

Plymouth Soup Run Report for January 2025

January in numbers

- 2,386 meals served, average 77 per night. (9% lower than January 2024; 5% lower than December 2024)
- 54 sleeping bags, 18 blankets and 1 roll mat given out.
- 48 referrals made to the Path Rough Sleeper Team.

Key points

- **Impact of weather:** With similarly low temperatures, slightly more wind and more than twice as much rain as January 2024, clients really felt the effects of the weather. *“As always we were grateful [for colleagues’ support], especially at the first stop where they helped to warm up a very cold man.”* Warm dry clothing was in high demand, wet sleeping bags were exchanged, and a lot of hot water bottles were distributed. When severe weather provisions were in place, Soup Run volunteers helped ensure that clients knew where they could be accommodated.
- **Run environment:** Security following the fatal attack on the Hoe impacted the routing of runs on two nights. Otherwise, most teams reported that runs were calm and uneventful. Any minor incidents were swiftly defused. As ever, clients appreciated the opportunity to talk: *“A busy, cold but calm Saturday night with lots of opportunities for chats with people, several seeking ways to turn their lives around.”*
- **Health and wellbeing:** In January, ambulances were called on two occasions for clients who were seriously unwell: *“A difficult end to the evening, just reminds us all why we are all out there in the pouring rain.”* The mental health support that could be offered was greatly enhanced by the weekly presence of the Changing Futures Occupational Therapy specialist. The NHS Mass Vaccination team joined one evening run and one Saturday morning rough sleeper session at Shekinah, with good take-up of both winter flu and COVID vaccinations. Two busy podiatry sessions were held on alternate Saturday mornings, many of the clients treated having serious foot-care issues. One was supported to get to hospital and was admitted for several days. Information on dangerous opioid drugs in circulation was shared with teams who checked their stocks of naloxone and readiness to administer.
- **Resources:** Support from our regular donors and suppliers ensured that there was always ample food to give out on runs. Generous members of the public also donated food as well as clothing and sleeping bags.
- **Teams and networking:** Our volunteers in January were from 11 churches, 8 businesses or workplace groups, and 6 community or philanthropic groups. They also included school, college and university students, and former service users. We were happy to have support from Path and Plymouth City Council colleagues and StreetVet volunteers. The Soup Run’s AGM was held and Soup Run representatives attended several operational and strategic meetings. One team leader stood down in January after 16 years of faithful service. New team leaders and volunteers came on board during the month. *“Thanks to all the new volunteers who joined ... for the first time on New Years's Eve, they loved it and will join us again.”*