

# Climate Conscious Travel at the University of Edinburgh

Improving data reporting and stakeholder engagement to support organisational change.

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# UoE Climate Strategy



# UoE Strategy to 2030

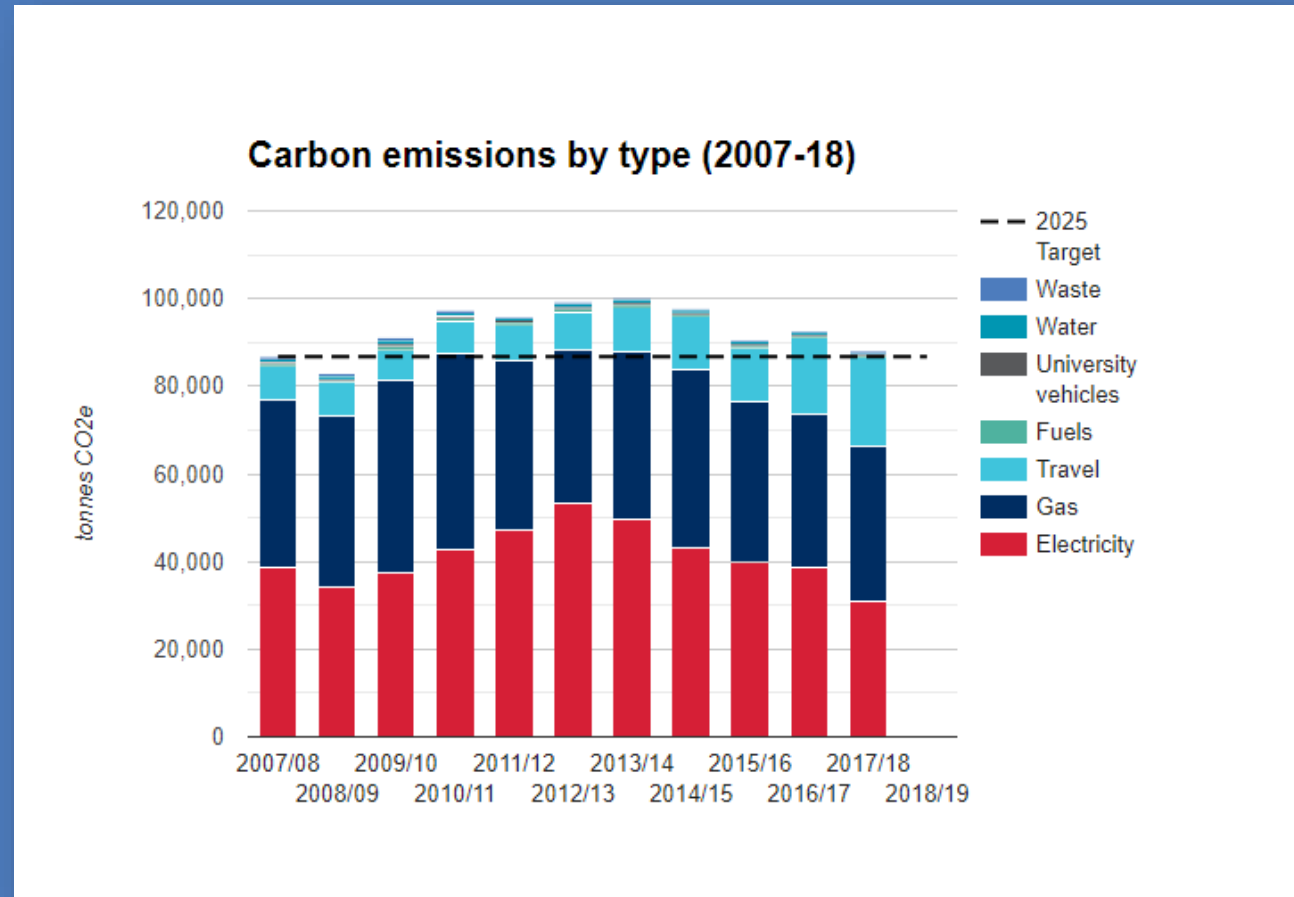


# Results

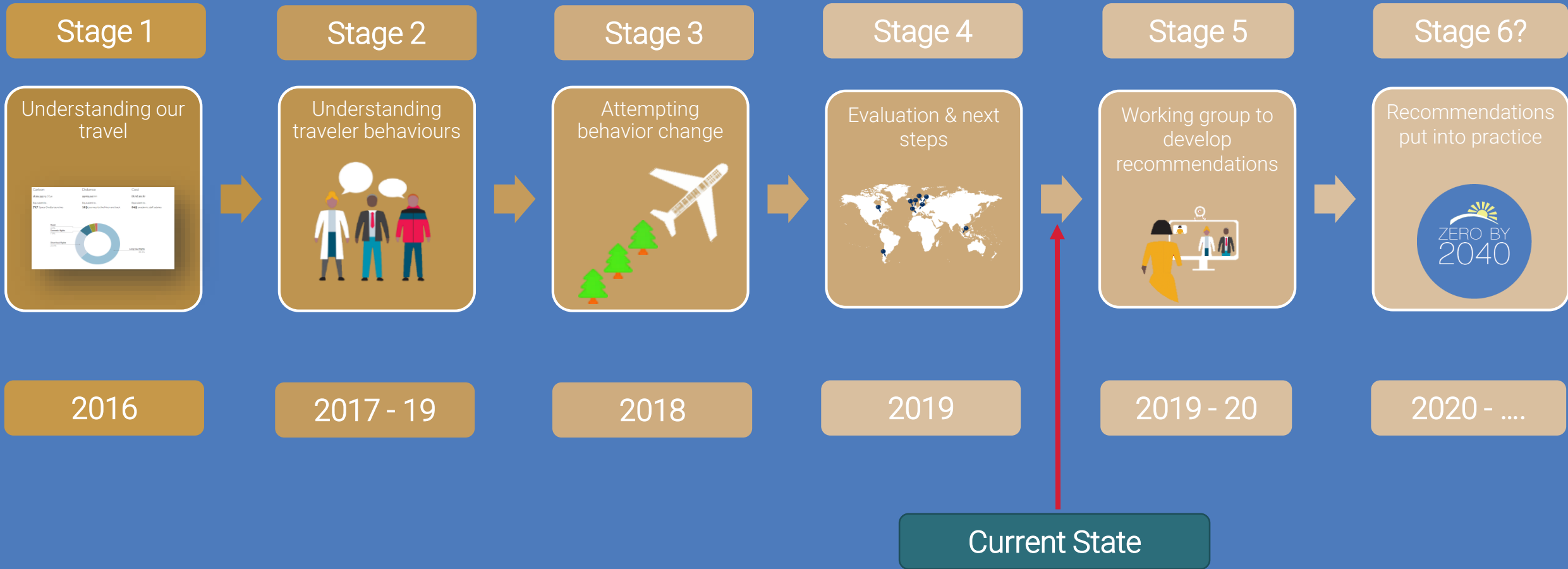
University carbon emissions are reducing – on track to reach intermediate target by 2025

This is mainly due to initiatives focused on reducing energy consumption (& decarbonisation of the grid...)

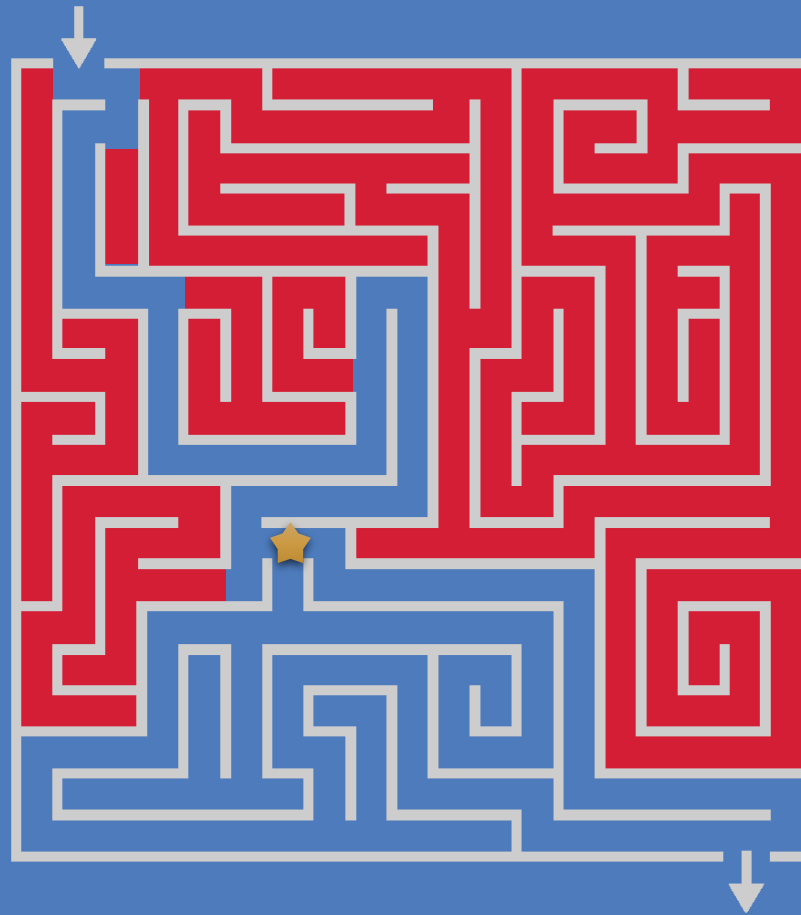
BUT ... emissions from business travel are increasing!



# Project overview



# Addressing Business Travel in Higher Education feels like....



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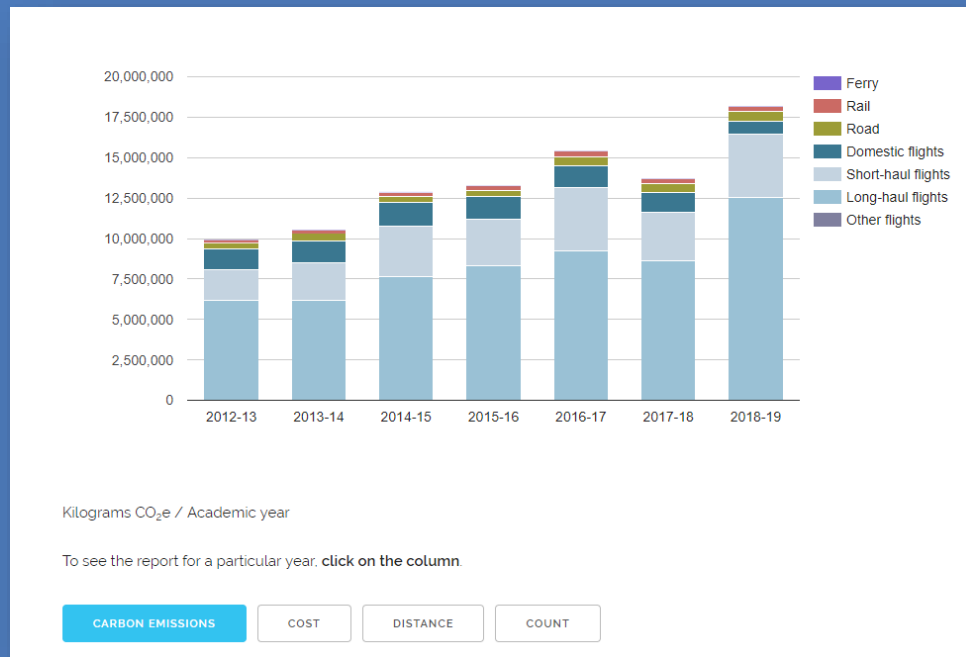


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# Stage 1: Understanding our travel



[edin.ac/business-travel-report](https://edin.ac/business-travel-report)

## In 2018-19 we...

- recorded over 110,000 journeys
- travelled over 66,000,000 miles
- Spent over £11m on travel alone
- emitted over 18,500 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Spent an estimated 199,200 hours travelling by air & rail



# Stage 2: Understanding traveler behaviours

2017: SRS workshop to develop ISM model to understand barriers to travel

2017-18: Interviewed 5 senior managers & conducted focus groups with around 40 academic and professional staff

2019: We collected survey data from over 400 staff & PhD Students at a number of University Schools



# Opposing Viewpoints

## Academia necessitates travel

*"...we don't travel for the fun of it. It's part of the job..."*

Senior Academic Staff,  
responding to business travel  
survey, 2019

Vs

## Staff like to travel

*"The opportunity to go to places around the world as part of my job is a huge plus point. [A] selfish imperative as well I realise."*

Senior Professional Staff, noted  
in focus group, 2018





# Stage 3: Instigating behavior change

We proposed a range of pilots aimed at reducing business travel emissions, without reducing research impact

Mandatory online training | Mandatory train to London

Automatic carbon compensation on flights | Adaptation of Internal Grant Criteria

Unfortunately it was not possible to initiate these as pilots on this occasion.



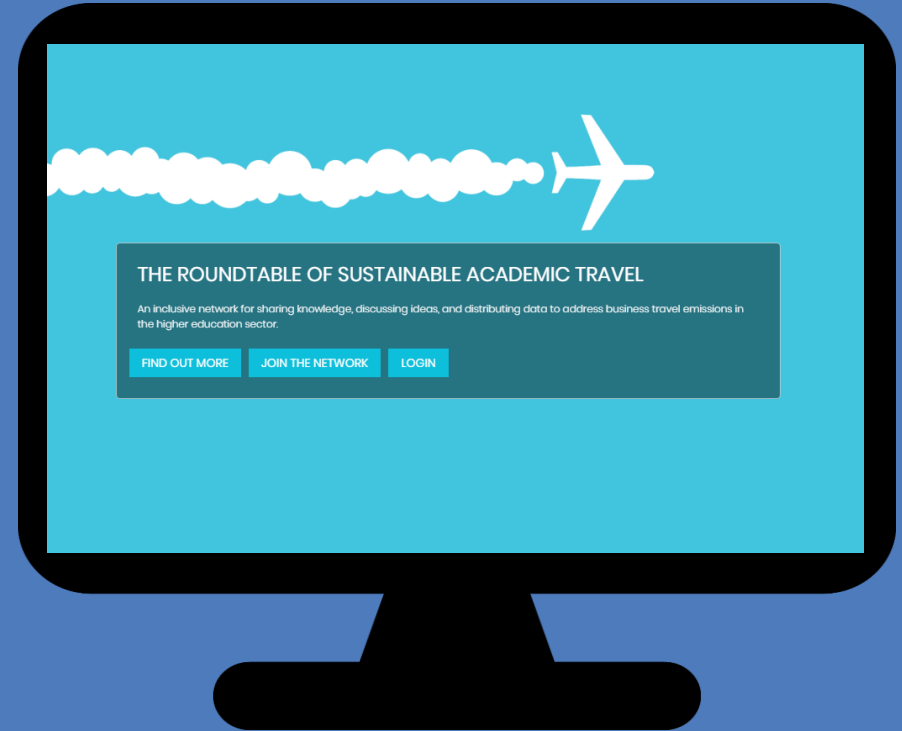
# Stage 4: Evaluation & next steps

- Developing Climate Conscious Travel model
- Initiating University-wide Travel and Aviation working group (stage 5) & supporting school /department level working groups
- Proposal to update the business travel report & share reporting tool with other institutions
- Trialling range of virtual tools & initiating review of Virtual Collaboration Tools
- Building an international network of institutions addressing business travel



# The Roundtable of Sustainable Academic Travel

- Method of increasing communication on this topic across FHE
- Opportunity to share knowledge, ideas, & data
- Open to all FHE institutions, & associated organisations
- To date: Over 85 institutions signed up from 20 different countries
- **Biggest challenge now?** Increasing collaboration and communication within the network



[businesstravelroundtable.ac](https://businesstravelroundtable.ac)



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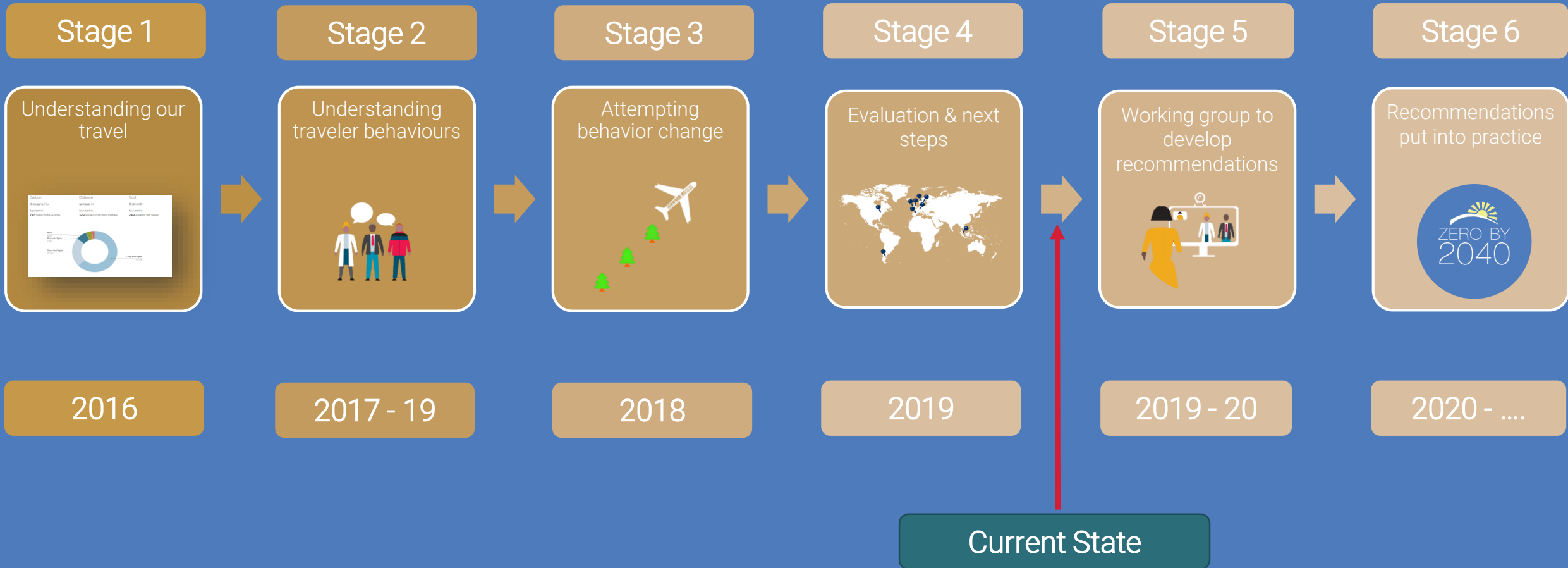
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# Lessons learned

- When discussing business travel, providing accurate data is important
- The barriers to reducing travel are complex
- Addressing business travel should not be focused on reducing carbon emissions alone
- When introducing change, engagement with all stakeholders is key
- Business travel emissions are a concern across the higher education sector



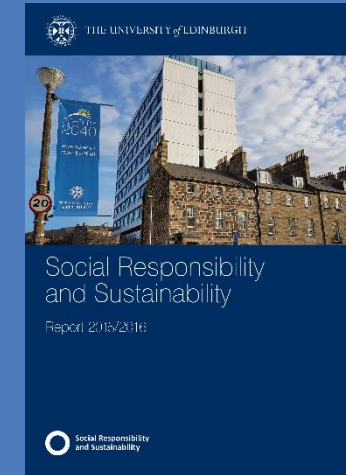
# Any questions?



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