

Plymouth Soup Run Monthly Report

In September 2021:

- Plymouth Soup Run served 2011 meals (an average of 67 meals per night, equivalent to 7 meals or 13% less per night than August, and 11 meals or 14% fewer per night than September 2020); the year-to-date total is 18,225 meals served. A drop in numbers is typical as the weather becomes colder, yet the level of need for other kinds of support seems to be increasing.
- Ambient food was distributed in addition to the Soup Run fare on most nights. A client who was isolating due to Covid was welfare checked and provided with food deliveries.
- The Soup Run is being used increasingly to locate clients on behalf of other services, to monitor clients' wellbeing, and pass on important message regarding e.g. housing appointments, and opportunities for obtaining a Covid vaccination.
- As well as arranging Outreach GP appointments for clients, one client who was unable to walk to his appointment due to an injury was provided with a taxi. Out of Hours Social Services were contacted on behalf of two clients. Medical assistance was provided by volunteers to one client. Several were seen by the Community Outreach Nurses, and supported with blood-borne virus testing and treatment by staff of the Hepatitis C Trust.
- The number of vulnerable clients with significant mental and physical health issues is concerning. Several described threats and physical attacks that they had received on the streets. Some were extremely distressed at not having a housing offer after rough sleeping for some time. Others were pleased to share better news with the prospect of moving into their own accommodation or hoping to be allocated a space in the night shelter.
- 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.
- Teams made 18 referrals to the Path Rough Sleeper Team (RST); they met 60 other rough sleepers (some sightings will have been of the same individuals on different nights); 84 sleeping bags and 13 blankets were given out to rough sleepers, exceeded supply on at least one nights.
- Clothing, underwear and toiletries were distributed most nights, with increasing requests for warm clothing as the temperature is dropping. On Sundays, clients who are rough sleeping can take a shower and have a change of clothes.
- Rucksacks are often requested to help rough sleepers to look after their possessions including medication; 13 were given out this month.
- 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. On a typical Sunday, the worker will meet 3 new rough sleepers and up to 20 existing rough sleepers/sofa surfers.
- In September, representatives of the Soup Run attended meetings of the Homelessness Prevention Partnership and the Plymouth Alliance Activities Group, a PCC meeting on the new Changing Futures initiative, and two Risk Management meetings.