

# Public inquiry into death of Dawn Sturgess

News story

Home Secretary announces a public inquiry to investigate the death of Dawn Sturgess.



Today, the Home Secretary Priti Patel has announced that the government will establish a public inquiry into the death of Dawn Sturgess, who died in July 2018 following exposure to the nerve agent Novichok.

The inquiry will be chaired by the honourable Baroness Heather Hallett DBE. Baroness Hallett is a Crossbench Life peer who was nominated by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Burnett of Maldon, to lead the investigation and inquest into Dawn Sturgess' death.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We are establishing an inquiry to ensure that all relevant evidence can be considered, with the hope that the family of Dawn Sturgess will get the answers they need and deserve.

I want to thank Baroness Hallett for agreeing to take on the role of chair and will be carefully considering her recommendations in this case. Above all though, my thoughts remain with Dawn's family.

The inquiry will be undertaken by Baroness Hallett alone as Chair, and the inquiry's investigations will be a matter for the chair.

As the sponsoring department, the Home Office will provide support and ensure that the inquiry has the resources that it needs, reporting to the Home Secretary. An inquiry allows consideration of material and hearings in closed proceedings. This has been done for other investigations such as the inquiry into the death of Alexander Litvinenko and the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

Read the Home Secretary Priti Patel's statement on the [UK Parliament website](#).

Published 18 November 2021

---

## **Integrated Rail Plan: biggest ever public investment in Britain's rail network will deliver faster, more frequent and more reliable journeys across North and Midlands**

- the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) will see the biggest ever government investment in Britain's rail network, with a £96 billion package of rail construction and upgrades for the Midlands and the North
- plan delivers a modern network that will benefit passengers far sooner than previously planned, with many improvements expected this decade – levelling up more quickly
- building 3 new high-speed lines, the IRP will transform rail services – boosting inter-city connections

The biggest ever public investment in Britain's rail network is announced by the government today (18 November 2021), with £96 billion to deliver faster and better journeys to more people across the North and the Midlands, similar to or more quickly than under earlier plans.

Transforming connectivity, the [Integrated Rail Plan \(IRP\)](#) published today will transform both east to west and north to south links, building 3 new high-speed lines, improving rail services to and between the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West including:

- Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) will connect Leeds and Manchester in 33 minutes, down from 55 minutes now
- HS2 East will run direct from central Nottingham to Birmingham in 26 minutes, down from 1 hour 14 minutes now, and from central Nottingham to London in 57 minutes. HS2 will also run from London to Sheffield in 1 hour 27 minutes
- HS2 West will run from London to Manchester in 1 hour 11 minutes and from Birmingham to Manchester in 41 to 51 minutes compared to 86 minutes today.

To most destinations on the HS2 and NPR core routes, both from London and across the Pennines, journey times will be the same as, similar to or faster

than the previous proposals – with improvements being delivered for communities across the Midlands and North up to a decade sooner and to more places. Capacity on key routes will also double or treble under plans.

Under earlier plans, smaller towns on existing main lines such as Doncaster, Grantham, Huddersfield, Wakefield, and Leicester would have seen little improvement, and in some cases even their services cut back. The IRP will protect and improve these crucial links and will deliver improvements with far less disruption to local communities. And on both local train lines and inter-city links, rail passengers will benefit from tangible changes, seeing more seats, shorter journeys, and more frequent and more reliable services.

As well as the new high-speed lines, the IRP fully electrifies and upgrades 2 diesel main lines – the Midlands Main Line and the Transpennine Main Line – as well as upgrading a third main line – the East Coast – with higher speeds, power improvements and digital signalling to slash journey times.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

My mission is to level up opportunity across our country, which is why we're making train journeys faster and more reliable through the biggest ever public investment in our rail network.

This is because better rail connections are essential for growing local economies and businesses, and our Integrated Rail Plan will deliver better services to more people, more quickly.

Levelling up has to be for everyone, not just the biggest cities. That's why we will transform transport links between our biggest cities and smaller towns, ensuring we improve both long-distance and vital local services and enabling people to move more freely across the country wherever they are.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Our plan is ambitious, deliverable and backed by the largest single government investment ever made in our rail network. It will deliver punctual, frequent and reliable journeys for everyone, wherever they live.

Just as the Victorians gave this country our railways nearly 200 years ago, this Integrated Rail Plan will create a modern, expanded railway fit for today and future generations. Significant improvements will be delivered rapidly, bringing communities closer together, creating jobs and making places more attractive to business, and in doing so, rebalancing opportunity across the country.

Our plans go above and beyond the initial ambitions of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail by delivering benefits for communities no

matter their size, right across the North and Midlands, up to 10 to 15 years earlier.

For NPR, we have chosen the first of the options put forward by Transport for the North (TfN) in 2019, a mixture of newbuild high-speed and upgraded conventional line. TfN's options for full newbuild high-speed line were carefully studied but would have made journeys between Leeds and Manchester only 4 minutes faster at a cost of an extra £18 billion, and taken up to a decade longer to deliver.

The package of investment confirms:

**Three new high-speed lines, covering 110 miles:**

- Complete HS2 from Crewe to Manchester, with new stations at Manchester Airport and Manchester Piccadilly
- a new high-speed line between Birmingham and East Midlands Parkway. Trains will continue to central Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield on an upgraded and electrified Midland Main Line
- delivering NPR through a new high-speed line between Warrington, Manchester and Marsden in Yorkshire as in the first of the options originally put forward by TfN in 2019.
- a study to look at the best way to take HS2 trains to Leeds, including capacity at Leeds Station.

**The upgrading or electrification of 3 existing lines:**

- the complete electrification of the Midland Main Line from London to Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield.
- a programme of rapid upgrades to the East Coast Main Line to the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the North East. Journey times will be up to 25 minutes faster than now
- full electrification and upgrade of the Transpennine Main Line between Manchester, Leeds and York as part of delivering the first phase of NPR, installing full digital signalling, with longer sections of three- and four-tracking to allow fast trains to overtake stopping services, and increase through passenger services by 20%. An additional £625 million in new funding has been confirmed today to progress the Transpennine Route Upgrade
- in total, electrification of more than 180 miles of route, meaning that 75% of the country's main lines will be electric, to meet the ambition of removing all diesel-only trains from the network by 2040, as part of our commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050.

**The freeing up of money to improve local services and integrate them properly with HS2 and NPR:**

- a new mass transit system for Leeds and West Yorkshire, righting the wrong that Leeds is the largest city in Western Europe without one. There will be £200 million of immediate funding to plan the project and start building it, and we commit to supporting West Yorkshire Combined

- Authority over the long term to ensure that this time, it gets done
- separately, we could halve journey times between Bradford and Leeds, to be as low as 12 minutes
  - greater connectivity benefits between the West and East Midlands in comparison to previous plan and progressing work on options to complete Midlands Rail Hub, dramatically increasing local services through central Birmingham and across the Midlands and connecting them better to HS2
  - investment to deliver a programme of fares, ticketing and retail reform including the roll out of contactless pay-as-you-go ticketing at commuter stations in the Midlands and North, ending ticket queues and tackling confusion about fares by automatically ensuring that you are charged the best price. The government will also drive towards rolling out digital ticketing across the whole network

The new plans, using a mixture of new-build high-speed line and upgraded conventional lines, were drawn up after it became clear that the full HS2 and NPR schemes as originally proposed would have cost up to £185 billion and not entered service until the early to mid-2040s.

Building on the expert findings of wide-ranging internal and independent analysis, including from the National Infrastructure Commission, the plan will deliver better outcomes for passengers in a faster and more efficient way than under original plans for the schemes.

---

## [Charity Commission opens inquiry into the Mahfouz Foundation](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission today announced that it has opened an inquiry into the Mahfouz Foundation and donations it received that were intended for another charity.



The [Mahfouz Foundation](#) has charitable aims which include the promotion of the history and culture of the Middle East.

The Commission has been engaging with its trustees since September after media reports alleged that donations, intended for the Prince's Foundation, went instead to the Mahfouz Foundation. Some of these funds were then subsequently transferred elsewhere.

The regulator has also identified concerns around the trustees' governance and financial control of the charity. The Commission escalated its case to a statutory inquiry on 2nd November.

This inquiry will examine:

- whether certain donations received by the Mahfouz Foundation were intended for the charity, have been used in accordance with the donors' intentions and if they should be returned to the donor or otherwise applied for charitable purposes
- whether the trustees have carried out their legal duties and responsibilities as trustees in line with charity law

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional issues emerge.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](#).

## **Ends**

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Prince's Foundation is not regulated by the Commission and is registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales.

Published 18 November 2021

---

# COP26 achieves International Standard For Sustainability

COP26 has achieved independent international recognition for its approach to delivering a sustainable event, attaining the ISO20121 certificate.

ISO20121 is an international standard which sets out the requirements to establish, maintain and continually improve an event sustainability management system. It requires event organisers to demonstrate consideration to all key financial, economic, social and environmental factors related to planning and operations.

Organisations adopting ISO20121 are required to demonstrate that they are minimising potential negative impacts on the environment, communities and local economy – maximising the positive impacts and leaving a legacy to be proud of.

COP26 President Alok Sharma said:

“Sustainability was at the core of COP26 and I am proud that the UK has added yet another impressive standard of environmental compliance to the event with the ISO2021 certification.

“To build on our work with ISO20121, COP26 will also be a carbon neutral event and become the first COP to have achieved PAS2060 validation on carbon neutrality. This will make good on our priority to reduce and avoid emissions at the highest level.”

Large ‘in-person’ events can put a strain on local resources such as water and energy, and create significant waste, or tensions related to culture or proximity with neighbouring communities. COP26 was able to illustrate, using the ISO20121 framework, its commitment to sustainability and that the event was managed in a sustainable way.

To attain the certification, the UK Government appointed Arup and Crowberry as technical sustainability advisors. BSI, British Standards Institution, provided an independent audit for certification of compliance.

Sustainability was embedded throughout the delivery of COP26, through the adoption and integration of the COP26 seven Sustainability Governing Principles:

1. Actively manage potential impacts on the environment and local community and identify opportunities to deliver environmental and social value
2. Provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all
3. Encourage healthy living
4. Ensure a safe and secure atmosphere
5. Encourage more sustainable behaviour
6. Promote the use of responsible sources and responsible use of resources throughout the supply chain

## 7. Leave a positive legacy

Additionally, the COP26 Unit has worked collaboratively with HMG teams, delivery partners and other stakeholders to embed and demonstrate how they have robustly considered all dimensions of sustainability. This includes a detailed assessment within all the operational delivery areas of the event including the Blue Zone and Green Zone Venues, Transport, Security, Suppliers, Catering and Health and Safety.

### Notes for editors

More information on the actions taken to deliver a more sustainable event under our seven principles is provided on the [COP26 Sustainability website](#), these include:

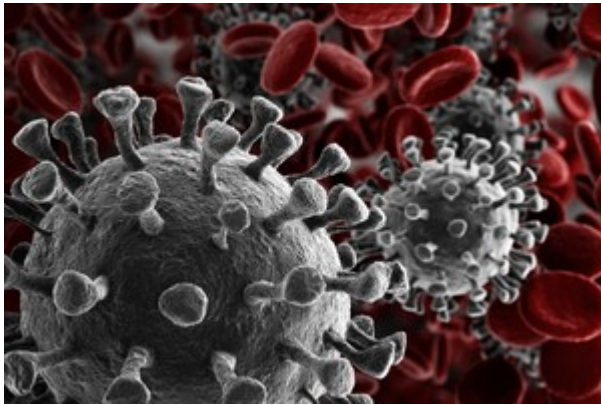
- Prioritising low carbon alternative energy sources such as electric and low emission vehicles, solar energy for temporary traffic lights and Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in generators, instead of diesel.
- Prioritising sustainability by including explicit requirements in our supplier procurements and with partners.
- Encouraging delegates to use active travel such as walking and cycling or public transport where possible.
- Catering that prioritises locally sourced, healthy and in season food items to minimise mileage for transportation and supporting local business. You can find out more about catering in our press release [here](#).
- Working with our hygiene partners, we supplied PPE that was sustainable, washable and included filters, in order to follow local COVID regulations and deliver a safe COP26.
- Repurposing the furniture, which was provided by Ikea UK to furnish the conference, will involve working closely with Glasgow City Council to ensure the furniture is given a second life at charity organisations and local community projects across the city. Other legacy examples include distributing the conference carpets in the temporary structures to low-income families, sending MDF sheets and cotton roof panels from the Hydro installations to wood recycling and men's shed projects in the city and turning the hundreds of metres of black backed fabric graphics into bags, pencil cases, laptop bags, and boxes.
- Employing local people for specific event roles.
- Prioritising leaving a legacy in the events industry by hosting industry-wide workshops on how to improve standards and best practice for future events.

---

[\*\*UKHSA reminds travellers to China\*\*](#)



## about the risk of avian flu



UKHSA is also [advising travellers to China](#) to alert their GP if they experience any symptoms when they return home.

A record number of human cases with avian flu (H5N6) have been reported from China with onset in 2021, with 22 cases reported in the last 10 months. Before 2021, the largest number of cases of avian flu in China was in 2016 when 9 human cases of infection were reported.

Most cases reported by China have involved close contact with an infected bird (dead or alive). Markets where live birds are sold can also be a source of infection. China has not reported any spread of H5N6 from person to person.

Though the risk to the UK public is very low, UKHSA and the National Travel Health Network are reminding UK travellers to China to protect themselves from avian flu by minimising exposure to wild birds and poultry while in China.

Dr Gavin Dabrera, a Consultant in Acute Respiratory Infections at UKHSA said:

Anyone visiting China should avoid exposure to any birds or live birds in 'wet markets' as a precaution.

We continue to encourage people to avoid touching dead or dying birds and maintain good hand hygiene while travelling.

Avian influenza remains a risk in China and if travellers experience any flu like symptoms within 10 days of returning from China, they should call their GP or NHS 111 and report their recent travel.

UKHSA has arrangements in place to deal with emerging diseases. This includes the detection and investigation of suspected cases, and the management of confirmed cases and their contacts.

Travellers can check [NaTHNaC's TravelHealthPro](#) website for current travel health recommendations for:

In light of the rise in cases in China, the UKHSA has reinforced [clinical guidance for health professionals in England](#) on the assessment and investigation of patients with severe flu-like illness who have recently returned from China.

Published 18 November 2021

Last updated 18 November 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 18 November 2021

First published.