

MARPA HOUSE RETREAT FUND SCHEME

RULES

Purpose

The Marpa House Retreat Fund Scheme ('the Scheme') is designed to enable people to do retreat at Marpa House if they would not otherwise be able to do so for financial reasons due to financial hardship or low income. The Scheme will pay for successful applicants to spend between 1 and 7 days in retreat (individuals are very welcome to pay for additional days if they wish to spend longer in retreat).

A total of £2200 a year has been ring-fenced for the Scheme, representing a total of 50 days in retreat. If individuals wish to sponsor others in retreat, they are very welcome to donate to the Scheme, thereby increasing the amount available to successful applicants. Such donations can of course be made anonymously if the donor so wishes.

What does the Scheme pay for?

Funds from the Scheme can only be used to pay for the cost of staying in retreat or semi-retreat at Marpa House (not visiting as a House guest). If an application is successful, the relevant sum will be transferred from the ring-fenced fund to the centre's general funds and the successful applicant will be able to attend their retreat free of charge. There is therefore no need for the applicant to handle money at any time.

Retreats paid for by the Scheme are non-transferrable and may only be undertaken by the successful applicant.

Eligibility – general

To be successful an application must meet:

- (1) One of the financial criteria
- (2) The non-financial criteria (which all individuals undertaking retreat at Marpa House must satisfy)

In addition, as below, the scheme will be operated on a strictly first come, first served basis. Even if an application meets the above criteria, it will not be successful if previous applications have already utilised all the available funds.

Eligibility – financial criteria

Anyone within one of the following categories will automatically satisfy the financial eligibility criteria for the scheme:

- (1) Full-time students.
- (2) Individuals in receipt of means-tested benefits.
- (3) Individuals volunteering long-term at Marpa House on staff.

Individuals who don't fall within one of these categories will be eligible for the Scheme if they can demonstrate that they are experiencing financial hardship and therefore that it would not be reasonably possible for them to pay the cost of doing a retreat at Marpa House.

Eligibility – non-financial criteria

In addition to the financial criteria, scheme applicants will also need to fulfil the usual requirements for doing retreat at Marpa House (e.g. having an established meditation practice and providing a satisfactory letter from a recognised Buddhist teacher).

The Marpa House Trustees retain the discretion to reject any application where they consider the applicant to be unsuitable (in the same way that they could prevent an individual doing retreat at Marpa House otherwise than via the Scheme).

The application process

Usually, there will be two application windows for the Scheme each year – the first opening around Losar and the other in the Autumn. However, in 2025 the timings will be different. The first application window will run from 10:00 on 1st June 2025 to 10:00 on 30th June 2025 and the second from 10:00 on 1st October to 18:00 31st October. Applications received after the end date of the application window will only be considered in highly exceptional circumstances.

Half the annual funds available via the Scheme (currently £1000) will be allocated for distribution during each application window. Any funds remaining unallocated at the end of any application window may be allocated in a subsequent allocation window at the complete discretion of the trustees of Marpa House.

Late applications may be accepted at the complete discretion of the trustees.

The trustees reserve the right to alter the length, timing and other details of any application window as well as the funding available for it. Every effort will be made to ensure that reasonable notice of any such changes is given in advance.

Applicants will need to fill out the form provided giving their name, address, contact details, next of kin, meditation experience, reason for the application, what they have been able to do to raise funds to do a retreat at Marpa House and evidence of how they meet the financial criteria above. The Marpa House Trustees retain the right to reject a form that does not provide all the details requested. Evidence of meeting the financial criteria could be copies of relevant documents (originals should not be sent under any circumstances).

Wherever possible, applications should be via email to trustees@marpahouse.org.uk but postal applications sent to Marpa House will also be accepted.

Applicants who are successful may not make an application in the application window following the one in which their first application was successful. For example, if an applicant is successful in the March/April 2025 window they would not be able to make an application in the August/September 2025 window (but could in the March/April 2026 window). Unsuccessful applicants may apply in any window following the rejection of their application.

Assessment of applications

Funds for each application window will be allocated on a strictly first come, first served basis. A postal application will be treated as though it arrived at 10:01 on the day before it is actually received at Marpa House. Applications received before the beginning of the application window will be disregarded and the applicant informed of that fact.

Applications will be assessed by two or more of the Marpa House trustees together with any other individuals they designate for that purpose. No application will be assessed before the end of the application window.

Where an application is successful the Marpa House trustees may, in their absolute discretion, offer the applicant more or fewer retreat days than they applied for.

May 2025