

Week commencing 19 October 2026

COVERAGE

5 – 18 October
2026

AUDIENCE

Security directors · C-UAS programme leads · airport and critical site
operators

HANDLING

Internal use — not for onward
distribution

IF YOU JUST REMEMBER ONE THING FROM THIS BRIEFING...

UK defence sites logged a drone incident roughly once a day for a year, and officials still will not name who is responsible.

Government figures reported this fortnight count 340 drone incidents at British military sites in the twelve months to August 2026, with officials naming only “actors acting in the interests of Russia or Iran”. If you share infrastructure with a defence site, ask whether your own detection logs would support an attribution case.

FORTNIGHT IN REVIEW

Incidents and sector activity

PRIORITY

THIS
FORTNIGHT

UK defence sites report near-daily drone incidents, with no public attribution

Figures reported this fortnight show 340 drone incidents at British military sites in the twelve months to August 2026. Officials have named no specific actor, citing only unspecified state and non-state actors acting in Russia or Iran’s interests.

So what: a pattern this persistent with no named actor makes detection evidence, not attribution, your near-term control. Confirm your logs would support a case.

PRIORITY

1 OCT

PANOPTES Stage 2 opens with a 29 October deadline

UK Defence Innovation released its Stage 1 decision for the £5 million force-protection PANOPTES competition on 1 October and opened Stage 2 to invited bidders the same day, submissions due by midday on 29 October. The programme is the first phase of a multi-stage counter-drone acquisition pathway.

So what: track which architectures reach Stage 2 as an early signal for the capability MOD will favour in tenders you may bid into next.

WATCH

ONGOING

Fibre-optic interceptors reported defeating jammed Shahed-type drones

Ukrainian reporting credits fibre-optic-guided interceptors, including the Octopus and STING systems, with large numbers of kills against Russian one-way-attack drones, since a wired control link cannot be jammed. Specific kill-count figures come from secondary defence-analysis sources and are not independently verified here.

So what: fibre-optic guidance defeats RF jamming on both sides of a fight. Ask your C-UAS vendor how its roadmap answers a non-RF, non-GNSS threat.

WATCH

ONGOING

Belgium’s counter-drone legal gap remains unresolved a year on

Belgium authorised its military to shoot down drones over bases after the November 2025 Kleine-Brogel incursions, but ministers said no legal framework yet covered drones nearby, where falling debris could hit civilians. A National Airspace Security Centre is live since 1 January; the gap itself is unchanged this fortnight.

So what: detection authority without interdiction authority is a common European gap. Confirm who may lawfully act at your own site’s boundary.

ACTION TABLE

Developments to track this fortnight

DEVELOPMENT	TYPE	WHY IT MATTERS FOR A PROTECTED SITE	ACT BY / WATCH
UK defence-site drone incidents, 340/yr	Incident	No named actor means detection evidence matters more than attribution.	Watch: pattern
PANOPTES Stage 2, deadline 29 Oct	Procurement	Signals MOD's preferred detect-to-defeat architecture ahead of wider tenders.	Act: track by 29 Oct
MOD CUAS Exploration tender, £125m	Procurement	Stage 2 outcome still pending; shapes the near-term UK supplier field.	Watch: Stage 2
Fibre-optic interceptors vs jammed Shaheds	Capability	Non-RF guidance defeats conventional EW on both sides of a C-UAS fight.	Watch: vendor roadmaps
Belgium counter-drone legal gap	Regulation	Detection without interdiction authority is a common European gap.	Watch: unresolved

Casualty, debris and attribution details are as reported by named sources; none are independently verified here.

REGULATORY AND SECTOR WATCH

What changed, and what is coming

In force now

- Belgium's National Airspace Security Centre has coordinated national drone detection since 1 January 2026.
- UK Flyer ID and Direct Remote ID requirements for drones over 100g remain in force since 1 January 2026.

Approaching

- PANOPTES Stage 2 submissions close 29 October 2026, shaping MOD's near-term architecture choice.
- Stage 2 invitations for the £125m MOD CUAS Exploration tender remain pending, with contract starts still expected around November or December.

Standing watch — SAPIENT NATO ratification. BSI Flex 335's path to a formal NATO STANAG, needing 14-nation approval, remains unresolved. No change this fortnight; treat as backdrop, not the story.

RECOMMENDED

Three things to do before the next edition

- Check whether your own detection logs would support an attribution case, given the UK's 340 unattributed incidents.
- Track PANOPTES Stage 2 and MOD CUAS Exploration outcomes for the architecture and supplier signals they set.
- Confirm who may legally act if your site detects a drone just outside its boundary, not only within it.

OUTLOOK — NEXT FORTNIGHT

We assess it is likely that PANOPTES Stage 2 submissions close on schedule, and a realistic possibility that outcomes begin shaping procurement language before the next edition. It is also a realistic possibility that a further unattributed drone incident is reported at a UK or European defence or transport site.

NEXT EDITION

Monday 2 November 2026. Send additions, corrections or sector intelligence to your ClearPath engagement lead.

