



## **Are you well enough to be on retreat?**

Our primary concern in considering whether someone is well enough to be on retreat is their own well-being. However, when you come on retreat, we also ask that you have a reasonable expectation of being able to participate fully in the programme. The following notes will help you determine whether this is realistic. You may also wish to seek the advice of your peers and teachers to see if they think this retreat is a good fit for you. If you need specific conditions or support, please [discuss your needs](#) and concerns with our team.

Any information provided will be treated as confidential. Information provided in confidence will be shared with the retreat team's leader and other members on a need-to-know basis and, where possible, with your consent. This is to give you the best possible support.

Programme details for individual retreats can be found in the retreats section of the website [here](#). This will help give you an idea of the daily programme you will be expected to participate in.

The list below covers the areas of concern people sometimes raise with us and the things we may ask them to consider.

<b>General health issues</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Physical limitations and/or disabilities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Emotional distress</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mental health issues</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Involvement with services</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Addictions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Infectious diseases</b>	<b>4</b>



## **General health issues**

Please note that if you have an unstable medical condition, our retreat centres can be quite remote so if you have any existing condition that may require A&E intervention, it would be wise to consider the distance between the retreat centre and the nearest A&E - although some retreat team members have basic first aid, they are not medically trained.

If you have a stable underlying medical condition but may require special conditions or support during your stay please discuss these prior to booking so we can clarify what support you may need and whether or not we can reasonably provide it - again [contact our team](#) to do this.

Please note: if you normally receive care at home, are looking for convalescence, or are unable to self-medicate, then a retreat may not be the best place for you as we will not be able to replicate these levels of support. We do, however, welcome carers. They would be subject to the retreat conditions, so they must be comfortable with that. Please book them a place and pay the deposit. This will go towards our costs – no further donation is requested for carers.

As we provide outdoor retreats, we cannot offer refrigeration for medications. This is because we do not have the power generation required to offer certainty around provision and maintaining temperature.

## **Physical limitations and/or disabilities**

Camping is in various areas on different sites. We don't have a specific accessible camping area.

We can get you quite close to the nearest camping area on most sites, but none of the camping areas are easily accessible via vehicle. There are camping areas farther away from the car park and main area that take longer or are trickier to get to.

Particularly at Bowerwood, you may want to request that we keep a space for you in one of the camping areas that is nearer.

We can arrange for team members to help you put up your tent if needed. Unfortunately, as we are off the grid, we cannot offer charging for electric wheelchairs. However, if you check with the wheelchair provider or your local



mobility support, they can sometimes recommend places in different areas of the country where wheelchair batteries can be charged. Unfortunately our Bowerwood site is not suitable for wheelchairs due to the nature of the terrain.

Frog Mill has a separate disabled toilet, but this is not true at all retreat sites. At Bowerwood, toilets are at ground level, but there is a steep slope to reach them. At Wartling Wood, there are steps up to the compost toilets. If you intend to bring your own toilet, please note that we have no facilities for emptying chemical toilets.

### **Emotional distress**

Many people suffer from emotional distress at some point in their lives. In most cases, retreats can help, and the tools we learn on retreat can be beneficial in coping with emotional distress in our lives.

Please be aware, however, that retreats are not therapeutic environments. Although many of our retreat team members can offer helpful support, they are not counsellors or therapists, and the time they can offer you will be limited.

We do not recommend coming on retreat in the immediate aftermath of a bereavement or other significant life transition. The intensity of a retreat environment can heighten an already challenging time.

Please also be aware that you will be around other people intensively on retreat and participate in a collective programme. Please consider whether this intensive contact with other people will be helpful to you.

Camping can be a great way to connect with self and nature. Still, it can also bring particular challenges related to privacy and comfort, so consider whether you are in a suitable emotional state to embrace this challenge.

Also, consider that many retreats will have periods of silence, varying from a short time each day to longer and deeper periods on more intensive retreats; it is important to be mindful of how any experience of silent periods might affect you.

### **Mental health issues**



Mental health covers a broad spectrum of issues. Having a diagnosed mental health condition or a suspected mental health condition does not mean you cannot come on retreat, particularly if your condition is stable and you are used to managing your life independently and being around people.

However, for some conditions, being outside of your familiar environment and in intensive contact with other people can represent a risk of relapse. If you require help and support at home to manage your condition or organise your life, then a retreat may not be the best place for you. Please note that we do not accept referrals from health professionals.

If you have a diagnosed or suspected mental health condition, please email our safeguarding team ([BuddhafieldSafeguarding@protonmail.com](mailto:BuddhafieldSafeguarding@protonmail.com)) so that the retreat leaders can help you establish whether being on retreat is the best thing for you. We may also ask you to talk to a member of the team running the individual retreat you want to book so they can discuss whether they are able to appropriately support you.

### **Involvement with services**

If you or your family are currently being supported by local healthcare or social services for any reason, don't hesitate to contact our safeguarding lead ([BuddhafieldSafeguarding@protonmail.com](mailto:BuddhafieldSafeguarding@protonmail.com)) to discuss this in advance.

### **Addictions**

A retreat is not a suitable environment for detox from drugs and alcohol. Before coming on retreat, people who are in recovery from addiction should be free from dependence and free from any medication they have used to support their detox.

People who are in recovery from addiction who have achieved this level of independence may, of course, find the environment offered by being on retreat a supportive condition for moving forward in their life.

We do not recommend that you try to give up smoking while on retreat. If you are a smoker or in the process of giving up, please make sure you bring enough cigarettes and/or patches with you for the week. Smoking, including electronic cigarettes/vaping, is not allowed within the retreat grounds, but you can smoke/vape outside the immediate retreat site.



### **Infectious diseases**

For your well-being and the well-being of other people on the retreat (some of whom may be immuno-suppressed or otherwise vulnerable to infection), please do not come on retreat if you have or believe you may have an infectious disease. If you are unsure of the level of risk, please consult your GP.

We hope this guidance has been useful. If at all in doubt as to whether or not a retreat is appropriate or whether we will be able to adequately support your needs please [contact us](#) to discuss your circumstances with us.

**Best wishes**

**The Buddhafield Team**