**Support Package and Ethos Statement in TBRL - model statement**

**Introduction: working at the [XXX][[1]](#footnote-0) Buddhist Centre[[2]](#footnote-1)**

Working at the[XXX] Buddhist Centre is an intensification of Buddhist practice: deciding to work at the[XXX] Buddhist Centre means deciding to do just that. It means a clear decision to help communicate Bhante Sangharakshita’s distinctive presentation of the Dharma and to try to exemplify it.

**The Vision of working at the [XXX] Buddhist Centre**

The vision of being supported by the Centre is: working harmoniously and effectively together so that we can communicate Bhante’s distinctive presentation of the Dharma as widely as possible. The spirit is the Bodhisattva Ideal – giving the Dharma. This includes being mindful of the message that the physical space communicates – is it beautiful, cared for, clean and easy for all to make good and full use of? Are good systems in place for the facilities of the centre to run well and be well managed?

**Order Members supported by the [XXX] Buddhist Centre**

We assume that Order Members supported by the Centre are keen to teach the Dharma and to do whatever they can to help spread the Dharma – including giving kalyana mitrata. We expect Order Members working at the Centre to take an active part in a chapter, to be in good communication with Order Members, and able to confess breaches of the precepts. We would expect them to want to give their time, energy and skills to the work of the[XXX] Buddhist Centre and that asking to be supported arises out of that fundamental desire.

**Mitras and Friends Supported by the [XXX] Buddhist Centre**

We would expect mitras who have asked for ordination to be in a GFR group wherever possible, or if they haven’t asked for ordination, a mitra study group. We do have ‘friends’ working at the centre and this is to give them a taste of work as a spiritual practice.

**Working in Team-Based Right Livelihood (TBRL)**

We need to work out how best to manifest our vision and establish what activities and meetings are needed to achieve this. It also means work reviews, team meetings, and a yearly team retreat. Working in a TBRL needs a willingness to be flexible, working to meet the objective needs of the situation and helping out wherever possible (rather than merely following a job description to the letter).

**The Support Package.**

The [XXX] Buddhist Centre Centre Support Team is a team-based right livelihood situation where people are supported to deepen their practice of the Dharma and to work for the good of Buddhism in [XXX]. Although one does not have to live in a community in order to work in the team this does offer the best opportunity to experiment with a radical ‘semi-monastic lifestyle’ which has a renunciative element which requires you to simplify your life, reduce your wants in order to raise money for Dharma projects.

The support which you receive for working at the Centre is worked out on an individual basis.

**Support**

The support aims to cover:

Rent.

Food.

Basic Medical Expenses.

Basic Clothing Requirements. (Up to [£260] per annum)

Lunch Allowance. There is a weekly lunch allowance of [£30] which can be spent as you choose.

Personal Allowance, ie spending money for additional expenses and other things. This amount may be agreed on a case-by-case basis according to different individual needs; it will typically be between £40-£55 per week.

**Retreat Allowance and Holiday time**

There is a retreat allowance to facilitate people going on retreat which is seen as a very important part of working in a team-based right livelihood situation.

6 weeks of retreat can be paid for including travel to and from the venue.

If you support an [XXX] Buddhist Centre retreat it counts as half coming from your retreat allowance and half as working. (For example a week-long retreat would mean 2.5 days coming from one’s retreat allowance.) Total retreat time taken should not exceed 10 weeks in one year. A rough financial guide for annual retreat expenses is [£1700].

For people who have immediate family living a long way from [XXX] (including overseas) it may be possible to make extra money available for visits in consultation with the Treasurer.

2 weeks can be taken as paid leave for holidays. If there is some money left over from the retreat allowance this can be put towards holiday expenditure. Holiday time can be used to go on retreat and some retreat allowance can go towards holiday or travel expenditure.

Retreat allowance is not automatically carried over to the next year. Requests to go over one’s Retreat Allowance need to be made to the Centre Manager.

Team members are encouraged to keep their own accurate record of the time that they have taken for retreats/holidays each year and a record of this expenditure.

**Office Hours**

The Centre Support Team is an Office Team with standard office hours ie Mon-Fri 9am-5pm (with an hour for lunch). Each person is encouraged to take responsibility for a specific area of the work and to engage with it in a conscientious and honest way. We aim to work in a transparent way communicating with one another about what we are doing particularly when we need to be away from the office. We organise cover at lunch time to assist the receptionist so there is at least one member of the team in the office.

**Flexible Working Hours and extra working hours.**

Each individual is expected to work at least a basic 35-hour week. The[XXX] Buddhist Centre aims to operate a policy of flexible working hours through trusting that each individual will work their basic hours.

At times there will be the opportunity to work extra hours, eg Centre Open Days. Supporting these is seen as part of an individual’s practice of generosity, each team member giving their time to help make meditation and the Dharma available on these weekend days.

It is also possible to use a day from retreat allowance/leave to have a day off, or request time off.

**Leaving Early**.

It is possible to leave early from work. In principle we are aiming to make sure we do the essential things and that we work at least the basic hours- sometimes we work late, sometimes we leave early. It is possible sometimes to work from home, or to work at the weekend and take time off during the week. Team members are expected to write down when they will be out of the office for more than two hours. On-going flexi-time requests will need to be discussed with the Centre Manager.

**Supporting [XXX] Buddhist Centre Classes**

Team members are encouraged to support and teach at the classes and courses run by the Centre and some flexibility around working hours is possible to facilitate that.

**Bank Holidays**.

The Team generally do not have Bank Holidays off. The exceptions to this are Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day. People from the team may be needed to provide basic cover for the Centre over the Xmas/New Year period. If they work these days this time can be taken elsewhere as ‘time off’. The Team aims to take it in turns to cover these times: two people, one year, two different the next year. Other Bank Holidays are worked as normal working days or they can be requested off as a part of retreat allowance.

**Training**

We aim to create a context in which people can have a strong experience of working in a Buddhist team-based right livelihood team. We have a regular weekly meeting for the team. We also have input from experienced Buddhist practitioners, for example visiting teachers and the Centre President.

We aim to help people to develop transferable skills. We encourage each team member to think in terms of taking two days training per year to develop their skills.

We have one Team Retreat a year.

**Sick Leave**.

People should stay at home if they are sick. People are trusted to come to work if they are well enough. If a Team member is off sick for five days they are required to get a sick note from their Doctor. For long term sickness, financial support can be continued for six months after which the individual will need to claim sickness benefits.

**Leaving the Team**

One month’s notice is required. If it is possible to give more than one months notice and to help to facilitate a smooth hand-over that would be appreciated.

**Part-time Paid Workers Terms**

Part-time workers may be paid at [£6.31] per hour or as agreed or as specified by legislation (eg minimum wage)

They are also entitled to [6] weeks sick pay and [4] weeks holiday per year pro rata

**Pensions.**

National Insurance contributions will be paid for the individual towards their pension. Note that UK pension law is changing and the pension may be provided by the Centre or UK Government[[3]](#footnote-2).

**Sabbaticals**

After many years working at the Centre it is possible to request a paid sabbatical. These requests will be considered on an individual basis by the [XXX] Buddhist Centre Council.

**Ordination.**

The Centre Team offers a good context to prepare for Ordination into the Triratna Buddhist Order. The Centre can meet all or some of the costs of someone attending their Ordination course depending upon what is necessary. The person will need to have been working at the Centre for at least 3 years if the Centre is to pay a substantial part of their course fees. Their retreat allowance will be adjusted for that year to the duration of the course + 5 weeks retreat allowance.



1. Centres adopting this policy need to replace all highlighted text with appropriate names and/or figures. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. This model policy reflects the LBC’s support package and ethos in 2013. It is not intended to be prescriptive and other Triratna Centres may choose to approach this area in a different way. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Please check national legislation or the Development Team for the latest on this. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)