

Plymouth Soup Run Report for June 2025

The month in numbers

- 2,772 meals served, average 92 per night (4% less than June 2024 and 5% less than May 2025).
- 42 sleeping bags given out.
- 41 referrals made to the Path Rough Sleeper Team.

Key points

- **The year progresses:** *"A beautiful evening, calm, dry and light for the whole run"*, remarked one team mid-month. The summer is usually our busiest time. However, June saw a slight reduction in demand, albeit with huge variation in numbers per night ranging from 53 to 113, making planning difficult. And the hot weather meant *"a big demand for bottled water throughout the night at every stop"*. Runs were generally uneventful, but there were pockets of tension requiring careful moderation by volunteers.
- **Meeting diverse needs:** Conscious of the role that the Soup Run plays as a reliable and responsive presence in people's lives, teams were always looking out for any special difficulties being experienced by clients. *"[Named rough sleeper] was released from prison last week. [The church] is holding his belongings for him"*. *"We took out shoes for the vulnerable barefoot gent [seen the previous night]"*. In exceptional circumstances, emergency food was delivered to vulnerable clients, in one case following urgent referral by a health professional. A number of clients with financial worries including concerns over their benefits were signposted to sources of support. Sensitive and tenacious partnership working over a long period of time by the Soup Run and Path to support a vulnerable rough sleeper culminated in their being settled in suitable, well-resourced accommodation.
- **Health concerns:** Support for physical health needs included providing dressings to a client recovering from surgery. A client suffering seizures was supported at a Saturday morning session prioritising rough sleepers, and was taken to hospital on two occasions with help from paramedics and the police. The mental health needs of the client group are always evident and often exacerbated by individual circumstances: *"[Name] was distressed ... she is supported but affected by weekend shut down."* In the light of the complex needs of our client community, regular mental health support from the Health Inclusion Pathway, Plymouth (HIPP) team and from Livewell was most welcome.
- **Resources:** We continue to receive generous donations from members of the public, e.g. via our Amazon wish-list, and surplus food from supermarkets, food redistribution projects and events. Many teams are cooking meals from scratch and strive to offer nutritious meals and variety to clients. Treats are always appreciated: *"Strawberries and cream were on the menu tonight!"* Receipt of a grant from the new round of the Household Support Fund from the UK Government via Plymouth City Council enabled over 40 clients to be helped over the month with costs of energy, food, and other essentials
- **Volunteers' week 2025:** This took place 2nd-8th June. We marked it by featuring teams from across the week in social media posts, giving voice to their motivations for participating in the Soup Run. We are enormously grateful for the efforts of our army of volunteers who enable the service to operate every night of the year without fail.