

Plymouth Soup Run Report for August 2025

The month in numbers

- 3,121 meals served, average 101 per night (3% more than August 2024 and 0.6% more than July 2025).
- 44 sleeping bags, 7 blankets and 1 roll mat given out.

Key points

- **A month of change:** August started with *"walm and balmy"* nights and *"high demand for bottled water"* but saw rain later. Similarly, the month started with exceptionally high numbers of people coming to the runs. In the first week, we served 30% more meals than in the same week in August 2024, but by halfway through the month this had settled to 18%, and just 3% up by the end of the month. Thankfully, the demand for sleeping bags returned to a more normal level compared with July.
- **The run environment:** On most nights, teams typically reported *"busy but peaceful and good natured"*, or *"a pleasant evening with good spirits"*, but there were moments of tension among clients, some in drink. On one run, police officers had dealt with a dispute before the team arrived, and teams responded to a police request to help manage another situation involving recurrent aggression towards a client.
- **Diverse needs:** Support was provided during the month to a young mother in a B&B who came with her baby to the run - *"she was very hungry"*. Food was subsequently delivered to her. But providing food is just one aspect of what we do. When teams report *"a very busy evening with a high level of need tonight"*, they are also referring to practical needs, e.g. for sleeping bags, blankets, toiletries and clothing, or bus tickets to get to hospital appointments, as well as health and financial worries. A proportion of our clients are street homeless, often newly so: *"At the second stop one female rather distressed has been homeless [for six days] - we were able to provide her with sleeping bag, blanket, toiletries, dog food, and a rucksack [...] and complete a Path referral"*. Emergency accommodation was arranged for another vulnerable client.
- **Health concerns:** Some complex clients are regulars at the Soup Run and so their absence or changes in their presentation are noticeable. Teams supported some with ongoing physical health concerns, others with injuries resulting from assault, and one newly discharged from hospital. Support from Livewell and HIPP was very welcome especially to respond to the mental health needs of clients.
- **Business and community support:** Teams were grateful for donations of food by businesses and by members of the public who collect and bring surplus food to runs. Supplies provided by FareShare in particular are making a big impact on the quality of the food offer by teams that subscribe to the service and prepare nourishing 'home-cooking'.
- **Thanks to teams:** As ever, we are only able to do what we do because of our volunteers. During August, there was some need for teams to respond flexibly to circumstances, be it rerouting the run because of events on the Hoe, stepping up to fill rotas due to holidays, or a team's dutiful service despite the sudden illness of one of their leaders. We welcomed some new volunteers in August and thank them for their contribution, alongside seasoned volunteers and the partner organisations with whom we collaborate.