

AIRPROX REPORT No 2026043

Date: 10 Apr 2026 Time: 0939Z Position: 5355N 00300W Location: 9NM N Blackpool Airport

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	C152	PA28
Operator	Civ FW	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Basic	Basic
Provider	Blackpool Appr.	Blackpool Appr.
Altitude/FL	1800ft	2000ft
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	White	White, blue, red
Lighting	Beacon	Strobes
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	2000ft	2000ft
Altimeter	QFE	QNH
Heading	180°	360°
Speed	90kt	130kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	SkyEcho ¹
Alert	N/A	NR
Separation at CPA		
Reported	0ft V/1NM H	200ft V/200m H
Recorded	200ft V/0.1NM H	



THE C152 PILOT reports that they [were with] with a student starting the takeoff-and-landing phase of their training. They [followed the] Blackpool coastline to Fleetwood to operate off Pilling Sands at a height of 1000-2000ft. They had a Basic Service from Warton Radar (129.530MHz). After completing three 'pseudo-circuit' patterns off Pilling Sands, they repositioned over the River Wyre estuary between Fleetwood and Knott End at 2000ft. Warton Radar gave them a squawk of 0450 and [suggested they] freecall Blackpool Approach.

Contact was established with Blackpool Approach (119.955Mhz) and a Basic Service [was agreed]. The Blackpool controller asked if they were inbound for a circuit detail, to which they answered "Affirm". They were then [asked] to squawk 7010 and were given the QFE. By that time, they were over the docks at Fleetwood when they saw the other aircraft directly in front [reported at a range of 2-3NM] and at the same altitude. They immediately turned left and descended to approximately 1500ft. They asked Blackpool ATC if they had traffic in the Thornton/Fleetwood area. They looked back and saw the aircraft had continued without change of course or height, and guessed the aircraft in question was the aircraft [whose pilot had] replied to Blackpool ATC stating that they were at Fleetwood. [The pilot of the C152] carried on and completed the circuit detail without further incident.

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

THE PA28 PILOT reports that they were flying in VMC, with their transponder set to Mode C/S, and had been displaying strobe lights. They were using SkyDemon in conjunction with [an EC device] 'receiver' which provides an electronic indication of traffic which is transponding appropriately. Approaching the mouth of the river Wyre, near Fleetwood, on a northerly track, they heard [the pilots of] two aircraft calling in the vicinity of Fleetwood for a join. They do not recall if they reported their altitudes. [The pilot of the PA28 believes that they had been] at approximately 2000ft AMSL based on

¹ The EC device fitted to the PA28 had been operated in 'receive-only' mode.

the Blackpool QNH. They observed one contact on their SkyDemon display, roughly two miles ahead of them, 200ft below on a roughly reciprocal course. They did not detect a second aircraft on the display. They, [and their passenger], both looked out for the two reported aircraft. They gained visual contact with one aircraft, ahead of them [reported at a range of 1-2NM] and clearly below. They did not consider there to have been any risk of collision, but they were about to instruct their PF to make a precautionary turn to the right (in accordance with the Rules of the Air regulations) when they observed the [C152] make a significant turn to their *left* (contrary to the Rules of the Air) so they maintained course and speed and monitored the other aircraft as it passed well below and on their right-hand side. They finally landed approximately 30min later. At no point did anyone indicate that an Airprox had been reported.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

THE BLACKPOOL CONTROLLER reports that [the C152] was at Fleetwood VRP and [the pilot] reported for a join and asked if [the controller] had any aircraft routeing northbound. [The Blackpool controller] asked the only other pilot that was receiving a Basic Service from them that was not already inbound to land. The pilot of that aircraft, which was [the PA28], then replied saying that they were at Knott End at 2000ft (from memory). [The Blackpool controller] then asked [the pilot of the C152] if they had copied the report of the position and level from the [PA28 pilot]. There was a transmission but [the controller] is not entirely sure what was said.

Factual Background

The weather at Blackpool Airport was recorded as follows:

METAR EGNH 100920Z 25008KT 9999 SCT026 08/03 Q1018
METAR EGNH 100950Z 26007KT 9999 SCT027 08/03 Q1018

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

ATSI has nothing else to add to the Blackpool investigation report.

Blackpool Unit investigation

Background

[The pilot of the C152] came onto the Blackpool frequency at 0938 and requested a join. They were given the standard join of 'east of the tall tower' for a right base join to RW28. Their reported level was 2000ft at the Wyre estuary. The pilot of [the C152] then asked the controller if they had any traffic routeing northbound in their vicinity. The ATCO clarified the position of [the PA28] for [the pilot of the C152]. [The pilot of the PA28] reported north of Knott End 2000ft.

No Airprox was reported on frequency. Post event, three days later, the pilot of [the C152] reported the Airprox to ATC. ATC filed an Airprox report as required. In Class G (uncontrolled) airspace, pilots are ultimately responsible for collision avoidance, terrain clearance, and maintaining separation from other aircraft, as it is an uncontrolled environment. Collision avoidance is primarily achieved through a 'see and avoid' technique (lookout), supported by radio communication and electronic conspicuity.

Timeline

0938:17

[C152 C/S]	"Blackpool Approach hello again [C152 C/S]".
ATC	"[C152 C/S] Blackpool Approach good morning. QNH now 1019. Basic Service".
[C152 C/S]	"Basic Service 1019 we're just over the Wyre estuary 2000ft on your QNH looking for... traffic for rejoin".

ATC "[C152 C/S] roger. Report east abeam the tall tower expect a right base join to RW28 QFE 1017".

[C152 C/S] "QFE 1017. East of the tall tower for a right base join RW28 [C152 C/S]".

~ Other transmissions (related to ground movements) ~

0939:40

[C152 C/S] "Er [C152 C/S], are you in contact with an aircraft heading north at Fleetwood sir? Two thousand feet?"

ATC "[PA28 C/S] report your position".

[PA28 C/S] "[PA28 C/S] is just north of Knott End altitude two thousand".

ATC "[PA28 C/S] roger, thanks. Break. [C152 C/S] that might be the one".

[C152 C/S] "Ok. ~unintelligible~ ..hang on that was all.. ~unintelligible~".

ATC "Roger".

Right-of-Way Rules

In this event, one pilot turned left and the other did not alter course. Actual positions and accurate altitudes are not available as Blackpool does not have radar, therefore, actual proximity and severity of the event is unknown. The pilot reports vary in severity. The pilot of [the C152] considered the event an Airprox and the pilot of [the PA28] did not perceive any risk of collision.

Summary

The aircraft were operating in Class G airspace to the north of Blackpool under 'see and avoid' [principles] for collision avoidance. There was no ATC involvement. ATC acted appropriately by establishing the position of [the PA28] when requested. As there was no report of the Airprox on frequency, there was no requirement for the ATCO to file a report at the time. Once they were aware of the event, they reported the Airprox through ECCAIRS as required.

Observations

The pilot of [the C152] made a left turn and descended to avoid [the PA28] which is contrary to the Rules of the Air, however, according to the pilot's report, this avoided a collision.

UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and both aircraft could be positively identified from Mode S data (Figure 1). Neither aircraft was observed by reference to ADS-B data sources.

The aircraft were depicted on the radar replay as having flown at Flight Levels. A suitable correction was applied to determine their altitudes. The diagram was constructed and the separation at CPA determined from the radar data.

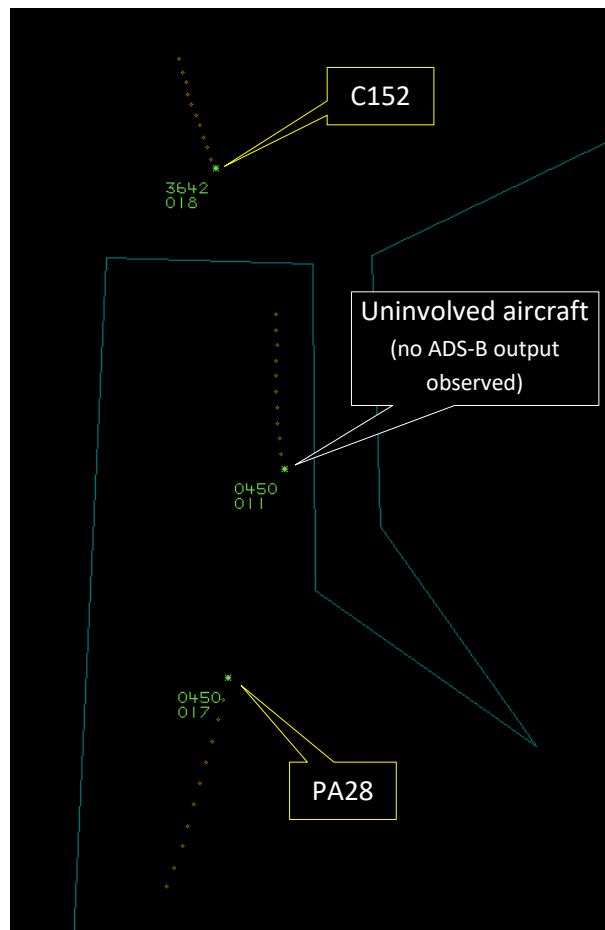


Figure 1 – Aircraft positions at 0938:19 (1min before CPA)

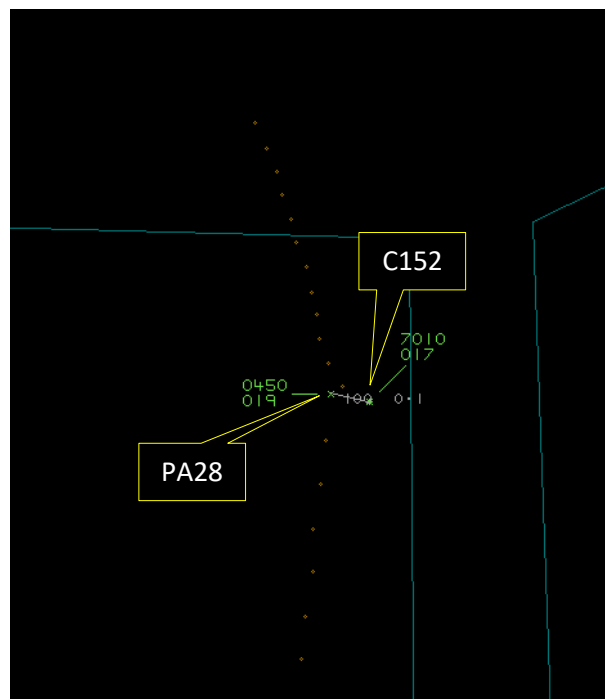


Figure 2 – CPA at 0939:19

The C152 and PA28 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.² If the incident geometry is considered as head-on or nearly so then both pilots were required to turn to the right.³

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a C152 and a PA28 flew into proximity 9NM north of Blackpool Airport at 0939Z on Friday 10th April 2026. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC and in receipt of a Basic Service from Blackpool Approach.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, a report from the controller involved, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the appropriate operating authority. 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 first considered the actions of the pilot of the C152. Members noted that, when returning to Blackpool Airport from a local flight to the north, they had visually acquired the PA28. It was agreed that, until sighted, the pilot of the C152 had not had situational awareness of the presence of the PA28 (**CF3**). Members wished to encourage the fitment of a compatible EC device which may have aided the pilot's situational awareness and provided a timely alert to the presence of proximate traffic.

Recalling the wording of (UK) SERA.3210, members noted that, '*when two aircraft are approaching head-on or approximately so..., each [pilot] shall alter [their] heading to the right*'. Members emphasised that such a response would ensure the 'predictability' of the actions of the pilot in the opposing aircraft so that the pilots would not inadvertently turn towards each other. However, members had some sympathy with the C152 pilot's position. They had been the first to react to the situation and, given the geometry that they had perceived at that time, had assessed that the safest course of action to avoid a collision had been to turn to the left.

Members next turned their attention to the actions of the pilot of the PA28. It was noted that, as they had been transiting northwards, they had gleaned generic situational awareness of two aircraft whose pilots who had called on frequency and who had been transiting southwards. It was also noted that they had subsequently seen one aircraft on their SkyDemon display. Members noted that, from analysis, the C152 was not observed by reference to ADS-B data sources and agreed that the EC device fitted to the PA28 would, therefore, not have been expected to have detected the C152 (**CF4**). As an aside, members noted that the PA28 was also not observed by reference to ADS-B data sources and that the additional EC device fitted to the PA28 had been configured to 'receive-mode'. Members pointed out that the use of ADS-B detection equipment relies on the transmission of an ADS-B signal from either the transponder or additional EC device. Without an ADS-B Out signal, an aircraft is essentially rendered 'invisible' to many other EC devices. As a simple analogy, the system does not work if everyone is listening but no-one is talking. Members highlighted the importance of the use of compatible EC devices in aircraft in general, particularly for those operated by training schools, especially so when flown in areas with a high density of traffic.

The actions of the Blackpool controller were next considered. It was noted by members that the pilot of the C152 had agreed a Basic Service with the Blackpool controller when inbound from the north. Members also understood that the service provided to the pilot of the PA28 had, essentially, reverted to the provision of a Basic Service once they had left the Blackpool ATZ when transiting northwards (although a Basic Service had not been explicitly agreed). It was therefore agreed by members that the Blackpool controller had not been required to have monitored the flights in question under the terms of a Basic Service (**CF1**) and that the pilots had been solely responsible for collision avoidance. Notwithstanding, it occurred to members that, with both pilots on frequency, and with each heading to, or from, the same area of operation, there had been an opportunity for the controller to have passed a

² (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

³ (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(1) Approaching head-on.

caution or generic Traffic Information to each pilot. Indeed, it was noted that, when asked by the C152 pilot if they had traffic “*heading northwards*” (after CPA had occurred), the Blackpool controller had immediately requested the position of the PA28 pilot. The workload of the Blackpool controller in the moments leading up to the Airprox was not clear to members, and they may not have been able to have assisted but, nevertheless, members agreed that an absence of ‘proactive’ Traffic Information had been a contributing factor during the encounter (**CF2**).

Concluding their discussion, members determined that the pilot of the C152 had been concerned by the proximity of the PA28 (**CF5**) and had subsequently taken action to have increased the separation. Members were satisfied that, although the encounter and proximity may have been uncomfortable, there had been no risk of collision. The Board assigned Risk Category C to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2026043			
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
2	Human Factors	• ANS Traffic Information Provision	Provision of ANS traffic information	TI not provided, inaccurate, inadequate, or late
	Flight Elements			
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
3	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			
4	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			
5	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 Blackpool controller had not been required to have monitored the flights of the C152 and PA28 under the terms of a Basic Service.

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:

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because the pilot of the C152 had not had situational awareness of the PA28 until visually acquired. The pilot of the PA28 had generic situational awareness of the presence of the C152.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the EC device fitted to the PA28 would not have been expected to have detected the presence of the C152.

