Decision making

This is the deliberative phase of the process where the participants discuss how they feel about the question and try to come up with an answer, solution or way forward.

This phase is designed to enable **all voices to be heard and for those voices to be valued and respected**. People are given an equal amount of time to speak and they are listened to. They are not talked over and what they say, if it is agreed with or mirrored by the rest of or the majority of the group, may be presented to the whole group in the delivery of the results.

To achieve this, the small group discussion should be facilitated, preferably by a trained **facilitator** , and the discussion minuted by a **notetaker**. An agreed summary of the notes are then presented to the whole group at the end of the discussion period.

The primary aim of the group discussion is to answer the question, therefore the role of the facilitator is to ensure that everyone who wants to say something in respect to the question gets the opportunity to do so. The role of the notetaker is to write down the points of the discussion that get agreement from other members of the group. When everyone that wants to has spoken, the facilitator will run through the notes to get agreement that they are the points agreed.

If necessary, they can use one of several methods to narrow down the agreed points:

- Getting a show of hands for the points that people like.
- Passing the points around and getting the participants to make a mark next to their favourites.
- In the case of a closed (yes/no) question, ask for a confirmation vote on the group’s decision.

Whichever way, it is the role of the facilitator in these small group discussions to ensure that what the group presents represents the thoughts and feelings of the group. It is not their role to input into the discussion or try to direct the conversation in any direction, except for keeping it focused on answering the question.
