

November 2023

The Psychology Zone (psychology23.imascientist.org.uk) ran from 6 November to 1 December and was funded by the British Psychological Society.

Key activity figures

	Psychology Zone	November Average
Students logged in	311	556
Students active	85%	87%
Schools	16	25
Psychologists given access	28	37
Psychologists active	25	30
Chats booked	32	50
Chats took place	22	36
Lines of Chat	4,308	9,913
Average lines per Chat	196	256
Follow up questions asked	129	127
Follow up questions approved	123	107
Answers given to follow up questions	211	333
Psychologist comments	13	39
Student comments	1	4
Votes	169	356

Who took part?

The Zone featured 25 psychologists researching human brains, the relationship between sleep and mental health, working in advertising and with the police and investigating the link between DNA and memory. They connected with 311 students from across the UK. 264 students (85%) actively participated by writing Chat lines and asking follow up questions.

81% of active students were from priority schools.

A total of 169 votes were cast by students. The winning scientist with the most student votes was **David McGonigle**, who studies the human brain's ability to change and repair itself.

Activity

32 Chats were booked, 22 took place. Of the remaining Chats booked 7 were cancelled and in 3 the school did not attend and did not give notice.

Students might share login details or computers during Chats. Therefore, the number of students engaged could be higher.

Students asked 129 follow up questions of which 123 were approved and sent to psychologists. Duplicate questions (that psychologists had already answered) were not sent again, with the student being directed to the previous answer and invited to comment and ask additional questions.

Funded by:

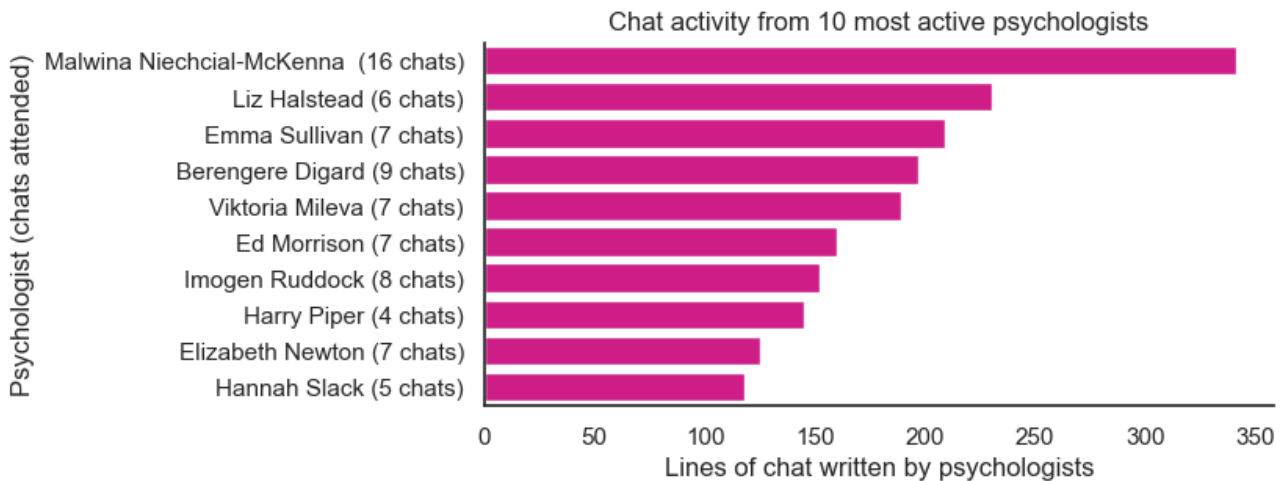
School activity

School	Students logged in	Active users	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Follow up questions approved	Votes
Cleeve School, Gloucestershire [WP-Q2 D]	75	49	3	190	4	6	36
Great Baddow High School, Essex	38	36	2	303	8	31	33
The Crypt School, Gloucestershire [WP-Q1 D]	32	32	2	243	8	2	26
St John Rigby RC Sixth Form College, Wigan [WP*]	24	24	2	162	7	73	24
King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls, Birmingham	16	16	1	103	6	0	4
The Thomas Adams School, Shropshire [WP-Q2 D]	20	15	2	122	8	0	6
Preston Lodge High School, East Lothian [WP-Q2 D]	21	14	1	104	7	1	0
Cecil Jones Academy, Southend-on-Sea [WP-Q5 D]	13	13	1	84	6	1	12
King's Academy Binfield, Bracknell Forest	14	13	1	65	5	3	6
NCEA Duke's Secondary School, Northumberland [WP-Q5 D]	13	13	1	75	6	0	11
NCG, Newcastle upon Tyne [WP*]	17	13	1	64	5	2	2
The John Wallis Church of England Academy, Kent [WP-Q5 D]	9	8	1	122	15	2	7
Aylesbury High School, Buckinghamshire [WP-Q1 D]	7	5	1	38	8	1	1
Bay House School, Hampshire [WP-Q2 D]	5	5	1	64	13	0	0
Elysium Healthcare Potters Bar Clinic School, Hertfordshire [WP*]	4	4	1	28	7	1	0
All Saints Catholic Academy, Nottinghamshire [WP-Q2 D]	3	2	1	18	9	0	1

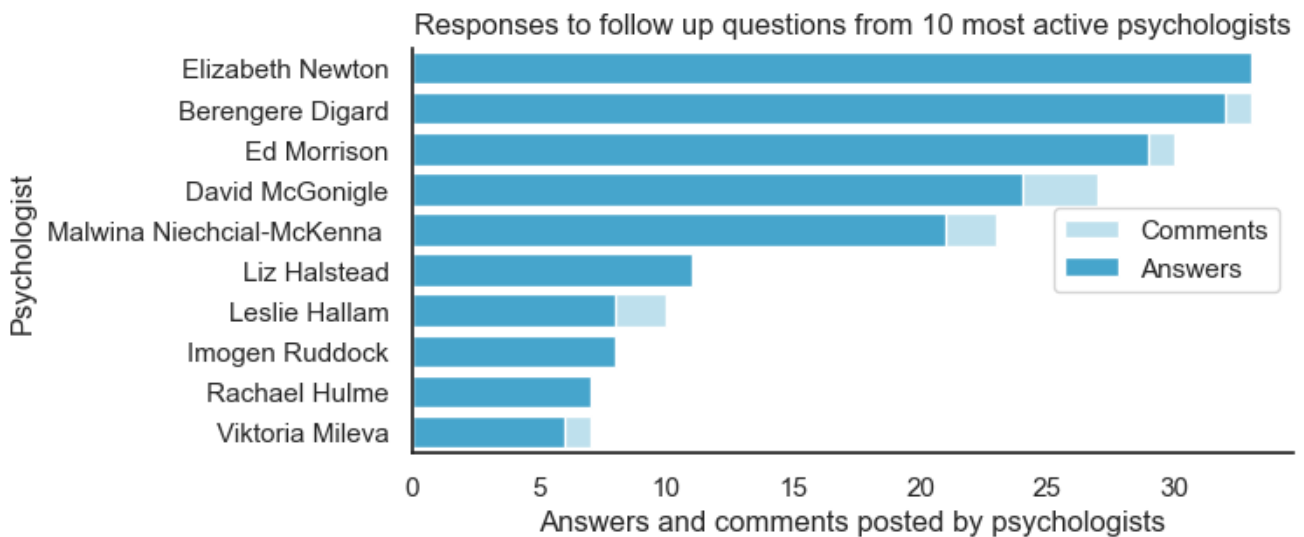
We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups. WP-Q indicates the level of economic deprivation in a school's catchment area: Q5 represents a high level. D shows schools that are more than 30 minutes from a large research HEI. Find out more, and how you can support us in working with more of these schools: about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp

Psychologist activity

During the Zone the psychologists interacted with students by writing 2,523 lines of Chat, and providing 211 answers to 123 follow up questions. On average, 5 psychologists took part in each Chat.



The psychologists shown wrote 77% of the lines of chat in the zone. The average psychologist attended 4 chats, and wrote 97 lines.



The psychologists shown posted 85% of the answers, and 77% of the comments in the zone. The average psychologist posted 8 answers, and 1 comments.

Examples of good engagement

The Chats provided numerous examples of great engagement, with students asking specific questions about psychology, demonstrating an interest in deepening their understanding of psychology.

Student 1: Are there any contagious psychological effects?

Emma (psychologist): Emotional contagion is a thing, it's a form of social contagion involving the spread of emotions and related behaviour from one person to another e.g. smiles

Malwina (psychologist): Yeah, like some people might say that someone's laugh is contagious, for example :)

Liz (psychologist): There's some interesting studies about this. The bystander effect (or diffusion of responsibility) happens when people are less likely to help someone if there are other people around, because we think others will help instead. Another example of this effect is when you hear an alarm go off and you look to other people to see how they behave. If they're not bothered, you're likely to be unbothered too. If they're panicking and trying to get away then you're likely to panic too.

Additionally, psychologists' answers regarding the connection between psychology and their personal lives helped students gain a better understanding of the subject's relevance to everyday life.

Student 2: Would you say that some of your research has influenced your outlook on life?

Emma (psychologist): Yes definitely, I appreciate you importance of sleep and try and prioritise it in my life

Malwina (psychologist): Yes, I think so. I now have more idea of what affects our brain health, which I didn't really realise or think about before!

Imogen (psychologist): Yes, my research on teaching has really made me think about how I'm interacting when I am teaching students, and the best ways to help them learn.

Psychologists provided valuable insights into the variety of pathways and careers within the field, highlighting the possibilities based on the students' personal interests and aspirations.

Student 3: what different pathways in the sense of job direction does psychology open up to?

Imogen (psychologist): You can go down the route of clinical psychology, where you work with patients, or research where you do experiments. Psychology also teaches you lots of transferable skills you can use in other industries!

Malwina (psychologist): Lots of different ones. Either related to psychology or not. A psychology degree teaches you lots of transferable skills, like thinking critically, communicating clearly and others. But have a look at the British Psychological Society website, they have a career bit there.

Emma (psychologist): So many! You can be a clinical psychologist, or go into psychology research which is what I am doing. But more broadly psychology provides you with lots of transferable skills to go into other jobs like marketing, HR, sales, etc!

Students asked the psychologists how they handle change and transitions. The psychologists' answers demonstrate that they, like everyone else, struggle sometimes, making them more relatable to the students.

Student 4: how do you navigate and cope with major transitions or changes?

Emma (psychologist): I tend to use exercise as a coping mechanism and I also like going for walks. I think making sure you look after yourself (e.g. self care) is really important :)

Imogen (psychologist): The most important thing for me is to keep in touch with family and friends to make sure I have people to support me. And even though major life changes can be uncomfortable, to try and see it as something exciting and new where possible..

Psychologists of the week

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

The Psychologists of the Week were:



David McGonigle, who studies the human brain's ability to change and repair itself.



Berengere Digard, researches the brain and the mind of autistic and non-autistic people.



Emma Sullivan, who investigates the relationship between sleep and emotions day to day.

Winning psychologist

The overall winner, with the most votes at the end of the Zone was **David McGonigle**.

As Zone winner, he receives £500 to spend on further public engagement projects.



The Zone winner, **David McGonigle**, studies the human brain's activity to change and repair itself using stimulators and scanners.

Feedback

Thank you to all the psychologists for taking part in your own time. We really appreciate the amazing responses."

Teacher

"Lovely chatting to you all! Brilliant questions"

Psychologist

"I absolutely love the format of these chats! It's so different to the way I normally communicate my work."

Malwina (psychologist)

"Thank you. There's lots to process here - really interesting."

Teacher

"I like how it gets you to explain your work in only a few words / as simple as you can. It's good practice for our public engagement skills! I also like seeing pupils interested in our work"

Hannah (psychologist)

"Thank you all so much for your time and help today, it has helped the students tremendously! Thank you!"

Teacher

"Thank you so much for speaking to us all!!!!"

Student

"It's nice to see the students enthusiasm and interest for psychology and studying it in the future"

Emma (psychologist)