

To Board of Trustees,
British Psychological Society,

We are a group of 81 psychologists who care about inspiring the next generation of psychologists. We want our profession to be inclusive and representative of the UK population. This requires us to be proactive in the promotion of psychology in schools.

I'm a Scientist is a unique platform that demystifies science, humanises researchers, and, most importantly, invites children and young people to ask questions that matter to them. The Psychology Zone, funded by the BPS between 2017 and 2024, has been a cornerstone of this effort, but the Society discontinued funding for the initiative last year.

We are calling on the BPS to reconsider its decision to withdraw this funding, and to reinstate support for Psychology in *I'm a Scientist*, Get me out of here.

Over the past decade and more, we have proudly represented the discipline in the *I'm a Scientist, Get Me Out Of Here* engagement programme. This innovative initiative has allowed psychologists from all backgrounds and specialisms to engage directly with thousands of school students from across the UK. In many cases, *I'm a Scientist* has directly nurtured science communication skills in psychologists that has led to lasting impacts on their careers, as well as the wider field - numerous participants have gone on to become award-winning communicators across a variety of media. For early career researchers in particular, *I'm a Scientist* has been an invaluable first step into public engagement: building confidence, refining communication skills, and fostering a lifelong commitment to making psychology accessible and inclusive.

I'm a Scientist continues to support the science capital for over 20,000 students each year. However, since the withdrawal of BPS funding, students are no longer being engaged with psychology. The programme is allowing over 500 scientists to improve their engagement skills and boost their confidence and motivation to do more outreach independently. But almost none are psychologists.

We understand that funding decisions are difficult, and that there are other ways to do outreach. However, *I'm a Scientist* has a set of unique advantages. Firstly, it represents exceptional value for money, and directly aligns with the Society's charitable objective of promoting the advancement and diffusion of psychological knowledge. It provides an obvious vehicle through which to champion the next generation of psychologists, and is a well-established, proven

and scalable model of outreach - one that reaches students from all backgrounds, in all parts of the UK.

Secondly, it provides an equitable space for all students to have a voice. It is a space for psychologists from all backgrounds to engage, showing students that there are psychologists who look and talk like them. It particularly benefits students with a diverse range of learning needs promoting inclusivity and equitability in terms of access to psychology.

For psychologists, *I'm a Scientist* can be equally transformative. It challenges us to communicate clearly, to think about our audiences and their needs, and to reflect on the societal relevance of our work in a very direct manner. There is no better way to develop science communication skills than by trying to explain psychological concepts to a class full of school students.

We are proud of the work that we have done through *I'm a Scientist*, and equally proud that the BPS has supported it for so many years. But we are concerned that the withdrawal of funding has sent the wrong message: that psychology is less committed to public engagement than other sciences, that our discipline is not for everyone, and crucially, that we are stepping back from our commitment to education and outreach, at precisely the time we should be leaning further in.

We ask you to reconsider. If the BPS were to reinstate funding for the Psychology Zone, it would reaffirm that the Society values outreach, education and the public understanding of Psychology in all of its forms. It would provide a space for psychologists from all stages - from early career to long-established chartered members - to develop their communication skills. Critically, it would ensure that young people across the UK continue to see psychology as a science that is relevant, exciting, and open to them.

The BPS is the only UK organisation that can make this happen.

Signed,

- Dr Ashleigh Johnstone - Senior Lecturer, Arden University and Chartered Psychologist
- Prof. Pete Etchells - Professor of Psychology and Science Communication, Bath Spa University
- Dr Pizza Chow - Senior Lecturer, University of Chester and BPS Chartered Psychologist
- Dr Ola Demkowicz, Senior Lecturer in Psychology of Education, The University of Manchester, and BPS Chartered Psychologist
- Dr Susanna Martin - Experimental Officer - Psychology, University of Bath
- Dr Emma Sullivan, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of York
- Dr Gwen Brekelmans, Senior Lecturer, Queen Mary University of London
- Dr Jo Daniels, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, University of Bath
- Dr Priya Silverstein, Postdoctoral Researcher, Ashland University, USA

- Dr Ellen Smith, Lecturer in Psychology, Northumbria University
- Dr Abbie Jordan, Reader in Psychology, University of Bath
- Dr Mary Spiller, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of East London
- Dr Mhairi Bowe, Associate Professor in Social Psychology, Heriot-Watt University
- Dr Line Caes, Associate Professor in Health Psychology, University of Stirling
- Dr Natalie Butcher, Principal Lecturer (Marketing & Recruitment), Teesside University
- Dr Emily McDougal, Research Fellow, Evidence Based Practice Unit, Anna Freud and UCL
- Dr Helena Paterson, Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Glasgow
- Dr Caroline Wesson, Senior Lecturer, University of Wolverhampton
- Dr James Bartlett, Lecturer in Psychology, University of Glasgow
- Dr Louise Rodgers, Educational Psychologist
- Dr Jennifer Deane, Health Services Researcher, Newcastle University
- Dr Tanya Schrader, Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, Birmingham City University
- Dr Jake Sallaway-Costello, Associate Professor, University of Nottingham
- Professor Zoe Knowles, Liverpool John Moores University and HCPC Registered Psychologist
- Dr. Jamie Murray, Lecturer School of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Glasgow.
- Dr Katie Lightfoot, HCPC Registered Health Psychologist, Chartered Psychologist, Director of Rejig Solutions, former Associate Professor Health Psychology & Med. Ed.
- Dr Lizzie Bradford, Lecturer in School of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of St Andrews
- Ms Chloe Tasker, PhD Researcher, Department of Psychology, University of Essex
- Dr Georgina Wren, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Leeds
- Dr Bérangère Digard, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Rita Lopes, CPsychol, Senior Lecturer in Positive Psychology and Coaching Psychology, University of East London
- Dr Madeleine Pownall, Associate Professor, School of Psychology, University of Leeds
- Ms Eleanor Stamp, PhD researcher, Centre of Experimental Medicine, Institute of Genetics and Cancer, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Alex Baxendale, lecturer in Psychology at Bangor University.
- Ms Celine Brookes-Smith, Lecturer at Arden University
- Dr Zoe Wimshurst, Senior Lecturer, Health Sciences University. Chartered Psychologist

- Dr Michael Smith, Associate Professor and Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange (Department of Psychology), Northumbria University. Chartered Psychologist.
- Dr Helen Dudfield, Fellow RAESoc, Hon Prof NTU, AFBPS, Chartered Psychologist, Dean of Fellows QinetiQ
- Dr Birsu Kandemirci, Lecturer, University of Manchester
- Dr. Kohinoor Darda, Founder & CEO, Advancement and Research in the Sciences and Arts (ARISA) Foundation, Pune, India
- Dr Jennifer Allen, Reader in Psychology, University of Bath
- Dr Daniel Farrelly, Principal Lecturer in Psychology, University of Worcester
- Professor Peter Kinderman, Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Liverpool.
- Dr Sam Carr, Reader in Education with Psychology, University of Bath.
- Christina Murphy, Lecturer at Arden University.
- Dr Maheen Siddiqui, Research Fellow, Birkbeck, University of London
- Dr Luan Cassal, Lecturer in Psychology, University College Birmingham, and BPS Chartered Psychologist
- Dr Caroline Hyde, Lecturer, School of Psychology & Counselling and School of Life, Health and Chemical Sciences, The Open University
- Dr Noura S Vyas, Associate Professor of Mental Health, School of Law, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Kingston University London
- Mr Nate Rae, PhD student and associate lecturer in Psychology, London South Bank University; Science Presenter at Braintastic! Science
- Dr Simon Payne, Lecturer in Behaviour Change Science and Psychology, Aberystwyth University
- Dr Mustafa Emara from Egypt. A psychiatrist.
- Dr Daljinder Chalmers, Health Psychologist.
- Caitlin Naylor, PhD Researcher at the University of Bath
- Malwina Niechcial, PhD candidate, Heriot-Watt University
- Tess Rugg, PhD Researcher, University of Bath
- Dr Reece Bush-Evans, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Bournemouth University
- Dr Natalie Mestry, Principal Academic, Bournemouth University
- Dr Hannah Slack, Postdoctoral Researcher, King's College London
- Dr Keri Wong, Associate Professor of Developmental Psychology, University College London
- Dr Danielle Paddock, Research Associate, Sheffield Hallam University
- Ms Sharon Frazer, Staff Tutor & Lecturer, School of Psychology and Counselling, Open University; PhD Researcher University of Exeter
- Dr Rianne Haartsen, Postdoctoral Researcher, Birkbeck University of London
- Prof. Jason Ellis, Professor of Sleep Science, Northumbria University.
- Dr Emma Palmer-Cooper, Lecturer in Psychology, University of Southampton
- Dr Lucy Maddox, Clinical Academic Fellow, University of Bath

- Dr Vassilis Sideropoulos, Senior Research Technical Lead, University College London
- Ms Nadine Mirza, Research Associate, University of Manchester
- Dr Rebecca Evans, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Liverpool
- Dr Ellen Seiss, Principal Academic, Bournemouth University
- Dr. Penny Holding, Consultant Psychologist Transformational Systems, DMIHER, Wardha India/Identitéa, London
- Dr Ian Stephen, Associate Professor, Bournemouth University
- Dr Tracey Elder, Senior Lecturer, Open University, and Chartered Psychologist
- Ms Lowri Evans, Vice President of Cultural and Behavioural Risk, CitiGroup
- Prof Denis Mareschal, Professor of Psychology, Birkbeck University of London
- Harry Piper, Teaching Fellow in Psychology, Bath Spa University
- Dr Steven Karlsson-Brown, Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement Specialist, Heriot-Watt University
- Prof Jasna Martinovic, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, University of Edinburgh.
- Dr Caroline Brett, Health Psychologist and Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, School of Health in Social Science, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Rachel K. Reid, Child and Educational Psychologist, London/South East
- Dr Claire Santorelli, Psychology Study Skills Coordinator, Birkbeck University of London