

## Plymouth Soup Run Report for October 2021

In October 2021:

- Plymouth Soup Run served 2272 meals (an average of 73 meals per night, equivalent to 6 meals or 13% more night than September 2021, and 1 meal or 2% more per night than October 2020); the year-to-date total is 20,497 meals served.
- Donations were gratefully received from food businesses/restaurants, harvest festival collections and generous members of the public.
- Food parcels were requested and delivered to the homes of 5 clients.
- Cold, wet and windy weather made conditions less welcoming for clients and volunteers this month, yet needs for food and other support including debt advice are increasing.
- Clothing, underwear and toiletries were distributed most nights, with increasing requests for warm clothing – coats, gloves and hats – as the weather deteriorates.
- The health, especially mental health of many clients continues to be a concern, with some extremely complex and distressing cases. In addition, a number of clients have presented with injuries and reported attacks they have suffered, with heightened tension being noted among clients on occasions, causing some to avoid certain locations.
- On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October, World Homeless Day, a particular effort was made to support clients' health: Community Outreach Nurses saw 21 clients and staff of the Hepatitis C Trust saw 15.
- Throughout October, Plymouth University Islamic Society students and medical students volunteered at the Sunday Soup Kitchen, serving food and providing toiletries. Volunteers from local businesses, Shelter and the Salvation Army joined teams on several nights.
- Teams made 32 referrals to the Path Rough Sleeper Team; they met 63 other rough sleepers (some sightings will have been of the same individuals on different nights); 45 sleeping bags or blankets were given out to rough sleepers, a reduction on preceding months but continuing to represent a significant expense.
- While a number of rough sleepers are expressing distress at their unresolved situations, it was heartening to see two such clients housed recently, with undoubted positive impacts on their health and wellbeing.
- The sad death of a well-known and much-loved client was felt by other clients and volunteers alike. They came together in a memorial service held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.
- Natasha's Law came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Soup Run teams have attended advisory webinars and shared information on food labelling requirements in order to comply with the law.
- The Soup Run collaborates closely with a number of services including PCC, Path and the Rough Sleepers team, as well as probation and the prison service prior to people's release, to pass on messages and enable joined-up support.
- During the month, volunteers came together at a meeting of the Soup Run Development Group, and representatives of the Soup Run attended meetings of the Rough Sleeper Strategy Intervention Group, the PCC Changing Futures Project, the Next Meal global link-up, and a Shelter consultation. They also supported a group of Dental students who will deliver oral health advice to clients in November.
- A number of meetings have been held to plan the Saturday morning opening of Shekinah on Bath Street for rough sleepers and winter provision clients. This will start on 6<sup>th</sup> November and will be supported by Soup Run volunteers.