

Participation-Sensitive Mandate Framework

Technical Assessment & Stress Testing Paper

United Kingdom PSMF Stress Test Assessment · 2026

1. Purpose of This Document

This document provides a technical assessment of the (PSMF) Participation-Sensitive Mandate Framework, examining its behaviour under varying electoral conditions, including low turnout scenarios, threshold variation, and complex parliamentary outcomes.

It is intended to support detailed scrutiny by policymakers, researchers, and institutional stakeholders.

2. Scope of Analysis

This paper focuses on:

- Threshold scaling and behavioural effects
- Worst-case parliamentary scenarios
- Provisional mandate and confirmation poll dynamics
- System stability under stress conditions

This document supplements, but does not replace, the core framework.

3. Threshold Scaling Model

The framework operates with a participation threshold set in legislation. The effects of the framework vary depending on where this threshold is set.

Tier 1, Safeguard Mode (~25%)

Activation: Extremely rare

- Function: Constitutional safeguard
- Effect: Minimal system impact
- Risk: Negligible
- Protects against extreme disengagement scenarios



Tier 2 , Engagement Mode (~30–35%)

Activation: Occasional

- Function: Signals participation relevance
- Effect: Moderate behavioural influence
- Risk: Manageable
- Encourages increased turnout without systemic pressure

Tier 3, Incentive Mode (~40%+)

Activation: Frequent

- Function: Behaviour-shaping
- Effect: Strong participation incentives
- Risk: Increased parliamentary sensitivity
- Introduces measurable political pressure linked to turnout

4. Baseline Behaviour (General Elections)

Under typical UK turnout conditions (~55–70%):

- The majority of constituencies receive full mandates
- The framework remains largely inactive at lower thresholds
- Government formation proceeds unchanged

This confirms compatibility with existing electoral outcomes.



5. Worst-Case Scenario Modelling

Scenario: Hung Parliament with Multiple Provisional Seats

Initial Result:

- Party A: 310 seats
- Party B: 300 seats
- Others: 40 seats
- Hung Parliament

Government forms via confidence-and-supply arrangement.

Provisional Mandates Identified

Total provisional seats: 60

- Party A: 25
- Party B: 20
- Others: 15

A provisional mandate is a classification applied to an otherwise valid electoral outcome where participation falls below a defined threshold. It does not affect the legal authority of the elected representative, but introduces a time-bound requirement for a confirmation poll.

Phase 1: Immediate Outcome

- Parliament functions normally
- Government forms
- No delay and no vacancy

The framework maintains continuity.

Phase 2: Interim Political Effects

- Increased sensitivity in marginal votes
- Greater constituency focus among provisional MPs
- Reduced party discipline in some cases

This reflects intensified, but bounded, parliamentary dynamics.

Phase 3: Confirmation Poll Stage (Within Two Years)

- 60 provisional mandates subject to confirmation poll
- 35 confirmed
- 25 rejected → by-elections triggered

Confirmation polls are conducted through existing electoral infrastructure wherever possible, either alongside suitable scheduled elections or through standalone local confirmation polls where no suitable election occurs within the two-year window, minimising administrative burden.

Phase 4: Outcomes Following Rejected Confirmation

Illustrative redistribution:

- Party A loses 10 seats
- Party B gains 8
- Others gain 7

Result:

Government majority potentially reduced or lost, This occurs only through a one-time, participation-linked process affecting a limited number of constituencies and does not interfere with the initial formation of government.

6. Constitutional Impact Assessment

What Does NOT Occur

- No invalidation of original election
- No disruption to government formation
- No vacancy of seats
- No quorum dependency
- No system paralysis

What CAN Occur

- Delayed adjustment of parliamentary composition
- Increased political sensitivity in hung parliaments
- One-time rebalancing of seats where confirmation is rejected



7. Interpretation of Effects

This framework introduces:

structured, participation-based feedback mechanism within an otherwise stable parliamentary system

Key distinction:

Not instability of the system,
but conditional responsiveness of mandates.

8. Comparison with Existing Mechanisms

Current System	Framework
By-elections (random)	Confirmation poll (structured)
Reactive seat loss	Participation-linked confirmation
No legitimacy linkage	Direct legitimacy linkage

9. Political Behaviour Effects

The framework may:

- Encourage higher turnout
- Increase campaign focus on disengaged voters
- Improve mandate awareness
- Strengthen accountability signals

10. Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigation
Parliamentary sensitivity	Threshold calibration
Political volatility	One confirmation poll only
Strategic behaviour	No advantage from abstention

The framework replaces random, unstructured adjustments to parliamentary composition with a predictable, participation-linked process grounded in democratic engagement.



11. Key Safeguards

- Election results always stand
- Immediate assumption of office
- One confirmation poll only, with no repeated cycles
- Time-bound process (max 2 years)
- Integration with existing electoral system

12. Core Conclusion

The framework:

- Preserves institutional continuity
- Introduces participation-sensitive mandate durability
- Operates within established UK constitutional behaviour
- Remains stable under stress conditions

Final Statement:

Participation currently determines outcomes, but does not influence how those outcomes are sustained. The framework introduces a structured confirmation poll mechanism through which participation becomes relevant to the durability of a mandate.