



Accountability Handbook

Version 2 – February 2020



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WHAT CLAPTON FOOTBALL CLUB MEANS BY ACCOUNTABILITY

We want to make sure everyone is as welcome as possible within Clapton Football Club, so we see holding each other to account a collective responsibility for all members. This should not mean we have to choose between successfully organising our club and figuring out how we get along.

Reviving Clapton Football Club as a 100% member-led community benefit society began with some important decisions: a unanimous agreement to organise our club based on values including solidarity and cooperation and the adoption of an equalities policy, which every member signs up to when they join, that commits us to ensure everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

We recognise, however, that the ways we behave and interact with each other is influenced by a society that is often selfish, oppressive and discriminatory.

Especially within a club that has decided to abolish the position of chair, devolve power away from its board and remove hierarchies whenever it can, we cannot assume people will suddenly stop behaving harmfully to and taking power away from each other, even without realising they are doing so.

This means we all have to work hard to nurture and develop meaningful solidarity between ourselves and towards others wherever we are.

We want to make sure everyone is as welcome as possible within Clapton Football Club, so we see holding each other to account a collective responsibility for all members. This should not mean we have to choose between successfully organising our club and figuring out how we get along.

That is why an Accountability Agreement can help us. It sets out our shared understanding of how all club members will conduct themselves and how we should respond if we are challenged about our actions.

ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

Members have collectively agreed that:

- *We accept that each of us is individually responsible for our own actions and we are collectively responsible for supporting those around us.*
- *We start from a position of believing and supporting people when they share their experiences with us.*
- *We accept that other people's lives and histories are invariably different to our own and try to avoid making assumptions about the opinions, background, cultures and identities of others.*
- *We try not to judge, compete or put each other down. We approach every situation with an open mind.*
- *We notice and respect each other's physical boundaries and understand the importance of always checking first before crossing them.*
- *We are mindful of the space we take up and if we are used to talking, we also need to listen to the wisdom that others bring to our organising and discussions.*

- *We try to communicate in an open, clear and uncomplicated way. We are aware of how the language we use can shut down other people's opinions and exclude participation, even when we do not intend to do so.*
- *Accountability means that each of us is ready, when challenged about how we act and how we speak, to take on board other's points of view, take responsibility for our actions and make amends in the ways that are asked of us. This accountability is also expected of people and groups working with us.*
- *If we witness actions or behaviour that is harmful, oppressive or discriminatory, we will challenge it constructively and not leave this to those who are most affected by it or assume others will deal with it.*

WHAT IS THE REMIT OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE?

One of the few responsibilities that remain with the Club's Board is resolving disputes.

However, the club also has an Accountability Committee has a devolved remit to provide an independent and confidential sounding board for other committees who are handling issues about members' behaviour, before they escalate to the position of a formal complaint.

Ultimately, the emphasis is on everyone to take collective responsibility for holding each other to account.

The Accountability Committee will not “police” every aspect of members' conduct within the club; instead every member has a responsibility to step up when a problem arises and to share this responsibility.

The Accountability Committee will help members to do this by supporting them in their participation in the club and can act to make sure all parties feel an appropriate outcome is reached.

It will look at any issues in an objective and timely manner, prioritise the needs of anyone harmed, act in good faith, avoid cynicism, and where appropriate, provide resources for individuals whose behaviour or language has been questioned, in order to educate themselves.

Once the Accountability Agreement is adopted as club policy, the committee will also publicise the expectations that club members have collectively agreed to.

OUR APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability within Clapton Community Football Club means a process for addressing violence, abuse, or harmful behaviour in order to create safety, justice, redress and healing – most significantly as an alternative to legal frameworks.

This process is designed to allow all members to have their conduct held to a shared agreement and for all members to help each other in situations where this agreement has not been upheld.

Each of the club's committees will have access to help and support to work both with a person who has been harmed and a person who has caused harm to push for appropriate outcomes. The nature and depth of this work is entirely dependent on the nature of the harm caused.

This guide is intended to provide information about how you, as a member, can help to hold another member to account, either within one of our committees or when attending a club match or event. It also explains what help the Accountability Committee can give you.

One of the approaches we want to adopt is the use of “transformative” or “restorative justice”. This places the emphasis on healing the harm done by an offence and rehabilitating the person responsible for it to avoid future harms and is often associated with alternatives to the regular court system.

However, its focus on rehabilitation, rather than simply on punishment, is valuable to a membership-based club too, because it:

- Seeks to constantly affirm our values and ethos that require us to resist abuse and oppression.
- Offers safety and support to members who experience violent, abusive or harmful behaviour in a way that respects their self-determination and right to take control over their lives.
- Develops sustainable mechanisms for addressing individual members' abusive behaviour and creates a process for them to account for their actions and transform their behaviour.
- Provides a commitment to the ongoing individual and collective development of all members and to transforming the social and political conditions that reinforce oppression and violence.

A transformative justice approach aims to provide people who experience violence with immediate safety and long-term healing and redress, while holding people who commit violence accountable within and by their communities. In practice, this means

- acknowledging and validating the hurt and harm caused by abusive behaviour
- listening to the person who has been hurt and prioritising their needs
- enacting consequences for the person who caused harm and provide opportunities for them to learn and change.
- helping address the root cause of why violent, abusive or harmful behaviour has happened, whilst recognising that we cannot fix everything.

In doing this, we will need to create safe boundaries and substantive consequences for different types of behaviour, which can include ‘cooling off’, temporary requests to stay away from games and socials, and outright bans if the harm caused is serious enough.

Our approach holds that people are not disposable. It recognises that individuals who cause harm are part of our community and that we are made stronger by holding them to account (should they choose to engage), rather than by shutting them out without the resources to learn and change.

It recognises too that, whilst we will support each other by having honest, tough conversations with clear boundaries, we can still acknowledge the impact on an individual that facing questions about their behaviour can have, for example, on their mental health.

This means it is vital that everyone involved in accountability work within Clapton Football Club refrains from gossip, muckraking, or any other behaviour which uses individuals' lives as social currency and creates an atmosphere of fear or recrimination – we must take confidentiality seriously.

IS CLAPTON COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CLUB A 'SAFE SPACE'?

We have deliberately chosen the formation of 'accountability' over that of 'safe spaces' because the idea that any group or committee within the club, with its devolved decision-making structures, holds the power to 'keep' others safe is flawed.

What 'safety' looks and feels like is different for everyone. Until the much larger systems of oppression have been toppled, no space is truly safe.

We believe we can best hold each other to account through a shared agreement that does not focus on a list of 'isms' or 'phobias,' but on individual behaviour and an open, developing culture of care.

COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

The following sets our consequences for members who have caused harm, based on current working practices at Clapton Community Football Club.

You can use these as guidance in how to engage with a person who has caused harm, depending on what has happened. You should work to these regardless of whether this person is a member or guest.

Levels of consequence (for interventions)

These levels are here to give us all a guide of where to locate a situation that has occurred, and to help us decide what action is appropriate.

Level 1 – Check In	Chat
<p>Encouraging someone to consider how their behaviour affects others</p>	<p>A check-in is the lowest level of intervention possible.</p> <p>Remember if you don't know someone's name, give yours and ask theirs first.</p> <p>Checking in is useful when a person uses language that's harmful or deliberately exclusionary.</p> <p>Checking in is a way to reach out to a person to let them know they have breached the Accountability Agreement and start a dialogue about why we have it, or just a reminder, and to act more mindfully about their behaviour in the future. Do this in your own</p> <p>Be warm and open to the confusion or embarrassment someone may feel as a result of the check-in. Hold your ground in communicating what you need to.</p> <p>This is the most common type of intervention.</p> <p>Can be done in person or via email.</p>
Level 2 – Call In	Chat with consequences
<p>Telling someone they need to stop behaviour that is harming others</p>	<p>This is more likely to be applicable if someone is known to have used harmful language or violence towards someone.</p> <p>If the person hurt explicitly says they would appreciate an apology, suggest that the person who caused harm apologise, and offer to act as a witness to that or be on hand for support if needed.</p> <p>More serious – like level 1 + consequences</p> <p>HOW:</p> <p>Firmly remind the person that their violent words or behaviour are unacceptable in this space.</p> <p>Ask them to take some time out and reflect.</p> <p>Ask them to stay away from the person they hurt, or give them space as appropriate.</p>

Level 3 – Call Out	Mostly consequences, no chat!
Instructing someone whose behaviour that is harming others to leave	<p>This involves telling someone who has used physical, sexual or psychological violence that they need to leave a meeting / match / event, either to protect others or de-escalate a situation.</p> <p>Committees can look at whether to block a member from further participation, or from visits to the club for the foreseeable future. Physically removing a violent person is always a last resort.</p> <p>HOW:</p> <p>Ask the person for their contact details and let them know that under the terms of the Accountability Agreement you need to ask them to leave.</p> <p>Ask them to contact the Accountability Committee via email about their participation in future club events.</p> <p>Make it clear they must enter into dialogue via email (or off site meetings) if they hope to return to the club. This is so that people who have been called out at this level realise they cannot just return with no consequences.</p>

It is important to record and report any check-ins or other interventions you have made. This is because unchecked behaviour can escalate.

The best way to do this is to speak to one of the club's officers, a member of the Accountability Committee, or otherwise email accountability@claptoncfc.co.uk with as much information as you have.

HOW MEMBERS CAN RESPOND IF SOMEONE NEEDS SUPPORT

If, as a member, someone approaches you for immediate support about harmful behaviour, it is important to make sure they do not regret reaching out to you.

You should offer a place to chat, maintain a warm, empathetic, response to whatever they tell you and give them some options for what you can do next.

<p>Believe them, listen, and validate</p>	<p>This is rule number one for how you can help.</p> <p>Don't ask lots of questions in response and validate how this person is feeling first to show you believe them.</p> <p>Even if you think someone else could handle it better, remember, they've picked YOU to speak to, so try to respond in a warm, human way to what you've heard:</p> <p><i>"That sounds really annoying/difficult/frustrating, thank you for telling me."</i></p> <p><i>"That's not okay."</i></p> <p><i>"That should not have happened, I'm really sorry to hear that it did."</i></p>
<p>Don't make assumptions and stay calm</p>	<p>Don't rush into anything.</p> <p>Practice "they" pronouns for everyone, all the time, until you're directly told otherwise.</p> <p>The person causing harm may already be known to them, so this requires discretion and sensitivity.</p> <p>You may personally feel worried or panicked but try to hold onto and regulate this emotion. This person has come to you for support – focus on their experience and stay calm.</p> <p>Know that others will always have your back – never try to deal with a situation by yourself.</p>
<p>Give them options for what can happen next</p>	<p>You can suggest:</p> <p><i>"We can handle this however makes you feel most comfortable. One option would be we could X, the other is that we could Y. Which would be best for you right now?"</i></p> <p>If a course of action seems obviously most relevant, try:</p> <p><i>"How would you feel about X?"</i></p> <p>It may be enough for this person to just let you know about an issue; they may not want any consequences for the person who's causing harm.</p> <p>In this case, you can validate and offer to be there if they change their mind and do want us to act.</p> <p>If the person who approached you about the harmful behaviour wants you to intervene directly with the person who has caused them harm, you will need to pair up with another member.</p>

	<p>They will need briefing about the situation, so explain this to the person who approached you first.</p> <p>Make sure to find out from the person who approached you if they are okay for the person you are intervening with to speak with them afterwards, as it is likely they will want to. You can then pass this information on.</p>
	<p>Options could include:</p> <p>At Level 1 [Check In]</p> <p>We can have a word with this person about the language they're using.</p> <p>We can ask this person to be more mindful of the space they take up.</p> <p>We can ask this person to avoid making assumptions about the cultures and identities of others.</p> <p>At Level 2 [Call In]</p> <p>We can ask this person to take some time out to reflect and to stay away from the person they hurt.</p> <p>At Level 3 [Call Out]</p> <p>We can ask this person to leave altogether.</p> <p>We can ask that person to leave and agree with them that they will not return for a set period of time.</p> <p>Sometimes the person reporting harmful behaviour may not want the person responsible removed, for their own safety and for fear of recriminations. In this instance, we should respect these wishes.</p>
<p>Keep a record</p>	<p>With the consent of the person who approached you, make a confidential note of your conversation by emailing accountability@claptoncfc.co.uk</p> <p>This creates a record so if multiple issues with one person arise, they can be addressed.</p> <p>If the person who approached you wants action to be taken on their behalf, we need to know their name and whether they are a club member or a visitor.</p>

HOW MEMBERS CAN INTERVENE

If, as a member, you are asked to intervene directly with a person who has caused harmful behaviour, it is important not to do so alone and to use clear, calm, and assertive language.

<p>Deciding to act</p>	<p>To not act on your own. Find someone else to intervene with you.</p> <p>Confer with your buddy first about what your aims for the conversation are.</p> <p>A good way to engage someone is to introduce yourself and then ask a question. You could bring the Accountability Agreement flyer with you so you have something to give them and to engage with.</p> <p>If you have been asked to take action, make a mental note of exactly what this was (for example, “I want them to know that it’s not OK to...”) and form your goals for the conversation in advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This person will know their behaviour has hurt someone else.</i> • <i>This person will reconsider their behaviour.</i> • <i>This person will not hurt anyone else</i> • <i>This person will stay away from the person they have hurt and not approach or speak to them.</i> <p>Have an agreed start and end point for the conversation e.g. “Thanks for listening.”</p>
<p>Making an approach</p>	<p>The two of you should aim to separate this person from any peers and ask to speak to them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Hi, we need to have a quick chat.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Can I borrow you for a second?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Excuse me mate, can we have a word please?”</i></p> <p>Do not swear, raise your voice, or use aggressive posture.</p> <p>If you do not trust yourself to be able to speak neutrally to the person in question, pass this role on to someone who can.</p> <p>Ideally you should have no social link to this person, as they are less likely to listen to you if you do.</p>
<p>Explaining the consequences</p>	<p>Outline why you’re talking to them.</p> <p>Avoid specifics, but don’t be evasive.</p>
<p>Example of a Level 1 – Check In</p>	<p><i>“Hi, I’m [NAME], I am part of the Matchday Committee at Clapton. Have you seen our Accountability Agreement? One of our members has let us know that you’re speaking in a way that’s making people feel uncomfortable. We’d like to ask you to consider how you’re talking more carefully. Is that okay?”</i></p>
<p>Example of a Level 2</p>	<p><i>“Hi, I’m [NAME], I am part of the Matchday Committee at Clapton.</i></p>

– Call In	<i>Have you seen our Accountability Agreement? One of our members has let us know that you're speaking in a way that's making people feel uncomfortable, and would like you to stop and apologise to them. Is that OK?"</i>
	<p>Keep it casual and human, but also clear.</p> <p>If they engage with what you say, thank them for their time, explain to them too that you have to make a note of the conversation, and give them an Accountability Agreement flyer.</p> <p>Check back in with the person who disclosed to let them know—but ensure you are DISCREET about this.</p>
Take action	<p>You probably won't resolve this issue in a two minute conversation!</p> <p>Remember that it is not your job to educate people. The majority of people will feel embarrassed and want to make amends.</p> <p>You may want to offer to send them some more info if they are willing to engage. You will need to ask for their email and you can then pass this on to the Accountability Committee who can share resources with them.</p> <p>Be empathetic to the fact that someone may not have known that their words or behaviour was not acceptable.</p> <p>Remember: you are not facilitating or pre-empting a conversation between these two people. This is NOT a negotiation.</p> <p>This is about you representing the club to take some action, so make sure you know what that action is going to be before you start.</p>
Dealing with someone who has been asked to leave (Level 3 call out)	<p>In (hopefully) exceptional circumstance you may be asked to participate in approaching someone to leave a match or event.</p> <p>This is a last resort. It could result in further violence and is ONLY appropriate if physical violence has taken place or is highly likely to.</p> <p>At least three people should deal with such a situation and as before, you are trying to persuade someone to leave with as little confrontation as possible: do not swear, raise your voice, or act aggressively yourself.</p> <p>In this situation, it is important to de-escalate any further aggression and remember: as far as possible, we are trying to ensure that the person, if they are also a member, eventually accounts for their actions and transforms their behaviour.</p> <p>This is far less likely to happen if we start invoking the idea of calling the police.</p>

LONGER TERM SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS

Every club member has a responsibility to step up when a problem arises and this responsibility is something we should share.

If you have, or hear of, an experience that makes you think of the Accountability Agreement, then speak to other members for advice and support and consult this handbook.

There are two options for who takes ownership by leading on decisions, handling direct communication and setting boundaries and goals when a complaint has been made.

It is very important that leadership and understanding are both shown from the outset.

Type of complaint	Who takes ownership
Complaint against a member who is a member of the club	Any two club members take ownership and enact the Collective Accountability process with support and guidance available from Accountability Committee. They can choose whether to be named or not and it should always be clear they have been appointed to act on behalf of whole collective.
Complaint against a guest at the club who is not part of the membership	The Accountability Committee will take ownership after a complaint is made – any information can be forwarded to accountability@claptoncfc.co.uk , either after any initial intervention or if email or other contact comes in directly.

COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Speed is important. Steps 1–3 should be completed within one month of the decision to begin the accountability process.

STEP ONE: Acknowledge and validate the hurt / harm caused between members	
<p>Coordinate two members of the club to liaise with the two or more parties in the dispute (via email or meeting) and keep a record of this.</p> <p>Send an initial email to the person/s asking for a written account of the issue/s.</p> <p>Reiterate confidentiality and that we will always ask before sharing info.</p>	<p>Ask the Accountability Committee for help with wording and copy it in if helpful.</p>
STEP TWO: Listen to the person who has been hurt and prioritise their needs	
<p>Signpost person/s to counselling and other support services if needed (ask the Accountability Committee for resources).</p> <p>Explain we will do our best to meet their requests as far as possible</p> <p>Explain honestly about anything that is beyond the remit of the club and that we will handle the complaint collectively.</p> <p>Check in with the person who has experienced harm during the process so they can let someone know if they are having any issues. Sometimes processes can end up causing further harm.</p> <p>Common requests could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A verbal or written apology from the person who has caused harm • That they no longer volunteer within a club committee or they take a break. • That they tell their partners and friends that they are in an accountability process as a result of their behaviour 	<p>Explain timelines and boundaries (for example, if they have a number, agree when is OK to call).</p>

STEP THREE: Engage with the person who caused the harm

Draft an email (and copy in the Accountability Committee) from the club committee explaining the harm caused and any resultant consequences there may be for them in a clear, fair way.

Start with what the person harmed has asked for, and see how this sits with this policy (the three levels of consequence).

Resist any urge to be punitive, remember that it takes strength to admit you have hurt someone.

Decisions about how they interact with the club committee during this period should be made on a case by case basis and prioritise collective comfort and safety.

Physical violence should generally result in a plan to implement a ban depending on the needs of the person affected and attitude of the violent person with regard to the incident.

The membership must vote on a ban.

In this incidence, remember to GET NAMES and give all parties involved an Accountability Committee card to get in contact directly - ESPECIALLY if they have been asked to leave an event or on match day.

“Please email this address before returning as we need to discuss an incident that took place.”

Is the email clear and fair? Is it passive aggressive?

Always offer a face to face meeting or telephone call if needed.

If engagement breaks down, the Accountability Committee can step in to act as mediators.

Provide the Accountability Committee with information so they can understand why and how the issue has come up.

STEP FOUR: Root Causes

This means reflecting together on the situation and looking to make changes.

It could mean enacting a new policy or instigating a group discussion on power dynamics, language, shared procedures, boundaries, racism or other oppressions etc. to help address the root cause through education and discussion, whilst recognising that *we cannot fix everything!*

When starting to engage with a person who may have knowingly or unknowingly breached the accountability agreement, it may be useful to consider that these are the usual stages a person will go through in the process of transformative learning:

Disorienting dilemma

For example being challenged on behaviour, words, actions

- Self-examination (including denial – that's not racist etc.)
- Sense of alienation (others around me don't speak / act like this?)
- Relating discontent to others (usually / often defensive)
- Explaining options of new behaviour (what is a better word I could use instead?)
- Building confidence in new ways (trying out monitoring how much I speak in meetings)
- Planning a course of action (starting to build this behaviour into my everyday actions)
- Knowledge to implement plans (reading learning points and resources via email)
- Experimenting with new roles (becoming an ally or supporter)

It is not your responsibility to guide someone through these steps, but we can all play a part in helping each other to learn, grow and be accountable for our own behaviour. Being open, direct and fair to everyone you work with as part of an accountability process is key.

FORMAL ARBITRATION

Despite our best efforts, Collective Accountability does not always lead to a successful outcome. Every member of the club (for instance, who is asked to take a break from club committees, or banned from continued membership) is ultimately entitled to use Rules 125 and 126 of the Club Rules, which state:

125. Every unresolved dispute which arises out of these Rules between the Club and:

125.1 a member; or

125.2 any person aggrieved who has ceased to be a member within the six months prior to

the date of the dispute; or

125.3 any person claiming through such member or person aggrieved; or

125.4 any person bringing a claim under the Rules of the Club; or

125.5 an officer of the Club

is to be submitted to an arbitrator agreed by the parties or nominated by the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of Supporters Direct. The arbitrator's decision will be binding and conclusive on all parties.

126. Any person bringing a dispute must deposit with Club the sum of £500 or such other reasonable sum as the Club Board shall decide. The arbitrator will decide how the costs of the arbitration will be paid and what should be done with the deposit.

A LIMITED LIST OF RESOURCES

In addressing root cases (Step 4 of Collective Accountability), you may find the following resources helpful. This is the start of a reading list, from which appropriate links can be offered to people who have caused harm as the start of a conversation.

Understanding Accountability

[Transform Harm: The resource hub of resource hubs](http://transformharm.org)
transformharm.org

[Accountability for community spaces \(a workbook\)](#)

Community Accountability - a resource list for further reading

[Full Book \(Pdf\) “The Revolution Starts at Home”](#)

[A full accountability process curriculum example](#)

[What do to instead of Calling the Police- an Abolitionist Toolkit](#)

Introductory reading on:

[‘Taking up Space’](#)

[Racial microaggressions in Everyday Life](#)

[Sexual assault, consent and boundaries](#)

[5 Things you might not think are Racist but Are](#)

[Gender, trans, and non-binary identities](#)

[Cultural appropriation: Understanding the Arguments](#)

[How Language Impacts The Stigma Against Mental Health](#)

So you’ve been called out

<http://fruitiondesign.com/dealwithit/02wispy.php>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/comment/reply/56214/844982>

What’s the deal with accountability anyway?

<https://saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com/resources>

<https://supportny.org>

<https://projectsalvage.wordpress.com>

<https://communityaccountability.wordpress.com/resources>

Taking up space

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/09/6-ways-men-dominate-space>

Microaggressions

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201102/how-does-oppression-microaggressions-affect>

<https://blavity.com/how-i-explained-microaggressions-to-my-non-black-partner/>

Sexual assault and rape - consent and boundaries

<http://www.bishuk.com/sex/consent-innit/>

Racism

<http://www.bustle.com/articles/124681-5-things-you-might-not-think-are-racist-but-are>

Gender, trans, and non-binary identities

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender/trans-identities>

Cultural appropriation

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/05/defending-cultural-appropriation/>

<http://www.makezine.enoughenough.org/mohawksdreads.htm>

Mental Health awareness

<http://thoughtcatalog.com/samantha-pugsley/2014/11/how-language-impacts-the-stigma-against-mental-health-and-what-we-must-do-to-change-it/>