Menu Design in the UK Food Service Sector: Nudging Consumers Towards More Environmentally Sustainable Food Choices (Study Protocol)

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Objectives:

There is a growing recognition of the importance of pro-environmental behaviour and an increasing level of conscious consumerism of sustainable and plant-based eating[1]. Eating out is an integral part of modern society, thus the food sector can make a substantial contribution to a more environmentally sustainable food system.

£655

spent annually by average UK households on eating out in restaurants (2021-2022)

In previous studies, changes to menu labelling and layout, and manipulating the type of information provided[2] have been used to influence consumer food choice. This study will investigate the design of menus in restaurants (specifically small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)).

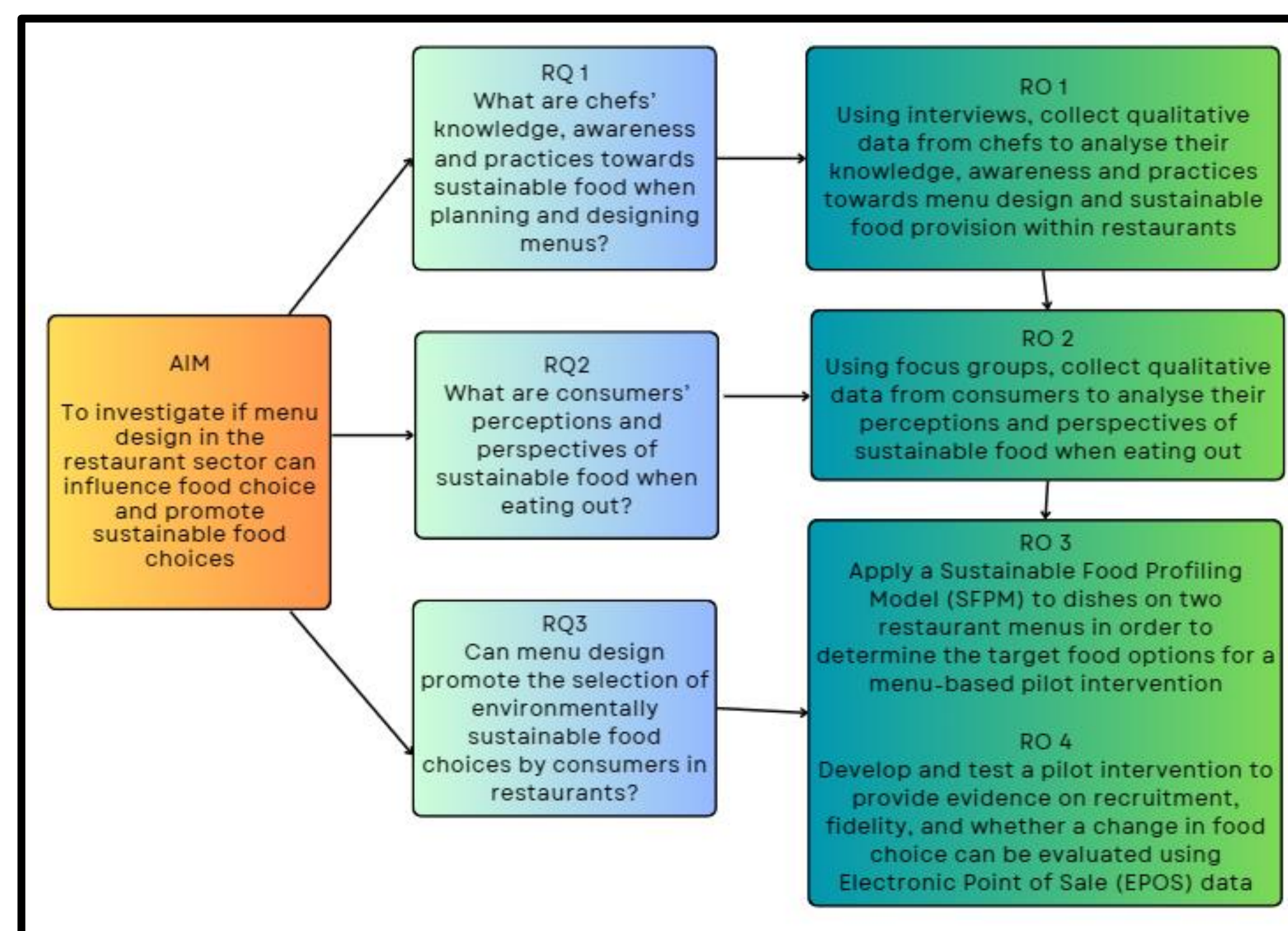**Figure 1:** Example of a restaurant menu

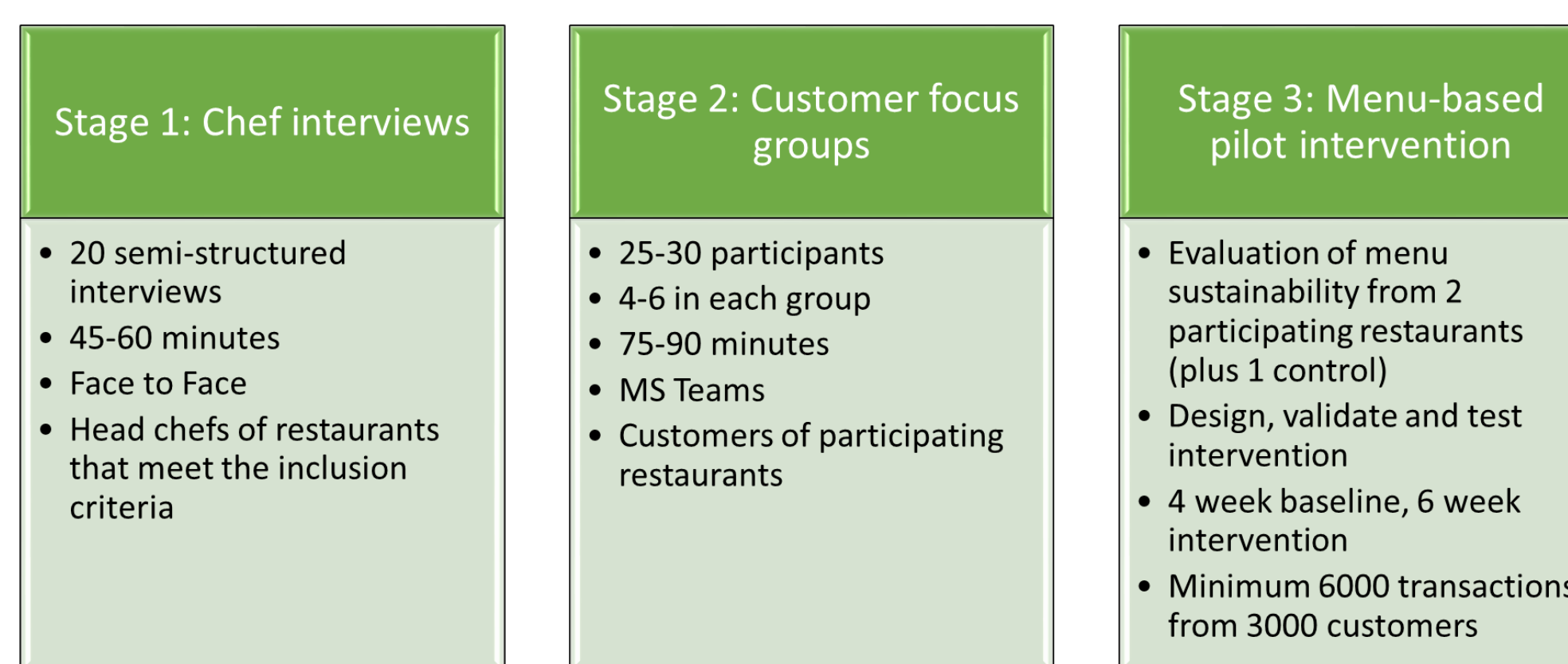**Figure 2:** Research aim, questions and objectives

Methods:

Figure 3: Research stages

✓ Stage 1 & 2: Qualitative components will explore participants' awareness and perceptions of sustainable food. Data will be analysed using an inductive thematic approach and will inform the development of a menu-based pilot intervention.

✓ Stage 3: Menus from participating restaurants will be evaluated using a Sustainable Food Profiling Model to rank dishes' environmental impact and identify dishes to be promoted as part of the intervention. Using the restaurants' EPOS system, food choice data (e.g., dishes ordered, dish category) will be collected and analysed to determine whether selection of the promoted sustainable dishes changed during the intervention
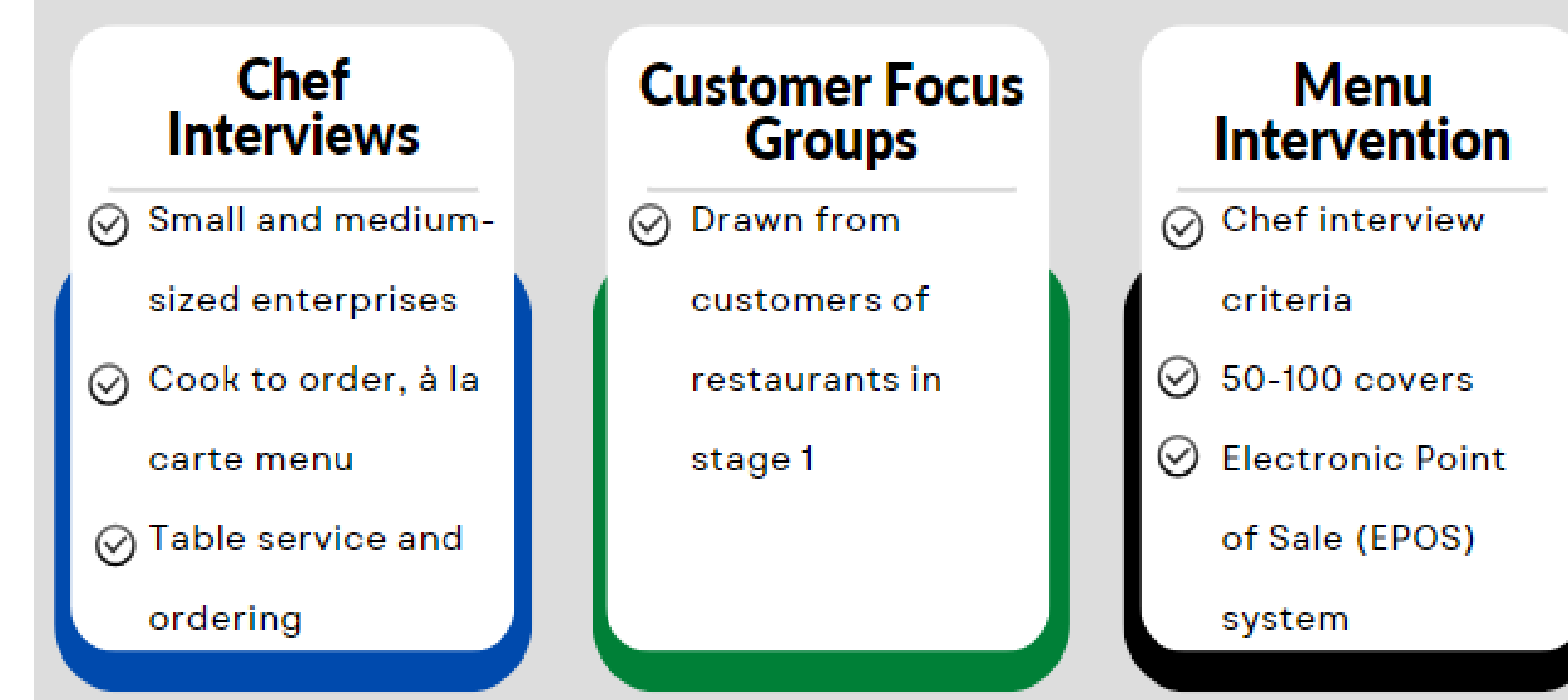
Inclusion Criteria

Figure 4: Inclusion criteria for each research stage

Conclusions:

It is argued that the 'great reset' of the visitor economy is long overdue[3] and Covid-19 has highlighted the necessary move from a linear to a circular economy; this Build Back Better ethos is crucial to ensure a resilient recovery. This study will extend the evidence on menu design and restaurants' sustainability performance. The work will inform the discussion on nudge-based approaches in influencing consumer behaviour.
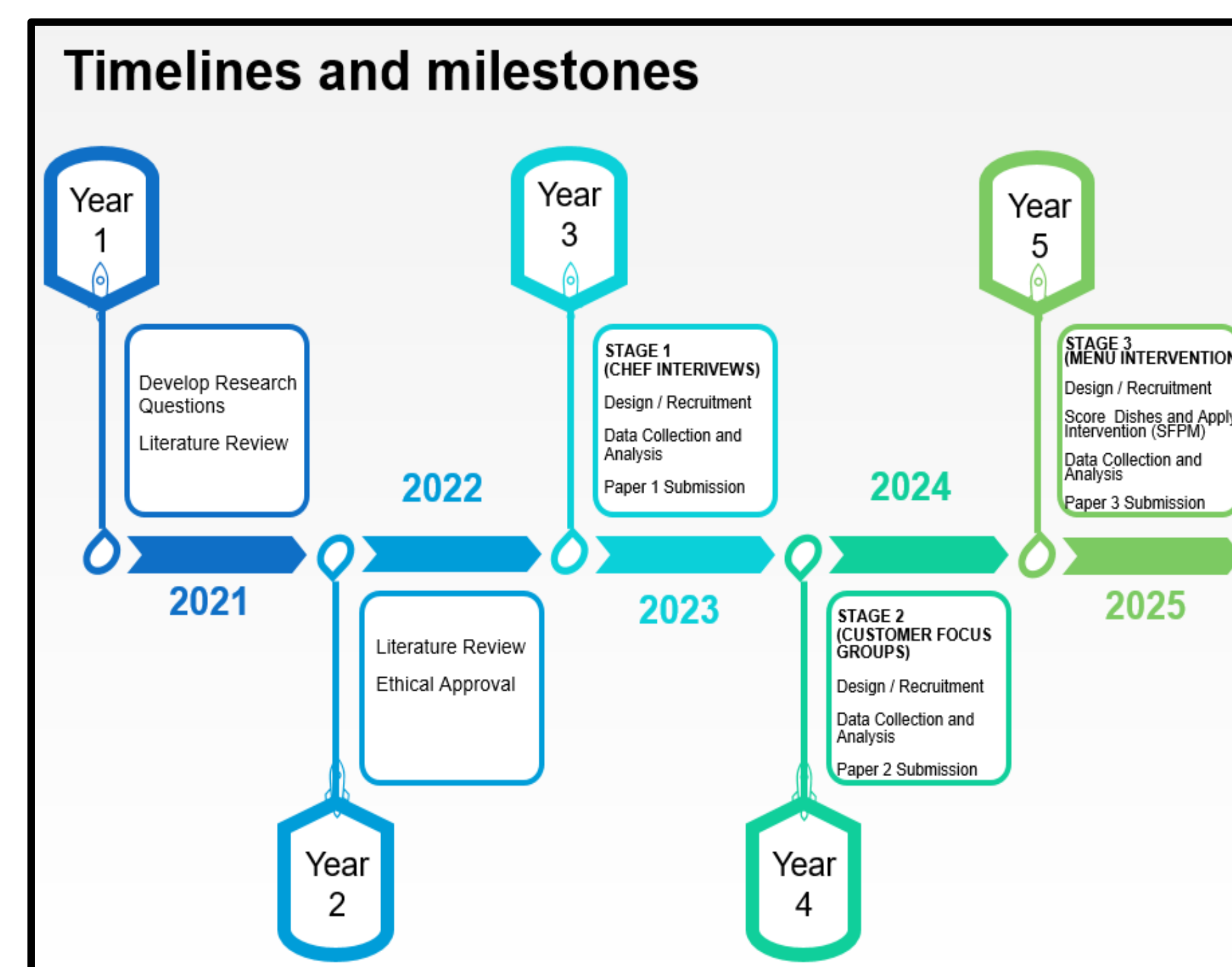
Project Timeline:

Figure 5: Project timeline and milestones

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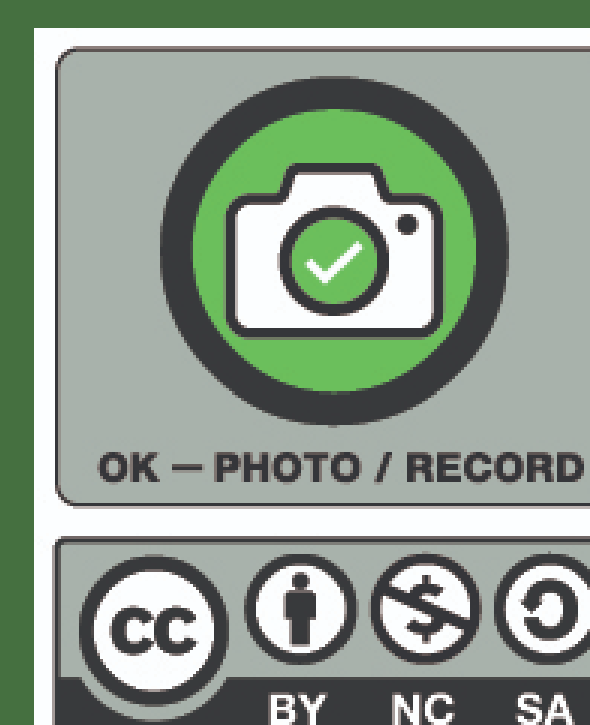Email: **fscmj@leeds.ac.uk**
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References: [1]Krizanova, J. *et al.* (2021) 'Pro-environmental behavior predicts adherence to plant-based diets', *Appetite*, 163, p. 105243. [2]Fernandes, A. C. *et al.* (2016) 'Influence of menu labelling on food choices in real-life settings: A systematic review', *Nutrition Reviews*, 74 (8), pp. 534–548. [3]Sigala, M. (2020) 'Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research', *Journal of Business Research*, 111, pp. 312-321.