



Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE
Fieldfisher
Riverbank House
2 Swan Lane
London
EC4R 3TT

16 November 2021

Dear Baroness Hallett,

Following your letter of 22 September 2021, I have considered the particular circumstances of the inquest into the death of Dawn Sturgess and the detailed views set out in your letter of 29 July 2021 along with the views set out by Counsel on behalf of Ms Sturgess' family. As a result I have decided to establish an inquiry under the provisions of the Inquiries Act 2005.

I would like to invite you to be the sole chair of this Inquiry in accordance with section 3(1) of the Act. If you accept this offer, as you indicated in July you would be happy to, then I would welcome an early conversation with you and your team to ensure a smooth transition to the inquiry and to allow an announcement to Parliament as soon as possible.

Subject to your views as prospective Chair of the Inquiry, I propose that the Terms of Reference build on the requirements of Section 5(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, as you noted in your letter to me of 29 July 2021 and Counsel to the Inquest subsequently set out.

There are a number of administrative and security details our teams will need to resolve, but I hope you will agree that we should aim to establish the inquiry as soon as is reasonably possible in 2022. My officials will do all they can to support you throughout the course of the Inquiry.

Like you, I am keen that this Inquiry keeps the family of Ms Sturgess at its heart in its pursuit to understand how she died. I am therefore also writing to the family of Ms Sturgess to inform them of my decision to establish a public inquiry.

I am mindful of the time that has already passed since Ms Sturgess' death and her family's understandable wish for the investigation to be completed as soon as the circumstances of a highly complex and sensitive investigation allow. I support your view that the Inquiry should be timely and hope that a proportionate, independent investigation will allow that to be met.

As I said in my letter to you on 29 September 2021, my thoughts remain with Ms Sturgess' family and all those affected by the horrific events which took place in Salisbury and Amesbury in 2018. I hope this Inquiry will bring comfort to them through a greater understanding of the circumstances of Ms Sturgess' death and recognise the bravery and resilience of those who responded.

Yours sincerely,

With our best wishes



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Annex

Provisional Terms of Reference subject to agreement from the Chair

- 1) Subject to paragraph 2 below, the Chair is to conduct an investigation into the death of Dawn Sturgess in order to:
 - a. Ascertain, in accordance with section 5(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 who the deceased was; how; when and where she came by her death; and the particulars (if any) required by the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 to be registered concerning the death;
 - b. Identify, so far as consistent with section 2 of the Inquiries Act 2005, where responsibility for the death lies; and
 - c. Make such recommendations as may seem appropriate.

- 2) That investigation is to take into account the investigations which have already been conducted by the Coroner (Lady Hallett).