

Plymouth Soup Run Report for November 2021

In November 2021:

- Plymouth Soup Run served 2139 meals (an average of 71 meals per night, equivalent to 2 meals or 3% less per night than October 2021, and 7 meals or 10% more per night than November 2020; all figures rounded); the year-to-date total is 22,636 meals served.
- Donations of food were gratefully received from food businesses/restaurants, with an early generous response from work and social groups and members of the public to our 'Reverse Advent Calendar Appeal'. This will help meet the constant need for toiletries, clothing, sleeping bags and ambient food items. The Soup Run was also fortunate to receive two significant cash donations from charitable funds.
- Teams made 21 referrals to the Path Rough Sleeper Team; they met 33 other rough sleepers (some sightings will have been of the same individuals on different nights); 32 sleeping bags or blankets were given out to rough sleepers.
- The wintry weather is having an impact on clients, many requesting warm clothing, hats, gloves and scarves. Soup Run volunteers supported Path's and Shekinah's provision of emergency accommodation in anticipation of the impact of storm Arwen.
- The Soup Run collaborates closely with a number of services including PCC, Path, the Rough Sleepers team, the probation service and the police to facilitate contact with vulnerable individuals. Concern was felt for at least one client rough sleeping after returning to Plymouth from interim accommodation after release from prison.
- A number of clients caused concern for their mental and physical health. The complexity of some is evident with expressions of anxiety and depression, reckless behaviour and self-harming ideation.
- Limited instances of aggressive behaviour have been dealt with through well-practised precautions including de-escalation and withdrawal to keep clients and volunteers safe.
- In view of the number of local Covid cases, teams are maintaining and reinforcing appropriate hygiene measures.
- Volunteers from local businesses and Salvation Army staff joined teams on several nights.
- Throughout November, Plymouth University Islamic Society students and medical students volunteered at the Sunday Soup Kitchen, serving food and providing toiletries.
- Dietetics students interviewed clients and volunteers in order to analyse the food offer made by the Soup Run and understand the part it plays in clients' nutrition.
- Soup Run volunteers hosted a dental student community engagement project which culminated in a well-attended oral health advice session at George House.
- During the month, representatives of the Soup Run attended meetings of the Alliance Activities Group, the PCC Changing Futures Project, and the Next Meal global link-up.
- The Saturday morning opening of Shekinah Drop-in began as foreseen on 6th November, supported by Soup Run and Alliance staff volunteers. It has been very well attended and has provided the opportunity for good interactions between service staff and rough sleepers/winter provision occupants.
- Three Covid vaccination drop-ins were held during November at Harbour, Hamoaze House and Shekinah. Soup Run volunteers encouraged clients to attend and provided refreshments for clients and for practitioners who were offering health and wellbeing advice. They included representatives of Livewell, the Community Outreach Nurses, the Hepatitis C Trust, the University Hospitals Plymouth Hepatology service, and the University of Plymouth Centre for Eyecare Excellence.
- Harbour staff provided training to 13 Soup Run volunteers in the administration of the opiate antagonist naloxone. For some it was a refresher and for all it was an opportunity to learn about the newly available nasal spray alternative to intramuscular injection.