

## The stages of the consensus process for large groups

Discussions in the  
spokescouncil

**Feedback  
through the  
spokes**

Discussions and  
decisions in small groups

### Step 1: Introduce and clarify the issue(s) to be decided

Share relevant information. Work out what the key questions are. This step can either happen with the whole group together or just with the spokes in the spokescouncil who then feed back to small groups.

### Step 2: Explore the issue and look for ideas

1. Gather initial thoughts and reactions. What are the **issues** and **concerns**?
2. Collect **ideas** for solving the problem – write them down.
3. Have a **broad ranging discussion** and debate the ideas. What are the pros and cons?  
Start to think about solutions to the concerns.  
Eliminate some ideas, shortlist others.

**Feedback ideas  
and concerns**

### Step 3: Look for emerging proposals

Is there one idea, or a series of ideas, that brings together the best qualities of what has been discussed? Look for a solution that everyone might agree on and create a proposal.

**Feedback ideas,  
concerns and  
proposals from other  
groups**

### Step 4: Discuss, clarify and amend proposals

Taking into account all the other groups' positions as well as those within your own group. Ensure that any remaining concerns are heard and that everyone has a chance to contribute.  
Look for **amendments** that make the proposals even more acceptable to the whole group.

### Step 5: Test for agreement

Check for blocks, stand asides, reservations and active agreement.

**Feedback position  
of each small  
group**

**Check if decision  
has been reached**

No?

Yes?

### Step 6 Consensus! Implement the decision.

Decide who will do what, when it needs to be done by, and if necessary, how it should be done.