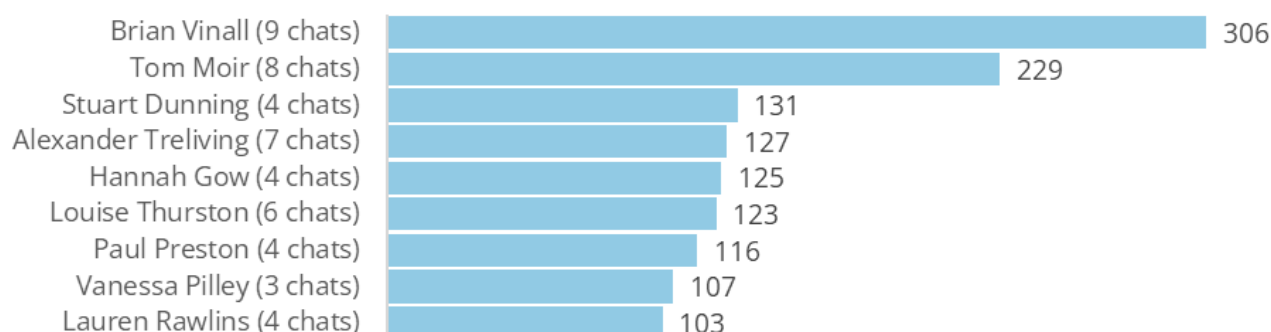
² Including 62 geographers added to IAP specifically to take part in IAG, together with 19 participants from other IAP projects who expressed interest in taking part in IAG sessions

³ Many students take part in pairs, or share computers or tablets; the estimated true number of students engaged is the students engaged (i.e. student accounts active in a chat) multiplied by 1.4

⁴ Total instances of a geographer attending a chat

Geographers

Lines of chat (and chats attended) by 10 most active geographers



The geographers shown wrote 66% of the chat lines during the term. The average geographer (who attended chats) attended 3 sessions, writing 36 lines.

Schools

List of participating schools

School	Priority school	Chats	Active student accounts
Epping St Johns Church of England School, Essex	- WP-Q2	6	135
Springwood High School, Norfolk	Yes WP-Q2, Distant	6	132
Middlesbrough College, Middlesbrough	Yes Other WP, Distant	2	26
Farr High School, Highland	Yes WP-Q1, Distant	2	21
Stretford High School, Trafford	Yes WP-Q5	1	16
Egham Park School, Surrey	Yes Other WP	2	13
Ashlawn School, Warwickshire	Yes WP-Q2, Distant	1	10
The Latimer Arts College, Northamptonshire	Yes WP-Q2, Distant	1	9
The Oxford Academy, Oxfordshire	Yes WP-Q5	1	1 ⁵

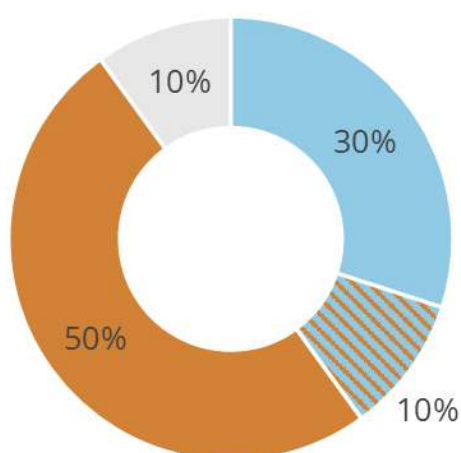
⁵ Questions in chat asked through teacher account

Widening participation and distant schools

We prioritise opportunities for widening participation (WP) schools⁶, and schools distant from major research HEIs⁷. Teachers at these schools are offered additional support, and earlier booking for chats.⁸

90% of participating schools were priority schools:

- 40% of schools were widening participation schools
- 60% were distant from HEIs



- Schools with high WP quintiles
- Schools distant from HEIs with high WP quintiles
- Schools distant from HEIs
- Non-priority schools

Locations of participating schools



[Imagery © 2026 NASA]

⁶ We define a priority widening participation school as one with a high proportion of students (quintiles 4 and 5) receiving Free School Meals, or Pupil Premium; or living in the most deprived areas in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Additionally, FE colleges, SEND schools, and PRUs are considered priority schools.

⁷ Schools more than 30 minutes from their nearest major research HEI are half as likely to receive a visit from a STEM professional as those within 15 minutes travel time. State schools more than 30 minutes from a HEI are priority distant schools. See:

about.imascientist.org.uk/2017/school-engagement-in-stem-enrichment-effect-of-school-location/

⁸ Read more about how we prioritise schools:

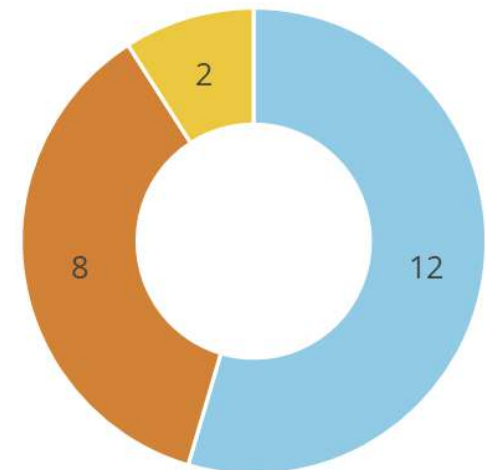
about.imascientist.org.uk/widening-participation-prioritising-places-for-schools/

Chats

Chat themes

Hazards and Responses was the most popular booking theme with 12 chats taking place.

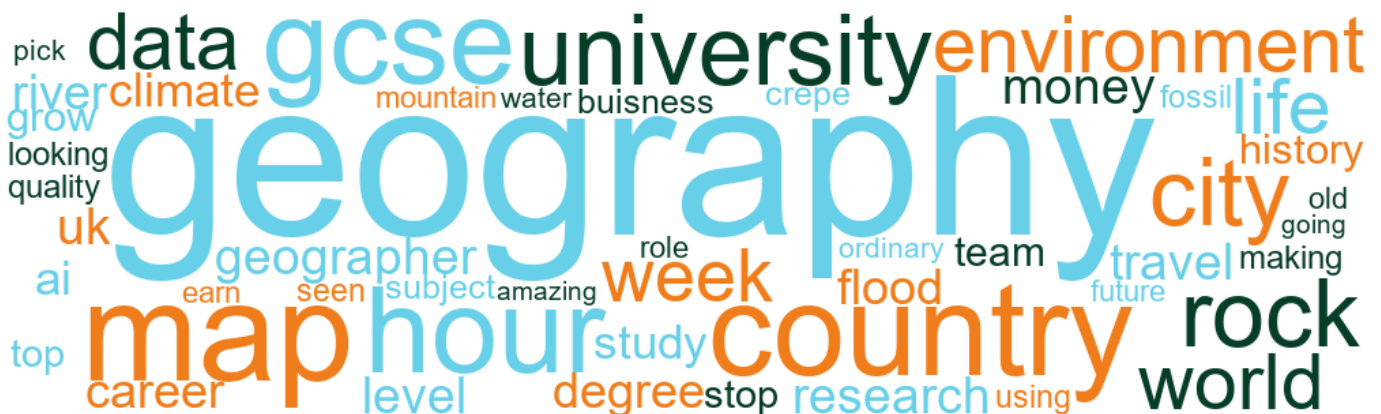
8 *Cities*, and 2 *Landscapes* themed sessions took place.⁹



- *Hazards and Responses* themed chats
- *Cities* themed chats
- *Landscapes* themed chats

Discussion topics in chats

The word cloud below reflects topics discussed in chat sessions between students and geographers. The size of each word reflects its frequency across all IAG chats. (Colour has no relevance.)



⁹ 1 additional *Hazards and Responses*, and 2 additional *Cities* themed sessions were booked but did not take place (not shown on chart).

Examples of great engagement

When asked why they chose to become geographers, the geographers shared a range of motivations, including a love of maps and enjoyment of geography at school. Others described interests in the environment and the variety offered by careers in geography.

bark536arco58 what made you guys choose to be geographers?

Tom M @bark536arco58: I've always loved maps from when I was a child - so I got into surveying and map making.

Franziska P @bark536arco58: I never really planned to be a geographer but enjoyed it the most out of the subjects I studied at University

Paul F @bark536arco58: I actually have a real passion for the environment and sustainability and while growing up and watching David Attenborough documentary's I wanted to work in that field

Alex T @bark536arco58: For me, it is the mix of things that geography can be - one minute you can be studying a volcano and the next you are looking at population numbers in cities. It's such a varied subject and so interesting

bark536arco58 @Alex T: geography seems so interesting now, i never really had the interest in it but now i do

Alex T @bark536arco58: That's really brilliant to hear - the more you study geography, the more interesting it will become. I hope you continue to enjoy it and find it interesting

In another session, geographers shared alternate career paths to the university route.

HannahB @all I'm not sure whether I want to go to university, what other options could I take after college or do you think university is a good choice?

Keith @HannahB: an apprentice scheme if you find something that you really like. Uni isn't for everyone and can be expensive these days

Franziska P @HannahB: There are lots of options, it really depends what you are interested in. University can be great, even if you're not sure what exactly you want to do. Lots of students apply for one course and change it to something else during studies

Tom M @HannahB: I didn't go to university Hannah, I was interested in getting out into work and so joined the civil service and found my calling then!

One student had some difficulty understanding Geography, the geographers helped summarise their roles.

buys536cubs69 @all can u simplify your job for me because i do NOT understand geograpy

Louise T @buys536cubs69: My work is both a job and I am studying - confusing I know! When you do a PhD you work at a University and get paid while still being a student technically. So I plan and carry out my own research and work like any other job

mark h @buys536cubs69: For me it's about understanding how the world around us works and how people interact with it

Vanessa @buys536cubs69: I use information about the earth (people and nature) to make risk based decisions for the future

Hannah G @buys536cubs69: Geography is about place, what is where, why is is there, how is is there, who is there, when is it there



Vanessa @Hannah G: Perfect response :)

Hannah G @Vanessa: ❤️

In this session, a student asks the geographers to share what they enjoy most about the subject. Responses include the variety, connection to global issues, and travel opportunities.

JunoW @Alex T Hi , What do you like most about geography?

Alex T @JunoW: Hi, there's so much that I like about geography! The main thing would be the variety in topics - from volcanoes to cities! I also love the practical fieldwork.

JunoW @Alex T: Yeah its cool how every bit of the world is sooo different!

Alex T @JunoW: Very true! Geography really allows you to explore and learn about all sorts of places and things.

megandonald @JunoW: I love how Geography connects you to the world. It doesn't matter where you are, you can still feel like you are connected to different global issues. You can also make ANYTHING geographical

JunoW @megandonald: Yeah i agree!

megandonald @JunoW: For example, I have worked in Tanzania researching how people live in 'informal settlements' (these used to be called 'slums') as part of the Geography degree

JunoW @megandonald: Wow thats interesting , do you like to travel with your job?

megandonald @JunoW: Yep. Mostly now I travel within Scotland. I got to lots of rural places to see what kind of skills people need to work there. For example, I help young people get apprenticeships in farming

Feedback

Geographer feedback

Participants were invited to complete a feedback survey December 2025. The following are excerpts from the feedback responses from IAG participants. For a full analysis of the feedback received across IAP, see the separate *IAP Autumn 2025 Summary Report*.

- The majority of IAG participants responding to the survey reported that their skills, confidence, and enthusiasm for communicating with lay audiences had ‘increased’ or ‘greatly increased’.
- Every IAG respondent reported that they would recommend — or already had recommended — the programme to a colleague.

How has IAG compared with other public engagement projects in which you have been involved?

Compared to other public engagement I've done, the I'm a... Programme was much more interactive and conversational. Instead of a one-off talk, presentations, or conference, it involved ongoing discussions with young people, which made it feel more engaging and responsive. The online format also seemed to help students feel more comfortable asking questions. Overall, it felt more like a two-way conversation than traditional outreach activities.

How has IAG been a factor in that change [increased level of public engagement] if at-all?

Being told that what I do is cool, and interesting etc by the kids has led to me posting more interesting social media (Linkedin in particular) and explained some technical details in a more accessible way

Dr Paul Preston

In what ways were your expectations exceeded?¹⁰

Really enjoyed the questions I was asked by students but also how engaged they were to learn about jobs in industry/academia

In what ways were your expectations exceeded?

I didn't think the chats with pupils would make me think as much as they have about my education/career path through the world of geography.

Some questions have really got my geography juices flowing! As a result, I feel more motivated and enthusiastic in my job and for the subject of geography as a whole.

Alexander Treliving

¹⁰ After reporting that expectations had been exceeded

Teacher feedback

Teachers are sent a feedback survey in the weeks following their chats. The following is a summary of early responses, feedback collection is ongoing.

- Teachers reported that the activity **exceeded their expectations:**

The speed and pace at which they could interact. The knowledge they gained.

I was impressed with how much the students gained from the conversation.

- Teachers were asked **how the activity fit into their teaching:**

Inspired year 12 students about where Geography could be used in future options.

Also enabled them to think about their own knowledge and understanding.

We used it for a careers day for KS3 Year 9 students considering their options

We used it for careers, we are approaching year 8 options, so the idea was to encourage more students to consider Geography.

- Teachers reported that students **enjoyed and were inspired by the activity, along with gaining a greater awareness of the wide range of careers available in the subject**, including specific organisations such as the Met Office, Environment Agency and the UN.
- Teachers reported the activity to be effective for **developing student awareness of careers that use Geography**, and in **supporting students in choosing Geography at the next stage of their education**.

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