

Are you well enough to be on Retreat?

Our primary concern in considering whether or not someone is well enough to be on retreat is their own wellbeing. However, when you come on retreat we also ask that you have a reasonable expectation of being able to fully participate in the programme. The following notes may help you work out whether or not this is realistic.

If you think you may need specific conditions or support please feel free to discuss your needs and concerns with our office team (01877 384 213). Any information given will be treated as confidential. Information given to us in confidence will be shared with the team leading the retreat, and other members of the Dhanakosa team on a need to know only basis, and where possible with your prior consent. This is to give you the best possible support.

Programme details can be found in the further information section for individual retreats. 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 bring up with us and the sorts of things we may ask people to consider.

1. General health issues
2. Physical limitations and/or disabilities
3. Emotional distress
4. Mental health issues
5. Concerns around addictions or detox
6. Infectious diseases

1. General health issues

Please note that if you have an unstable medical condition, Dhanakosa is half an hour's drive from the nearest medical centre, has a minimum 25 minute call out time for an ambulance and is 1h 15m from the nearest A&E. Retreat team members are not medically trained.

If you have a stable underlying medical condition but may require special conditions or support during your stay please call the office (01877 384 213) to discuss these prior to booking so we can clarify what support you may need and whether or not we can reasonably provide it. Single rooms and downstairs rooms may be available but should be agreed with the office team prior to booking.

Please note: if you normally receive care at home, are looking for convalescence or respite, or are unable to self-medicate, then a retreat will not be suitable as we will not be able to replicate these levels of support.

2. Physical limitations and/or disabilities

Dhanakosa is an old house and was not originally designed with disabilities in mind. However we have made a number of modifications. If you require a single room, a downstairs room, a bed (rather than a bunk) or a room with a bath for a medical reason please arrange this with the office prior to booking as these facilities are limited and cannot be guaranteed without prior arrangement.

If you have food allergies or other medical dietary requirements please let us know prior to your retreat so we can ensure appropriate arrangements have been made.

We do have ground floor bedrooms that can be used by people with wheelchairs or other mobility aids and a shower room accessible for people with physical disabilities, with an emergency alarm. If at all in doubt or if you think you may require special support during your stay please call the office prior to booking so we can be sure we can give you the support you need.

3. Emotional distress

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

Please be aware however that retreats are not therapeutic environments and although many of our retreat team members will be able to offer helpful support they are not counsellors or therapists and the amount of 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 on retreat you will be around other people quite intensively, and participating in a collective programme. Please consider whether or not this sort of intensive contact with other people will be helpful to you or not. Single room accommodation is limited and must be agreed prior to booking.

All retreats will have periods of silence, usually at least one full day on introductory retreats up to several days on going deeper or regulars retreats.

4. Mental health issues

Mental health covers a wide 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 of the condition; or 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.

While meditation and mindfulness can be helpful in managing stress, depression and anxiety, according to UK best practice guidelines, the practice might not be suitable if you are experiencing major depression or other clinically diagnosed psychiatric illness such as personality disorder, major trauma (PTSD), psychosis or current self-harming.

If you have a diagnosed or suspected mental health conditions please call our office to talk over your needs to make sure being on retreat is really going to be 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 on so they can discuss whether they are able to appropriately support you.

5. 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. We ask that people are at least 6 months into recovery and abstinence to attend a retreat.

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 on the premises, but you can smoke/vape outside the front gate.

6. Infectious diseases

For your own wellbeing and the wellbeing 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 are ill with a heavy cold or flu with a temperature, Covid, a stomach bug or other infectious disease.

These can be transmitted easily within the context of a residential retreat setting. You can view our cancellation [policy here](#). Please note it is very unlikely that we will be able to provide single room accommodation or special support at the last minute. **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 call our office (01877 384 213) to talk it through with us**

Best wishes

The Dhanakosa Team