

MARPA HOUSE RETREAT FUND SCHEME RULES

Purpose

The Marpa House Retreat Fund Scheme ('the Scheme') is designed to enable people to undertake a retreat at Marpa House if they would not otherwise be able to do so 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 fund equating to 50 days in retreat will be ring-fenced for the Scheme for the coming year. If individuals wish to sponsor others in retreat, they are very welcome to donate to the Scheme. 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 cover the cost of staying in retreat or semi-retreat at Marpa House (not for 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-transferable 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) All the non-financial criteria (which all individuals undertaking retreat at Marpa House must satisfy)

In addition, as noted below, the scheme will operate on a strictly first-come, first-served basis.

Even if an application meets the above criteria, it will not be successful if all the funds available for the scheme have been spent in respect of other applications.

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.
- (4) 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 a 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.

The next application window will be:

10:00 am on 1st September 2026 to 10:00 am on 30th September 2026

Applications received after the application window end date will only be considered in highly exceptional circumstances.

Half of the total annual funds available via the Scheme 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 Marpa House trustees.

No applications will be considered before the application window starts. Late applications may be accepted at the trustees' complete discretion.

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 sent 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 first application window for 2026, they may not apply in the second application window in that year. Equally, if an applicant was successful in the second application window of 2027, they could not apply in the first application window of 2028.

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 start of the application window will be disregarded, and the applicant will be informed.

Applications will be assessed by two or more of the Marpa House trustees together with any other individual(s) the board of trustees 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.

August 2026