

AIRPROX REPORT No 2026032

Date: 26 Mar 2026 Time: 1206Z Position: 5101N 00038W Location: 1NM SSW of MID VOR/DME

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	PA28(A)	PA28(B)
Operator	Civ FW	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Basic	Basic
Provider	Farnboro' Radar	Farnboro' Radar
Altitude/FL	2300ft	1900ft
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S+
Reported		
Colours	White, blue	White, blue
Lighting	Strobe, ldg	Strobes
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	5-10km	5-10km
Altitude/FL	~2100ft	1765ft
Altimeter	QNH (1023hPa)	QNH
Heading	023°	180°
Speed	105kt	127kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	SkyEcho
Alert	N/A	None
Separation at CPA		
Reported	300ft V/50m H	475ft V/20m H
Recorded	400ft V/~0.1NM H	



THE PA28(A) PILOT reports that they were disturbed that they didn't see this plane at a distance even though it was white against a white background. They were aware of a different plane at distance towards their 2 o'clock. Their usual scan was then interrupted by an issue changing the fuel tanks. They saw the plane very late, approaching below them on their port side, and initiated a climb, although it would have passed beneath them. It appeared [the other pilot] hadn't seen them. Since this incident [the PA28(A) pilot has downloaded SafeSky and will always include it in their scan although they are aware not all planes will register on it].

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE PA28(B) PILOT reports that they had received no warning on their (EC equipment). They had chosen a non-standard height as radio traffic had indicated other aircraft in area. The other aircraft was spotted in their 11-12 o'clock, quite late, they believe because of [the approach] angle and the broken cloud background. Once sighted, it was clear that it would pass overhead and slightly to the right of them so urgent evasive action was not required. They note that their EC equipment is normally very good at picking up aircraft approaching but did not report this one.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

THE FARNBOROUGH LARS CONTROLLER reports that they were on duty as Farnborough LARS West and Zone. They do not know what the traffic loading was like. It had been brought to their attention that there was an Airprox between PA28(A) and PA28(B). No Airprox was reported to them at the time and they have no recollection of the incident.

Factual Background

The weather at Gatwick Airport was recorded as follows:

METAR EGKK 261150Z 31007KT 260V360 9999 FEW045 09/M02 Q1023=

Analysis and Investigation

Farnborough Safety Investigation

The pilot of PA28(A) contacted the Farnborough LARS frequency at 1134:27 (all times UTC), requested a Basic Service and reported approaching Guildford at altitude 1400ft tracking south to the coast. The pilot of PA28(B) contacted the frequency at 1151:54 and reported approaching M3 J4 and was initially instructed to take up a hold due to Farnborough inbound traffic and was subsequently provided with a Radar Control Service for their transit of the Farnborough Zone. Once clear of the Zone, the pilot was informed it would be a Basic Service outside CAS, which was acknowledged by the pilot. The pilot of PA28(B) was instructed to re-call the controller on the LARS West frequency at 1159:46 and issued a new squawk of 0435. PA28(A) was subsequently returning to [...] on a northerly track maintaining altitude 2300ft. PA28(B) was maintaining 1900ft on an opposite direction track to PA28(A). It was perceived that both aircraft were tracking towards the MID VOR.

At 1205:44, the two aircraft passed with 400ft vertical and 0.1NM lateral distance. This was assessed as the closest point of approach. The lateral tracks of the two aircraft did not change. Neither pilot reported the confliction on frequency.

Investigation

Farnborough Radar was operating in a LARS West and Zone combined configuration. PA28(A) was outbound from [...], tracking to the south coast abeam Goodwood before returning to [...]. PA28(B) was outbound from [...], inbound to [...]. After initial contact with the Farnborough LARS frequency, the pilot of PA28(A) did not broadcast on the frequency for the entirety of the flight. Both aircraft were receiving a Basic Service where CAP774 Chapter 2, 2.1 stipulated:

‘A Basic Service is an ATS provided for the purpose of giving advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights ... The avoidance of other traffic is solely the pilot's responsibility. Basic Service relies on the pilot avoiding other traffic, unaided by controllers/ FISOs. It is essential that a pilot receiving this ATS remains alert to the fact that, unlike a Traffic Service and a Deconfliction Service, the provider of a Basic Service is not required to monitor the flight.’

CAP774 Chapter 1, 1.11 highlighted:

‘There may be circumstances that prevent controllers/FISOs from passing timely Traffic Information and/or deconfliction advice, e.g. high workload, areas of high traffic density, unknown aircraft conducting high energy manoeuvres, or when traffic is not displayed to the controller or is obscured by surveillance clutter ... In high workload situations, which may not always be apparent from RTF loading, controllers/FISOs may not always be able to provide timely Traffic Information and/or deconfliction advice. High workload situations may not necessarily be linked to high traffic density.’

The NATS4118 stated that the controller ‘zooms out occasionally to see and highlight the next inbounds but is zoomed in before the Airprox occurs’. It is high-medium to heavy traffic [levels] with several Zone transits and multiple LARS.’ The initial report from the controller stated, ‘[They did] not know what the traffic loading was like.’ The RT review displayed that the 10min prior to the confliction occurring, RT occupancy and workload appeared to be high. The confliction was not reported on the frequency.

Conclusions

The pilots of PA28(A) and PA28(B) were both receiving a Basic Service from the Farnborough LARS controller. In the 10min prior to the conflict, RT analysis displayed high RT occupancy and workload.

The two aircraft were on opposite direction reciprocal tracks with 400ft vertical distance.

The Airprox report from the pilot of PA28(A) stated they were aware of the aircraft, however momentarily distracted prior to the conflict 'by an issue changing the fuel tanks'.

PA28(A) subsequently passed overhead PA28(B) and initiated a reactive climb after seeing the other aircraft late. The pilot of PA28(B) was aware of the aircraft position and took no avoiding action.

The confliction was not reported on frequency.

CAA ATSI

Nothing to add to the NATS investigation report. Both aircraft were on a Basic Service with no requirement for the controller to continuously monitor.

UKAB Secretariat

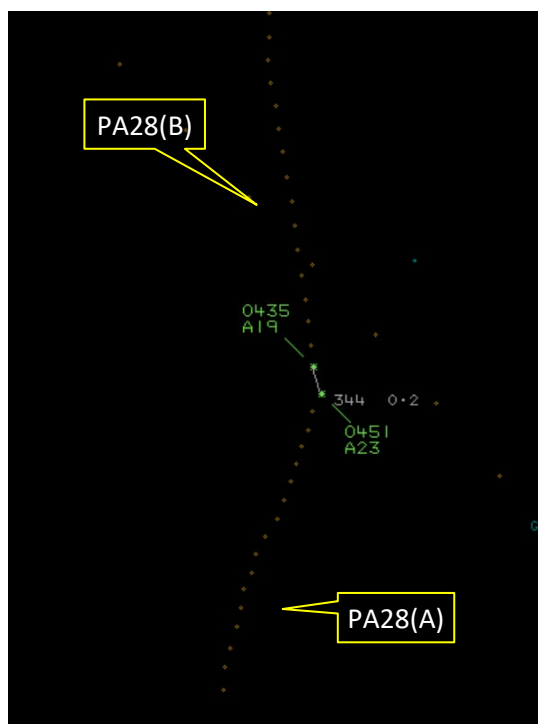


Figure 1: At CPA minus 3sec (1205:42)

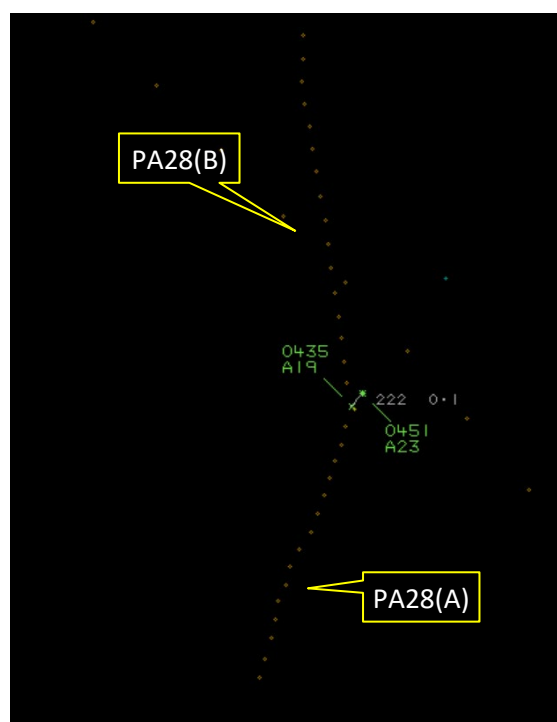


Figure 2: AT CPA + 1sec (1205:46)

Both aircraft were tracked by radar and identified through Mode S data.

The PA28(A) and PA28(B) pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.¹ If the incident geometry is considered as head-on or nearly so then both pilots were required to turn to the right.²

¹ (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

² (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(1) Approaching head-on.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when PA28(A) and PA28(B) flew into proximity 1NM south-southwest of MID VOR/DME at 1206Z on Thursday 26th March 2026. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC and in receipt of a Basic Service from Farnborough LARS West.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, GPS track data, a report from the air traffic controller involved and reports from the appropriate operating authorities. Relevant contributory factors mentioned during the Board's discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

The Board firstly considered the actions of the 2 pilots, noting that both had been subject to a Basic Service with Farnborough. Members wished to stress that the highest level of active service should be sought to enhance situational awareness for operators (**CF3**). They recognised that this is not always possible due to other commitments but, where services are denied, would encourage pilots to report via CAA form FCS1522³ to enable greater understanding of areas where improvements are necessary and could be made. Members noted that the pilot of PA28(A) had not carried any additional electronic conspicuity (EC) equipment, and wished to remind all pilots that EC is a critical element in generating situational awareness and should be considered by all where possible. They noted positively that the pilot of PA28(B) had indeed been equipped with an active EC unit which had in this case unfortunately been unable to detect any electronic emissions from PA28(A) (**CF5**). The Board agreed that the combination of no Traffic Information and incompatible EC fits had deprived both pilots of situational awareness of the proximity of the other aircraft (**CF4**). In discussing the final barrier to a mid-air collision – See and Avoid – Board members noted that both pilots had achieved a late-sighting of the other aircraft (**CF7**), with the pilot of PA28(B) assessing there to have been no risk of collision and the pilot of PA28(A), having reported difficulty in spotting a white aircraft against a predominantly white background and distraction by a fuel-tank changeover issue (**CF6**), had then visually acquired the PA28(B) late. Having been concerned by its proximity (**CF8**), the pilot of PA28(A) had initiated a climbing avoidance action, although they too had assessed the other aircraft would have passed below them. With respect to the matter of 'in-cockpit tasks', in this case the fuel-tank changeover, the relevant Board member wished to remind pilots to break such tasks down into component parts: lookout, look in and find the task, look out, perform the task (ideally without having to look in), lookout!

In reviewing the contribution from the Farnborough Radar controller, members noted that both PA28(A) and PA28(B) pilots had been established on a Basic Service at the time of CPA, and that under this service the controller is not required to continuously monitor the flight (**CF1**). They also noted that the traffic loading for the band-boxed zone, for which the controller had held responsibility, had been reported as 'high-medium to heavy traffic [levels] with several Zone transits and multiple LARS'. Although this particular area is covered by a Short-Term Conflict Alert system, it would not have operated on this occasion as the traffic in question had carried squawks that had sat outside the select frame of that system (**CF2**) and was therefore inactive. Acknowledging the limitations of a Basic Service, and higher priority traffic in their AOR, Board members accepted there had been little more that the controller could have done in this case.

The Board concluded their discussion and considered the risk of collision, noting that both pilots had achieved visual contact with the other aircraft and the PA28(B) pilot had assessed there to have been no risk of collision. Members were in agreement that safety margins had been reduced but were satisfied that there had not been a risk of collision. The Board assigned Risk Category C to this event.

³ [FCS 1522 - UK Airspace Access or Refusal of ATS Report](#)

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK**Contributory Factors:**

	2026032			
CF	Factor	Description	ECCAIRS Amplification	UKAB Amplification
Ground Elements				
• Situational Awareness and Action				
1	Contextual	• ANS Flight Information Provision	Provision of ANS flight information	The ATCO/FISO was not required to monitor the flight under a Basic Service
• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance				
2	Technical	• Conflict Alert System Failure	Conflict Alert System did not function as expected	The Conflict Alert system did not function or was not utilised in this situation
Flight Elements				
• Tactical Planning and Execution				
3	Human Factors	• Communications by Flight Crew with ANS	An event related to the communications between the flight crew and the air navigation service.	Pilot did not request appropriate ATS service or communicate with appropriate provider
• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action				
4	Contextual	• Situational Awareness and Sensory Events	Events involving a flight crew's awareness and perception of situations	Pilot had no, late, inaccurate or only generic, Situational Awareness
• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance				
5	Technical	• ACAS/TCAS System Failure	An event involving the system which provides information to determine aircraft position and is primarily independent of ground installations	Incompatible CWS equipment
• See and Avoid				
6	Human Factors	• Distraction - Job Related	Events where flight crew are distracted for job related reasons	
7	Human Factors	• Identification/ Recognition	Events involving flight crew not fully identifying or recognising the reality of a situation	Late sighting by one or both pilots
8	Human Factors	• Perception of Visual Information	Events involving flight crew incorrectly perceiving a situation visually and then taking the wrong course of action or path of movement	Pilot was concerned by the proximity of the other aircraft

Degree of Risk: C.**Safety Barrier Assessment⁴**

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

Ground Elements:

Situational Awareness of the Confliction and Action were assessed as **not used** because the Farnborough LARS controller was not required to monitor the flights of the 2 PA28s under a Basic Service.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **not used** because this event sat outside the select frame of the equipment in use at Farnborough.

⁴ The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).

Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **partially effective** because both pilots could have sought an active Air Traffic Service in this area.

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because neither pilot had any situational awareness of the proximity of the other aircraft.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the conspicuity equipment carried by PA28(B) had been unable to register any electronic emissions from PA28(A).

See and Avoid were assessed as **partially effective** because the PA28(A) pilot had been distracted whilst switching fuel tanks, and both pilots had achieved only late sightings of the other aircraft.

