

SNP media officer resigns

Murray Foote, who was in charge of media for the SNP, has resigned following the row over numbers of members.

Mr Foote, formerly editor of The Daily Record and Sunday Mail, tweeted: "Acting in good faith and as a courtesy to colleagues at party HQ, I issued agreed party responses to media inquiries regarding membership.

"It has subsequently become apparent there are serious issues with these responses.

"Consequently, I concluded this created a serious impediment to my role and I resigned my position with the SNP group at Holyrood."

In light of recent events, a brief update from me:
pic.twitter.com/gSwuGjYgLD

– Murray Foote (@murrayfoote) [March 17, 2023](#)

The party had denied that the number of listed members had decreased by tens of thousands and Foote had defended media reports last month as inaccurate. But in light of the news yesterday which confirmed the numbers had fallen to 72,186 Mr Foote handed his notice to the Chief Executive, Peter Murrell.

Earlier in the week the two SNP leadership candidates Ash Regan and Kate Forbes had issued a joint demand to Mr Murrell to publish the number of members who could vote in the leadership election.

SNP Leadership Election

F.A.O. Peter Murrell
Chief Executive Officer
Scottish National Party (SNP)
Gordon Lamb House, 3 Jackson's Entry, Edinburgh, EH8 8PJ

Subject: Request for Information on SNP Membership and Voting Process

Dear Mr Murrell,

I am writing this open letter on behalf of all the campaign teams of Ash Regan and Kate Forbes, both of whom are contesting for the leadership of the Scottish National Party (SNP). We request that you provide essential information pertaining to the current membership status and voting procedures within the SNP, which is necessary for ensuring a fair and transparent leadership election.

Specifically, we ask that you disclose the following information to all campaign teams:

1. The total number of paid-up members currently within the SNP.
2. The number of digital voting papers that have been sent out to members.
3. The number of physical postal voting papers that have been issued.

We have previously reached out to the National Secretary, Lorna Finn, with a request for this information. However, we have yet to receive a response, which has prompted us to address this matter through a formal open letter.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the SNP, it is your responsibility to ensure that the leadership election process is transparent, fair, and equitable. Providing this information is crucial to fostering trust and confidence among the candidates, their campaign teams, and the party members who are participating in the election.

We kindly request that you respond to this letter and share the requested information as soon as possible. Your cooperation in this matter will not only demonstrate the SNP's commitment to democratic values and principles but also help maintain a strong and united party during this leadership contest.

We look forward to your prompt response and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Ash Regan MSP

The party then published the numbers showing a drop of about 40%.

Ash Regan's campaign pointed out that while she was pleased to learn that SNP HQ has released the membership numbers, after her call for greater party transparency, it is "important to note that there has been a significant reduction in membership numbers since October 2022, following the Gender Recognition Reform (GRR) fiasco". This was due to the previous administration's resistance to listening to reason on the protection of women and girls. Such a significant drop in membership numbers must have been what quickened the out-going First Minister's resignation.

Ash Regan is the only candidate in this leadership contest who has demonstrated integrity on the GRR debacle, having resigned from government in protest at the resistance to introduce safeguards around the GRR Bill. She understands that listening to the concerns of members is crucial for the success of the SNP.

Ash Regan said: "The SNP has a tradition of attracting independent minded and smart people who work together for Scotland. We've lost some good people and I want to see us build our membership numbers and attract people back to the party. The SNP I lead will recognise the hard work and dedication of our activists."



LMurray Foote resigns as SNP media chief in row over party membership figures Pic taken at Bute House Feb 2020 PHOTO Alan Simpson Photography