

Plymouth Soup Run Report for February 2025

The month in numbers

- 2,187 meals served, average 78 per night (2% lower than February 2024 and 1% higher than January 2025).
- 48 sleeping bags and 22 blankets given out.
- 46 referrals made to the Path Rough Sleeper Team.

Key points

- **Impact of weather:** Many nights during February were bitterly cold. Although, overall, the month was drier than January, teams often had to replace clients' wet clothing and sleeping bags. On one very wet and windy Sunday, Soup Run volunteers joined efforts coordinated by Path to offer indoor shelter to rough sleepers during the day and overnight at the Salvation Army (Barbican) and Hamoaze House. One Saturday morning session at Shekinah opened early on a particularly cold day.
- **Run environment:** Slightly quieter and generally peaceful runs mean that volunteers had ample time to talk to clients to provide welcome social contact and share positive moments: *"A good night with lots of chats, help, laughs."* *"The night Plymouth Argyle beat Liverpool. Everyone was very happy and relaxed - so much chatter about them winning."*
- **High level of need:** Despite the cold, teams were kept busy providing food and practical help to clients. *"At Kings Road there was a man who said he had 3 children and a partner, and they hadn't eaten properly for over a day."* *"Food, warm clothing and a hot water bottle were given to a man sleeping in his car."* Food was delivered nightly to a particularly vulnerable hostel resident. Volunteers offered a listening ear for some clients who needed to share their distressed at the situations they found themselves in. Pending a service decision, emergency accommodation was arranged for two vulnerable clients.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Fortnightly Saturday morning podiatry sessions at Shekinah continued to be well used. Two vulnerable clients were accompanied to dental appointments and another in urgent need of treatment was signposted to the emergency dentist. Bus tickets were provided to enable clients to attend hospital appointments.
- **Resources:** Thanks to good information sharing, there was ample food available on all nights but one, when additional food had to be bought during the run to ensure that everyone was fed. We were grateful for support from our regular donors and suppliers and generous members of the public. And we continued to use a Government/DWP Household Support Fund grant made available by Plymouth City Council to help clients experiencing cost of living pressures.
- **Teams and networking:** Our volunteers in January were from 9 churches, 5 businesses or workplace groups, and 5 community or philanthropic groups. Several teams welcomed new volunteers recruited through our revamped online volunteer application page. Medical students accompanied teams on two nights. Each Monday, StreetVet volunteers joined the run to tend clients' companion animals. At the end of the month, we said goodbye to Rachel, Occupational Therapist specialising in mental health, who provided invaluable support to clients and teams while on her placement with Changing Futures.