

By-election likely as MP watchdog says Margaret Ferrier should be suspended from Commons for 30 days

Margaret Ferrier MP should be suspended for 30 days for her breach of Covid rules in 2020, a [Commons Standards Committee report](#) into her conduct has concluded..

If the recommendation is approved by a vote in the Commons, it will trigger a recall petition and a possible by-election in her Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency.

Ms Ferrier referred herself to the MP standards watchdog after she admitted attending Westminster while waiting for the results of a Covid test and then travelling back from London to Glasgow by train, the day after being made aware she had tested positive.

Ms Ferrier lost the SNP Whip as a result of the breach of the rules, but remained as an independent MP, despite calls to resign, including from former SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon.

The standards committee investigation found Ms Ferrier to have “knowingly and recklessly exposed members of the public and those on the parliamentary estate to the risk of contracting COVID-19 and demonstrated a disregard for the parliamentary and national guidance in place”. They also found her to have “caused significant damage to the reputation of the House.”

Ms Ferrier has already pled guilty to a breach of criminal law and was given a sentence of community service at Glasgow Sheriff Court last August.

A by-election could be an early test for the new leader of the

SNP and First Minister Humza Yousaf. The seat is a key target for Labour, who won it in 2017 before it went back to the SNP in 2019.

Commenting on the decision, Edinburgh South MP Ian Murray, Labour's Shadow Scottish Secretary, repeated calls for Margaret Ferrier to step down. He said:-

"Margaret Ferrier's reckless actions put people at risk and rode roughshod over the rules everyone else followed. It is right that Parliament has thrown the book at her for this unacceptable behaviour.

"There are still serious questions for the SNP to answer on what they knew and what they did at the time.

"Even Nicola Sturgeon called for her to resign – now Humza Yousaf must do the same.

"If Margaret Ferrier doesn't resign the people of Rutherglen and Hamilton West can exercise their right to boot her from office.

"Her constituents deserve better and that means a by-election."

Speaking after First Minister Questions today, Humza Yousaf reaffirmed the SNP position that Ms Ferrier should stand down and said he looked forward to fighting that by-election.



Ian Murray MP