

Frequently Asked Questions: Resident Community Member Role at the Being Peace Centre

Why This Role?

What makes this opportunity special or different from other practice opportunities?

This is a rare chance to be a founding member of the first Plum Village centre in the UK: a truly historic moment for the practice community. You're not joining an established system, you're helping to create it. Your energy, insights, and presence will literally shape how Being Peace Centre develops. There's both vulnerability and beauty in this initiating role, and the significance of being part of establishing the UK's first dedicated Plum Village practice centre cannot be overstated.

Beyond that, living your practice in community for an extended period is profoundly transformative in ways that week-long retreats cannot match. The daily rhythm of practice, the challenges of living with others, the opportunity to integrate mindfulness into every aspect of life: this is where practice deepens from understanding to embodiment.

You'll develop practical skills, receive training and mentorship, and be part of creating something that will support countless practitioners for years to come. Most importantly, you'll have the precious gift of time, time to practice, to heal, to grow, and to discover what emerges when you truly commit to the path.

About the Role and Commitment

How long is the commitment, and can I choose my duration?

We're inviting community members to commit to between 8 months and 2 years. For this first intake starting in January 2026, some members may stay for 8 months, with the opportunity to extend if it feels right for both you and the community. Once the community is established, we'll have regular intake cycles in January, May, and September each year. We ask that you come with an intention to stay for at least 8 months.

What happens if I need to leave before my commitment period ends?

This is a voluntary role without a formal contract, which means you are free to end your volunteering at any time. We deeply understand that life brings unexpected changes; whether personal, family, health, or other circumstances. If you find you need to leave, we simply ask that you communicate openly with the Community Practice Mentor and give as much notice as possible so we can support both you and the community through the

transition. There's no penalty or judgment; we want what's best for your practice and wellbeing.

What level of Plum Village practice experience do I need?

We're looking for practitioners with genuine commitment to and experience in Plum Village practice. This typically means you've attended multiple retreats in the Plum Village tradition, have an established home practice, and feel a deep connection to Thay's teachings. You don't need to be an "advanced" practitioner, what matters most is your sincerity, openness to learning, and willingness to live the practice daily. During the Discernment Weekend, we'll explore together whether this commitment feels right for where you are in your practice journey.

What other skills do I need?

We are looking for people who can live well in a community and can deal with meeting new people regularly. You may have lived in a community before or work well in a team. You will need empathy, flexibility, patience, self-awareness and generosity. It is not easy to live in close proximity with other people. You will need to exercise compassion regularly. Other practical skills such as cleanliness, flexibility and good time management will be very important too to harmonious living. You will need to be inclusive and patient in your attitude: you will be meeting new retreatants regularly who may come from all backgrounds and may require a lot of support.

Work Rotations and Daily Life

How do the four-month work rotations actually work?

Every four months, you'll move into a new role area, allowing you to develop diverse skills and experience different aspects of running the centre. The rotation includes:

- **Household and Office** (2 people): You'll support the administrative team with tasks like managing bookings, correspondence, and scheduling, while also caring for the household spaces, keeping living areas clean, welcoming, and harmonious.
- **Kitchen** (1 person): Working alongside our part-time chefs during retreats, you'll support meal preparation and service. Between retreats, you'll prepare breakfast for the community and help coordinate self-cooking arrangements.
- **Maintenance** (1 person): Supporting our part-time maintenance coordinator, you'll help care for the buildings, grounds, and facilities, from minor repairs to seasonal upkeep. This role cultivates practical skills and a deep relationship with the physical space.
- **Flexible Role** (1 person): This vital position provides coverage when other community members take their week off every six weeks. You'll move between roles

as needed, which helps you develop versatility and a comprehensive understanding of how the centre functions.

- **Garden** (1 person): This is the one exception to rotation, one community member will focus on gardening for a full year, helping to develop our "Happy Farm" mindful organic growing space. We're seeking someone with strong gardening skills for this role.

Every four months, the community will meet to discuss the next rotation, considering everyone's preferences, developing skills, and the community's needs. This collaborative approach ensures the rotation serves both individual growth and collective harmony. There may be times when you are asked to do a role that is not your preference which we would ask you to approach with grace.

What does a typical day look like?

Your days will flow with the rhythm of practice. Mornings begin with sitting meditation, followed by breakfast and morning chores. You'll then move into your working meditation period, whether in the office, kitchen, garden, or maintenance work, approached with mindfulness and presence. Midday brings lunch and rest, followed by more work practice in the afternoon. Evenings include dinner, possibly walking meditation, and evening practice or community time.

During retreats, the rhythm shifts to support retreatants, you might be serving meals, holding space during Dharma sharing circles, or ensuring the physical environment supports deep practice. Between retreats, the pace is generally gentler, with more time for personal practice, community building, and the ongoing work of maintaining the centre.

You'll have one "lazy day" each week for rest and renewal, plus a full week off every six weeks to recharge, visit loved ones, or simply be.

What specific tasks will I be doing in each role?

In **Household and Office**, you might find yourself responding to retreat enquiries, updating the website, managing the booking system, cleaning shared spaces, preparing rooms for new arrivals, doing laundry, or creating a welcoming atmosphere for guests.

In the **Kitchen**, you'll chop vegetables mindfully, support meal service during retreats, prepare simple breakfasts, wash dishes, maintain kitchen cleanliness, help plan menus with the chefs, and perhaps explore creative ways to nourish the community.

In **Maintenance**, tasks could include basic repairs, painting, gardening support (distinct from the dedicated garden role), setting up retreat spaces, monitoring heating and water systems, seasonal preparation of the buildings, and responding to immediate practical needs.

The **Flexible Role** means you'll learn aspects of all these roles, stepping in wherever you're needed most. This variety can be wonderfully enriching, helping you discover unexpected skills and preferences.

Accommodation and Living Arrangements

Tell me more about the shared accommodation. What if I really need privacy or have specific needs?

Accommodation is in gender-separated shared rooms with 3-4 people per room, located in a private area of the retreat centre away from guest spaces. The rooms are simple and comfortable, designed to support practice rather than luxury. Sharing a room is considered an essential part of the Plum Village practice; it's an opportunity to practice interbeing, to learn patience and consideration, and to support one another's practice journey.

We understand that some individuals have essential needs related to gender identity, health conditions, or safety that make standard shared accommodation challenging. In these cases, alternative arrangements may be requested and will be considered compassionately on a case-by-case basis. However, we cannot accommodate preferences based purely on comfort or habit; part of the practice is learning to be at ease in community.

If you're unsure whether your needs would qualify for alternative arrangements, please discuss this openly in your application or contact us at roles@plumvillage.uk. We want to support everyone's practice while maintaining the integrity of community living.

Can I bring my pet? What about visits from family and friends?

Unfortunately, the facilities don't allow for pets of any kind. We know this can be a difficult consideration for animal companions, and we encourage you to make arrangements for their care before applying.

Regarding visits from family and friends, during your week off every six weeks, you're welcome to leave the centre to spend time with loved ones. While we want to be accommodating, the centre's primary purpose is as a retreat space, so having personal visitors stay on-site would need to be discussed with the Community Practice Mentor and would likely be very limited. The discernment weekend is a good time to discuss your specific situation.

What about the £50 weekly stipend, what's that meant to cover?

The £50 weekly stipend is yours to use as you wish. It might cover personal items, phone bills, transportation for your weeks off, gifts for loved ones, savings, or occasional treats when you venture into town. Since accommodation and all meals are provided, this amount is intended for personal expenses rather than living costs. Some community members may find it ample; others may supplement it with personal savings depending on their needs and circumstances.

Practice and Community Support

What kind of support will I receive for my practice and wellbeing?

We're committed to creating robust support structures, learning from established Plum Village centres worldwide and UK retreat centres with residential communities. Your support includes:

- **Community Practice Mentor:** Bi-weekly one-to-one meetings to support your practice, discuss challenges, and celebrate growth
- **Weekly Sangha meetings:** For community connection and harmony
- **Monthly Beginning Anew sessions:** To address difficulties and refresh relationships
- **Monthly Dharma teachings:** Deepening your understanding of Buddhist practice
- **Conflict resolution support:** When challenges arise between community members
- **Opening retreat:** In January 2026 with Michael Schwammberger to build strong foundations
- **Various training opportunities:** Including first aid, food hygiene, racial awareness, Plum Village practice, and facilitation skills

You'll also have access to the beautiful estate for nature connection and can attend on-site retreats during your weeks off.

What happens during the 8-week probationary period?

The first eight weeks are a mutual exploration period. You'll receive regular feedback and support through one-to-one meetings, and we'll work together to ensure the role is truly right for you. This isn't about testing whether you're "good enough", it's about honestly discerning whether this particular path serves your practice and whether you're finding joy and meaning in the community. If either you or we feel it's not the right fit, we can part ways with kindness and without judgment. If all feels well, your service is confirmed and continues.

How do you handle conflicts or difficulties in community?

Living in community inevitably brings challenges, sharing rooms with others, supporting retreatants, working in community daily, it's all part of the practice! We approach difficulties as opportunities for growth rather than problems to avoid. When conflicts arise, you'll have support from the Community Practice Mentor trained in conflict resolution. We'll use practices like Beginning Anew, compassionate listening, and mindful communication.

The key is bringing awareness, honesty, and kindness to difficulties rather than letting them fester. We're creating a culture where it's safe to be vulnerable, to acknowledge mistakes, and to work through challenges together. Your emotional intelligence and willingness to engage with discomfort mindfully are essential qualities we're seeking.

Practical Considerations

Do I need a driving licence?

A UK/EU driving licence for manual transmission with fewer than three points is desirable but not essential. The centre is in rural Gloucestershire, so having drivers in the community is helpful for errands, emergencies, and transportation needs. However, if you don't drive, you can still apply—we'll work it out as a community.

What about healthcare, insurance, and other practicalities?

As this is a voluntary role, you'll need to maintain your own health insurance (or access to NHS care as usual). You should register with a local GP once you arrive. The centre will arrange for enhanced DBS checks as part of the onboarding process since the role may involve contact with vulnerable adults.

You'll remain responsible for any personal debts, phone contracts, or other financial obligations. The stipend and free accommodation are designed to support a simple lifestyle during your service, not to provide income for external commitments.

Do I have to have UK citizenship or Right to Remain?

We may be able to manage the visa requirements for non-UK citizens to become residents at the Being Peace Centre, however we cannot commit to this for all cases. This is likely to be more possible for future intakes.

What about dietary requirements or health conditions?

The centre provides vegan meals in line with Plum Village tradition. We can accommodate common dietary requirements such as gluten-free, or allergy-related needs, please let us know in your application.

During retreats, meals are prepared for the community and guests. Between retreats, food is provided for the community to self-cook together. You're welcome to bring your own additional food items if you have specific preferences or dietary needs beyond what's provided, though please be mindful of shared kitchen and storage space.

Regarding health conditions, we want to support practitioners with diverse health needs while being realistic about what we can accommodate in a community setting. The role does require good physical and mental health, as you'll be doing varied physical work and living in close community. If you have health conditions that require specific accommodations, please discuss these openly in your application so we can explore what's possible together.

When is the application deadline, and what's the selection process?

Applications close on 7th November 2025 (midnight). During the application period, we'll be holding an informational webinar where you can learn more about the role and ask

questions, please sign up for our newsletter to receive details about when this will take place.

We'll review applications and invite a limited number of people to a Discernment Weekend on 28th-30th November 2025. This isn't an interview; it's an opportunity for you to experience the site, meet other potential residents, practice together, and genuinely explore whether this commitment feels right for you. Unfortunately we are unable to invite all candidates to the Discernment Weekend, so if you aren't invited and are still keen we do encourage you to reapply to join the community at a later date.

What if I'm accepted but offered a later start date?

We're committed to creating a balanced and diverse community that we believe will work well together. This means that even if your application is strong and you have a wonderful Discernment Weekend with us, we might invite you to join a later intake rather than the January 2026 start date. The next intake after January will be in August/September 2026.

We understand this requires flexibility and patience on your part. If we offer you an August/September start instead of January, it's not a reflection on your practice or suitability, it's about ensuring each intake has the right balance and diversity to create a thriving, harmonious community. We hope you'll understand this approach as part of our commitment to building a truly inclusive space that reflects the diversity of the UK practice community.

Is this role right for me?

Only you can answer this question, but here are some reflections that might help:

Does your heart say "yes" even while your mind lists all the practical challenges? Have you been longing for deeper immersion in practice? Are you at a point in life where you can step back from career or other commitments? Do you feel called to service? Are you genuinely willing to live simply, share space, and work through difficulties with patience and kindness? Are you genuinely interested in living in community and do you think you have the skills needed to cope sharing a room and space with others?

If these resonate, we encourage you to apply and come to the Discernment Weekend. Trust your practice to guide you toward clarity about whether this path is calling you.

Questions Not Answered Here?

We've tried to anticipate common questions, but everyone's situation is unique. Please don't hesitate to reach out to roles@plumvillage.uk with any questions not covered here. We're happy to discuss your specific circumstances and help you discern whether this opportunity is right for you.

You can also stay connected through our newsletter for updates about any informational webinars we'll be holding during the application period.

We look forward to hearing from you and perhaps welcoming you into our founding community.

With gratitude and warm wishes for your practice,

The Being Peace Team