



INQUEST TOUCHING THE DEATH OF DAWN STURGESS

**c/o Fieldfisher
Riverbank House
2 Swan Lane
London EC4R 3TT**

Secretary of State for the Home Department
Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

17 November 2021

Dear Secretary of State

Inquest into the Death of Dawn Sturgess

Thank you for considering my request to set up an Inquiry to enquire into Dawn Sturgess' death and the kind invitation contained in your letter today for me to Chair the Inquiry with terms of reference annexed to your letter. I am grateful to you for reaching your decision within the timeframe set at the preliminary hearing on 22 September 2021.

I will be delighted to Chair the Inquiry, providing arrangements are made for me to retain the services of my existing legal team. They have already spent many hours in preparing for the inquest and are experienced in this kind of work. It will be essential for me to keep them to ensure I have all the assistance I need and to avoid any hiatus in the work of preparing for the Inquiry.

It will also be important for me to retain my powers as Coroner so that the extensive work currently being undertaken by Operation Verbasco, HM Government and others to prepare documents for use in the Inquiry may continue without interruption. Like you, I am anxious to ensure that the Inquiry can commence its substantive work and deliver answers to the questions the bereaved family and partner of Dawn Sturgess have about her death as soon as possible. I will therefore ask my team to liaise with your officials to work through all the necessary arrangements so the Inquiry can be set up early in 2022.

Yours sincerely

The Rt Honourable the Baroness Heather Hallett DBE