

March 2023

The Psychology Zone (psychologym23.imascientist.org.uk/) ran from 6 to 31 March 2023 and was funded by the British Psychological Society.

Key activity figures

	Psychology Zone	March 2023 Mean
Students logged in	535	815
Students active	90%	90%
Schools	15	33
Psychologists allocated	25	
Psychologists active	14	28
Chats booked	40	75
Chats took place	31	48
Lines of Chat	6,230	12,417
Average lines per Chat	201	256
Follow up questions asked	91	201
Follow up questions approved	82	151
Answers given to follow up questions	246	451
Scientist comments	6	41
Student comments	2	5
Votes	335	453

Who took part?

The Zone featured 14 psychologists working across a range of academic and industrial fields. The psychologists team included early career researchers (PhD students), academics (Research/Teaching Fellows, Lecturers and Professors) and clinical practitioners. Participants (students and psychologists) wrote 6,230 Chat lines with 90% of active students asking 82 follow up questions.

535 students from 15 schools across the UK logged into the Zone and connected with 14 psychologists.

80% of active students were from priority schools: 80% from underserved schools and 28% from widening participation schools.

A total of 335 votes were cast by students. The winning psychologist with the most student votes was **Birsu Kandemirci** who is a developmental psychology researcher and lecturer at the University of Manchester.

Activity

40 Chats were booked. 31 took place.

It is common for students to share login details or computers during Chats. Therefore, the number of students engaged is expected to be higher.

Students asked 91 follow up questions of which 82 were approved and sent to psychologists.

School activity

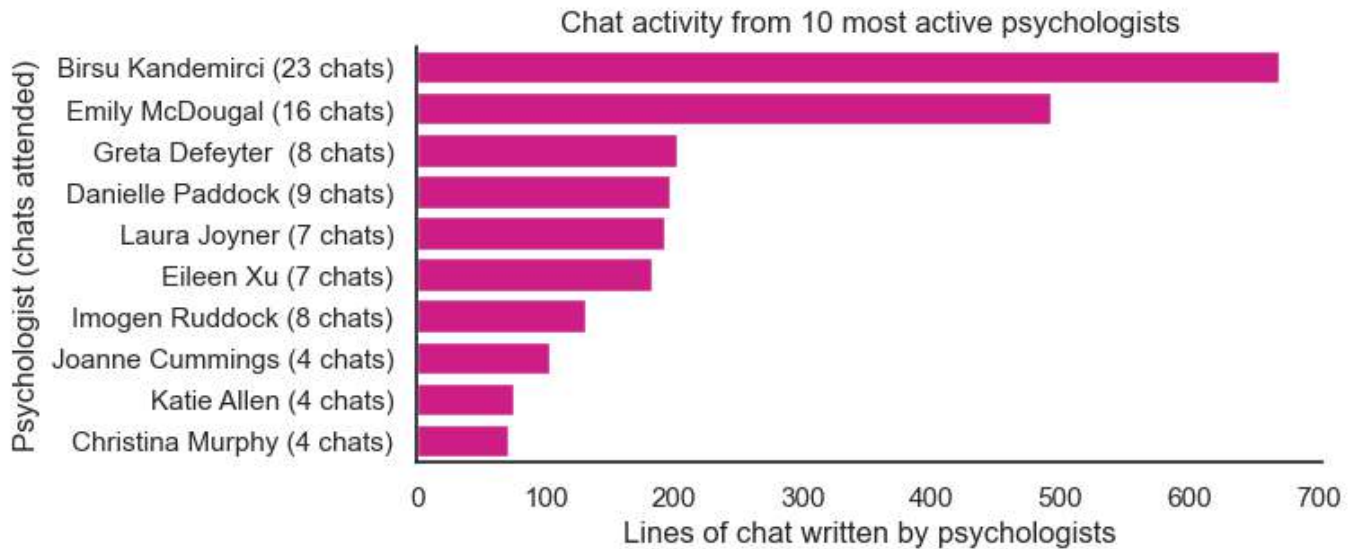
Students from 15 schools across the UK actively participated in the Zone.

School	Active students	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Follow up questions approved	Votes
Churston Ferrers Grammar School Academy, Devon (U)	144	6	1871	13	18	139
Furness Academy, Cumbria (WP/U)	130	7	732	6	17	40
Great Baddow High School, Essex (U)	44	3	371	8	14	44
Attleborough Academy, Norfolk	27	3	126	5	11	27
Colne Community School and College, Essex	27	1	48	2	2	27
The Priory School, Shropshire (U)	17	1	117	7	0	8
Range High School, Merseyside (U)	17	2	99	6	15	17
The Thomas Adams School, Shropshire (U)	15	2	60	4	0	0
Aylesbury High School, Buckinghamshire (U)	14	1	53	4	1	5
Hounslow School, Hampshire	13	1	77	6	3	11
Exeter College, Devon	10	1	32	3	0	3
Winterbourne Academy, Bristol	10	1	58	6	0	10
The WREN School, Berkshire	5	1	84	17	0	0
Colchester County High School for Girls, Essex	4	1	44	11	1	3
The Sittingbourne School, Kent (WP/U)	2	0	0	0	0	1

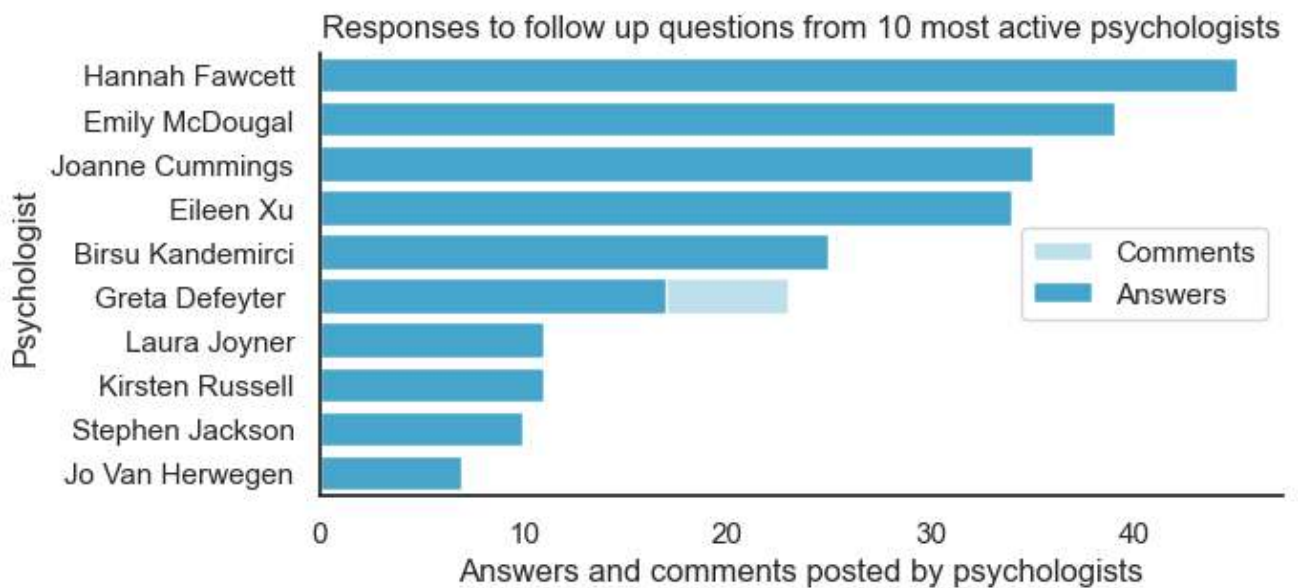
** In these chats teachers typed questions on behalf of their students, with the chat displayed on a screen.*

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



The psychologists shown wrote 96% of the lines of chat in the zone.
The average psychologist attended 7 chats, and wrote 172 lines.



The psychologists shown posted 95% of the answers, and 100% of the comments in the zone.
The average psychologist posted 18 answers, and 0 comments.

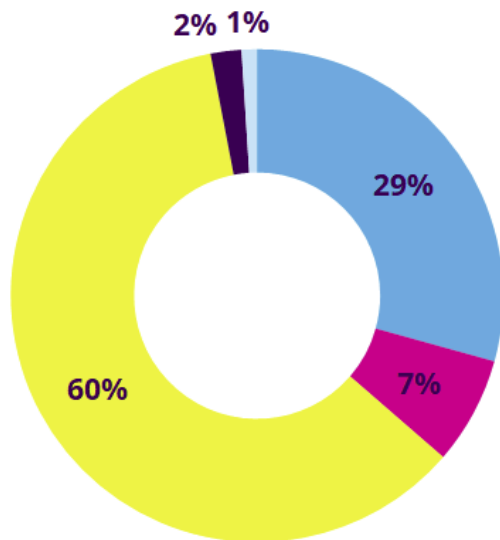
Chats

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



Follow up questions

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



- STEM topics
- Working scientifically
- Careers and education
- Personal
- Event/Other

Are there similarities between the functions of a gorilla's and a human's brain?

How are humans able to speak inside of their minds (have an inner speech?)

What is the most difficult aspect in assessing your patients?

What do you believe was your biggest obstacles to overcome in your most recent piece of research?

I've been struggling to find work experience for psychology-how did you go about getting your work experience with the school psychiatrist and a GP?

Was there a point in your career that you felt like giving up and if so, how did you overcome it?

What is the ratio of theory to practical work in a psychology degree?

Do you think certain aspects of life would be easier if you didn't have ADHD?

Examples of good engagement

Sixth form students are interested more specifically in the career routes that the psychologists' followed. A student asks Hannah about her path into Forensic Psychology following completion of her degree.

Student 1: How did you get into Forensic Psychology after completing a degree? Did you do work experience with a company or did you just get hired on right away after completing a degree?

Hannah (psychologist): I studied a psychology degree and really enjoyed the forensic psychology unit that I studied in my final year. I then chose to complete an MSc Forensic Psychology and then my PhD (research doctorate) in forensic psychology. I've been working in universities teaching forensic psychology since I finished my MSc course. I provide consultancy to charities and the police, but haven't directly worked for them.

Many of the students were keen to know whether an academic background is always necessary to follow a career in psychology.

Student 2: Is pursuing a masters or PhD key to having a career in psychology? Or is it such that if you want to pursue further research, more education is needed?

Laura (psychologist): I think it depends on what you want to do. If you want to be an applied psychologist (like clinical etc) you need to do further study, but you will often work post BSc to get experience in the area first

Katie (psychologist): It very much depends on what you want to do within psychology but you're pretty likely to need an additional qualification on top of a degree

Birsu (psychologist): hmmm hard question. I thought if I didn't do my MSc, I would struggle with my PhD a lot. But this is, of course, if you are interested in staying in academia. Depending on what career you are interested in, different pathways are available for sure 😊

Laura (psychologist): However, I do know lecturers etc who don't have postgraduate degrees in psychology - I don't think there are many but it's possible!

Emily (psychologist): It depends what your aspirations are. There are definitely psychology related roles that wouldn't need further qualifications. Non-academic jobs are generally more flexible and look more at experience.

Imogen (psychologist): It depends on the career - if you want to do research then you need an undergraduate degree and a PhD as a minimum, but I choose to do a Master's in-between as I wanted to get back into education after working.

One of the more specific questions covering an enquiry about the workings of the mind. Emily offered some insights into how no two brains are alike!

Student 3: How do humans speak inside of their minds?

Emily (psychologist): I think you're talking about our inner voice? Did you know that not everyone has an inner voice! For example, I don't hear myself speak in my own head! I don't think in words.

Student 3: That is very interesting! :D

A student asks Danielle, Emily and Birsu whether they ever thought they would be a psychologist when they were younger.

Student 4: When you were younger, did you think you would be a psychologist?

Danielle (psychologist): Definitely not! I wanted to be a dancer. I didn't really know what Psychology was until I got to sixth form.

Emily (psychologist): No. I never considered it was an option until I studied it at a level.

Student 4: Cool! So when did you start thinking that you were going to be a psychologist?

Emily (psychologist): Probably once I finished my university degree!

Birsu (psychologist): When I was very young, I wanted to be an astronomer :) But from high school onwards, I knew I wanted to study Psychology

What do psychologists do day-to-day? What does an average workday look like? Emily provides an insight into her working life for one of the students.

Student 5: How do you do your research?

Emily (psychologist): There are lots of steps involved! The most fun part is collecting data. For me that usually involves visiting children at school and getting them to complete some tasks. Then I take their data and analyse it to answer my research question!

Student 5: What other kind of data do you collect?

Emily (psychologist): Sometimes I also conduct interviews. This gives me a very different type of data - I analyse what people say rather than working with numbers. I actually prefer this type of research! :)

Student 5: Nice thanks!

Psychologists of the week

Students voted each week for their favourite scientist to be named scientist of the week. **The psychologists of the week were:**



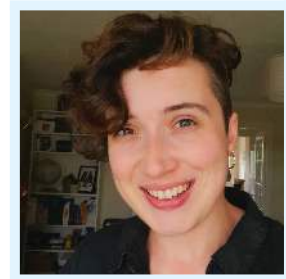
Danielle Paddock,

a behavioural science and health psychology researcher at Sheffield Hallam University



Greta Defeyter,

researches food insecurity and the effect it has on families, children and young people



Emily McDougal,

a developmental psychologist and researcher investigating how children and young people think and learn

Winning psychologist

The overall winner, with the most votes at the end of the Zone was **Birsu Kandemirci**, a developmental psychology researcher and lecturer at the University of Manchester

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



"I'm overjoyed to find out that you voted me the winner of the Psychology Zone 2023!

Your questions made me stop and think about a lot: the choices that led me to become a Developmental Psychologist, the challenges I faced along the way, what I love the most about my job, or what made me change my mind from wanting to become an astronomer to become a Psychologist.

I'm looking forward to planning my workshops and carry on talking about Psychology with young minds!"

You can read their full statement [here](#)

Feedback

"Thank you so much for your time today. We appreciate you answering all of our random questions"

Teacher

"This has been really great, thanks so much!"

Student

"Thank you very much for all your questions. I have thoroughly enjoyed answering your amazing questions. As Rebecca said, please feel free to send your questions if you didn't get a chance here :)"

Birsu (psychologist)

"Thank you, we're really appreciative of your time and your answers"

Teacher