

## **Plymouth Soup Run Report for October 2024**

### **The month in numbers**

- 2,600 meals served, equivalent to 84 per night.
- 50 sleeping bags and 7 blankets given out.
- 35 referrals made to the Path Rough Sleeper Team.

### **Key points**

- The total served this October was 11% less than September 2024 and 14% less than October 2023. This can be accounted for by the break in the weather with dramatically increased rainfall (up by ca 50%) and lower average temperature (down by ca. 6C) than either September 2024 or October 2023. It is concerning that numbers always start to reduce in the colder/wetter months, being unlikely to reflect any real reduction in underlying need.
- Numbers on any one night fluctuated, ranging from 51 to 108, presenting a catering challenge. Quieter nights numbers-wise did, however, allow more interaction with clients some of whom were in significant distress over their housing situation and other issues.
- Whilst most nights were also quiet in the sense of being peaceful, some were marked by alcohol-fuelled behaviour and aggression particularly between female clients. Teams used de-escalation skills and withdrew from stops as necessary.
- Individual client needs and causes for concern included a vulnerable man with additional needs who was supported to reach his accommodation, another who had collapsed and for whom an ambulance was called, one requiring first-aid for a leg wound, and a 13/14 year old runaway who was supported until collected by the police.
- Lighter moments included the usual excitement at the arrival of the CityBus 'Chatter Bus', passing on the good news of accommodation being allocated to clients, one's visible delight at finally having his own front door key, and simply catching up with people to provide some continuity in their lives.
- Generosity from regular supporters and suppliers enabled us to meet food and other practical needs amply. In addition, our Harvest appeal brought in wonderful donations, particularly from schools, which gave the opportunity to explain Plymouth Soup Run's work at Harvest Assemblies
- We marked the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month – World Homeless Day and World Mental Health Day – by sharing 10 facts about our service. These can be found on our social media pages @plymouthsoup run. For our volunteers however, and for the 88 people served that Thursday night and the three recipients of sleeping bags, it was not really a special date. It was like the preceding and following days, when we all witness the continuing scar across our community of homelessness, poverty and wider deprivation.