



In November 2018, MEP students and volunteers sat together and talked about what we liked about MEP, and what things we could do better. A small group of volunteers got together after the event to see if there were some things we could change and do better.

What you said ... about the space

- Heating (it's cold)
- Lighting (it's dark)
- Not enough chairs
- No space behind door and counter
- Not enough space
- No space for prayer
- The bar gets busy (not enough people to serve refreshments)
- Too noisy (e.g. for teaching with audio aids)
- Phones ringing / being used during lessons

What we did ...

- We got a new boiler!
- New volunteers will be shown where all the light switches are.
- We have bought new chairs.
- We checked if we can do something about this, but we think it is difficult to move everything every Monday. We will ask the Cowley Club if some things can be moved somewhere else.
- You can book to use the Library in advance by contacting Diane (volunteer at MEP).
- MEP is limited in the spaces it has. The garden spaces outside or the Library (if not booked) are spaces we can suggest.
When we asked some students, they said that if they want to pray, they will find a way to do this.
- We encourage everyone to help themselves to refreshments (not wait to be served), and also help to do some washing up.
- If you need a quiet space to do certain activities, you can book the Library in advance by contacting Diane (volunteer at MEP).
- Teachers can ask their students before lessons to turn their phones on vibrate, and to take phone calls in different place. Sometimes students have very important calls to take so we cannot ask them to switch off their phones.

What you said ... about the space

Challenges of sharing space with the Cowley Club

Not clean when we arrive at Cowley

The toilet

Tea towels / hand towels

We are worried about security (access to MEP is a bit ad hoc)

What we did ...

→ We found that it has helped MEP to have a volunteer from MEP to attend the Cowley Club general meetings (once a month).

By attending these meetings regularly, we are improving communication and building better relationships with members of the Cowley.

If you can volunteer to attend one or more meetings, please speak to Maude (volunteer).

→ This is sometimes a problem.
When it happens, we need to tell the Cowley Club. We do this by attending the Cowley Club general meetings once a month.

→ We have improved the signs in the toilets.

Please remember:

Only put loo paper in the toilet.

Everything else needs to be put in the bin.

→ We can change dirty towels when we need to.
Clean towels are in wicker basket next to boiler.
Dirty towels go straight in washing machine.

This information is in the new volunteers' induction.

→ Door security is part of the new volunteer induction. We also need to make sure there are enough volunteers on the door.

If you are on the door, it's good to be welcoming, but make sure that you talk to anyone you don't know in the space behind the door (next to the counter).

What you said ... about English classes and teaching

- Not enough teachers
- Can we teach using conversation as well as traditional teaching methods – in 1:1 settings as well as in a group?
- Existing conversation group is big and at high level – intimidating for new students to join/talk
- English classes both morning and afternoon
- An extra opening day / an occasional extra opening day
- Classes in a different place on another day
- Life in the UK group for test

Practise IELTS test

1:1 English lesson support

Offering teaching which is not based on level of English but based on need (e.g. filling out forms, writing letters etc)

Assessment process could be improved (i.e. language level)

Children at MEP – can we plan childcare so parents can study without being interrupted?

Some people are more confident about speaking so talk more but this stops others from speaking.

Can we mix students and languages so that students who don't speak a certain language is not left out of the group?

What we did ...

- We are organising extra volunteers to come in to do conversation classes in the afternoon.
We can also refer students to other places to get English classes in Brighton & Hove (see <https://brighton-and-hove.cityofsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/03/esol-provision-summer-2019.pdf>)
- We are meeting with ESOL coordinators for Brighton & Hove from the Friends Centre. We will ask them to give us a simple leaflet of different ESOL providers so we can hand this out easily.
- We are checking if this is possible to organise.
- MEP cannot offer much 1:1 English lesson support, especially outside of MEP time and space.
Remember that if you meet a student or teacher or other volunteer outside of MEP, this is not part of MEP.
- We are already doing this, as and when it comes up.
- The assessment process has recently been reviewed and simplified a lot.
- This has been talked about a lot before, and we agreed that this is difficult to provide.
- These issues and questions will be covered in the Teaching Support Sessions being organised with/for teachers.

What you said ... about other things at MEP

Extra activities / other projects / outings (e.g. sewing, poetry, art, IT/computer help, trips, gardening, art, chess, crochet, teach music, sports activities)

Can we have volunteer student translators? (wear badges so people know)

Need more volunteers to do washing up/tidying up / improve the rota

Encourage students to get involved in running MEP, feel part of MEP

Induction for new students so they understand that MEP is 'DIY'

Better communication about how MEP works and what's available, e.g. claiming travel, activities available, washing up

Getting volunteers more involved so new volunteers don't feel they don't have a role

Advice / information / support could be better (happening ad hoc at the moment)

What we did ...

→ MEP has many extra activities – art, sewing, allotment, poetry group, and maybe a choir soon. Other places such as Table Tennis Club run sports activities.

This information is now included in the updated simple MEP info leaflet so that students know about them.

MEP volunteers organise outings in August, when the Cowley Club is closed for maintenance.

If students want support with computers/IT, you can ask Sandy (volunteer).

→ This has been happening.

→ This has been worked on and it is improving.

→ We have improved the simple MEP information leaflet so that students know how MEP works, and with more information about activities and claiming travel.

→ We cover some things in the new volunteers' induction.

Volunteers: remember to delegate if you're too busy. New volunteers: if you notice something needs doing, do it, or ask another volunteer if you can help.

We will create a leaflet to show how MEP is structured to make it easier for all volunteers to see how MEP works, and who is doing what.

→ There is information about other useful organisations on the MEP website.

We can signpost students to other organisations in the city.

What you said ... about other things at MEP

We could learn from each other more – no time to share either teaching experience or life experience (i.e. where to access services, how to navigate B&H services etc)

Could build more links with other organisations (i.e. Friends Centre / Visual English)

Mental health support – especially for isolated people

Childcare – budget for events

Can we get a newer computer (for computer training / CVs)?

What we did ...

→ Sharing and talking about life experiences is part of how MEP works. This is an ongoing process.

→ Various MEP volunteers are attending other organisations' meetings and feeding back to MEP. We are also working with other organisations in the city, like the Friends Centre.

→ We have added some information to the simple leaflet about MEP, which is given to students.

We will try and organise an annual training day for everyone at MEP with an organisation called MIND.

→ The Finances and Fundraising subgroup will remember to allocate money to pay for childcare at events, so everyone can take part.

→ We looked at the cost of a new computer (laptop) but this is very expensive, and can only be used by one person at a time.

We are working with the Cowley Club to try and improve the WiFi so that people can use their smart phones more.