

Plymouth Soup Run Monthly Report

In August 2021:

- Plymouth Soup Run served 2299 meals (an average of 74 meals per night, equivalent to 7 meals or 11% more per night than July, and less than 1% fewer per night than August 2020); the year-to-date total is 16,214 meals served.
- Food was delivered to the homes of 4 people who were unable to get to the Soup Run plus 1 person who had been placed in a hotel by a neighbouring council. A family including 3 small children has been supported on several nights to provide food while the father awaits payment of wages due.
- The Soup Run Coordinator received numerous calls from people asking for help with access to food especially at weekends. When Sunday team volunteers are doing preparation at Shekinah on Saturdays, they often provide drinks and food to people seeking support.
- Despite good communication among teams on demand levels and a cautious approach to catering, teams had to draw on emergency food supplies on at least 2 nights and/or buy extra food due to unexpectedly high numbers of clients.
- Teams made 20 referrals to the Path Rough Sleeper Team (RST); they met 70 other rough sleepers (some referrals and sightings will have been of the same individuals on different nights); 62 sleeping bags/blankets were given out to rough sleepers, exceeded supply on several nights. Clothing, underwear and toiletries were distributed most nights.
- Very close collaboration is enjoyed with the RST who regularly pass on specific concerns to the Soup Run as the last service out at night other than emergency services. Also, the participation of a MARS worker at the Soup Kitchen every Sunday is allowing development of a comprehensive picture of the client group and their level of need.
- The Police, the Mental Health First Response service, Cornwall Social Services, and a concerned relative sought help from the Soup Run to look out for and support individuals at risk; these requests occur throughout the week and weekends.
- Mental health remains a conspicuous concern with many clients. One client with serious mental health issues which are having consequences for his broader wellbeing and housing situation is being supported by the Soup Run and helped to connect with other services. Teams made follow up contacts with various support services on behalf of other clients regarding health and housing issues. One client was assisted to attend a relative's funeral out of area.
- 3 clients with wounds received first aid from trained volunteers; another with a shoulder injury declined help. Paramedics were called on 2 occasions: for 1 client with a head injury and 1 client suffering from consequences of severe leg ulcers who was hospitalised as a result. The only option for the latter client to receive the necessary urgent attention was for Soup Run volunteers to take him A&E due to a long wait for paramedics and temporary closure of the Cumberland Centre.
- Many teams reported positive feedback from clients, for many of whom, the Soup Run is an important source of support, advice and human contact.
- In August, representatives of the Soup Run attended a meeting of the Rough Sleepers Strategy Implementation Group, and the Soup Run Development Group met, bringing together volunteers from all nights. The latter meeting gave particular attention to complying with new food labelling requirements that come into force in October 2021.