

Plymouth Soup Run Report for September 2025

The month in numbers

- 2,906 meals served, average 97 per night (2.5% more than September 2024 and 4% less than August 2025).
- 63 sleeping bags, 4 blankets and 1 roll mat given out.

Key points

- **Seasonal change:** The weather was a prominent talking point in team reports: *"The dark and damp of autumn has truly set in". "Temperatures have certainly dropped - a lot of demand for warm clothing from both men and women"*. Although the month was mostly dry, a couple of days were marked by heavy rain, and *"no matter how wet it is there are still people waiting for food"*.
- **The run environment:** For most of the month, team reports were upbeat: *"A very calm evening". "A good run and lots of humour ... lots of banter"*. Whilst most runs were issue free, occasional tensions arose, requiring moderation by teams and a prompt departure from the last stop one night. A client was caught in a dispute between two others and needed checking over. We saw another with facial injuries from a fight, and two whose tent and sleeping bags had been vandalised.
- **Mental health support:** Seeing people on a regular basis, teams get to know fluctuations in wellbeing, some negative: one person *"was very upset and down"*, and others positive: *"good to chat with 'A' who presented as the best we had seen in years"*. Practitioners from the Health Inclusion Pathway, Plymouth (HIPP) and Livewell were a welcome presence on alternate weeks, catching up with people already known to them and offering support to new clients.
- **Responding to diverse needs:** Clients circumstances and challenges are many and varied, calling for support tailored to their needs. A client who has received inputs over a long period of time with seemingly intractable issues in their life, has been connected with an advocate to help them navigate through their difficulties. A young mother with a baby is currently a regular client and teams always ensure that she has enough food. Two vulnerable young women were provided with emergency accommodation in collaboration with Path. Several clients were given bus tickets to enable them to attend medical appointments.
- **Household Support Fund:** The second quarter of the current grant under the UK Government/ Department for Work and Pensions HSF scheme was completed at the end of September. Over the financial year to date, we have been able to offer prompt and flexible support to 77 mostly single-person households, providing emergency supplies of food, energy and clothing, goods to ease the hardship of rough sleeping, and help for clients who are setting up home. We are grateful to Plymouth City Council for making the funds available to us.
- **Teamwork:** The Soup Run is a sizeable effort in collaboration with partner organisations and among participating teams, and our cohort of volunteers is ever evolving. Several teams had new volunteers join them in September, and some new team leaders 'flew solo' for the first time. A school student who volunteered as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award programme is planning to volunteer regularly and also develop supportive activities within their school. Business teams are enthusiastic supporters of the Soup Run but do not always have premises where they can prepare food; so we were grateful for the kind cooperation of two of our participating churches who made their kitchens available. Harbour staff delivered drug awareness and naloxone use training to teams. Soup Run volunteers joined Path colleagues contributing to a national survey of women who are rough sleeping. And as always, StreetVet volunteers joined us regularly to tend clients' companion animals.
- **Resourcing runs:** Planning for usually high and sometimes unpredictable numbers is challenging, but teams catered well and were able to feed everyone. The food that teams prepared offered variety from night to night and often included very creative use of supplies from food redistribution projects and donor supermarkets, as well as individual supporters such as 'R' *"who turned up at Mayflower Street with three bags full of food! The clients were delighted"* We thank all of our supporters who provide food, other in-kind donations and financial contributions.

