

Plymouth Soup Run Report for October 2025

The month in numbers

- 2,652 meals served, average 86 per night (2% more than October 2024 and 12% less than September 2025).
- 79 sleeping bags, 22 blankets and 3 roll mats given out.

Key points

- **Hostile weather:** *"A wet and windy night which probably impacted the numbers of people". "Everyone was absolutely soaking wet!"* The cold and wet weather affected clients and teams alike, but a volunteer reflected: *"At least now we are home in the dry, unlike the people who are street homeless"*. Demand was high for sleeping bags – almost double the usual monthly average – plus blankets and warm clothing: Teams are carrying seasonal supplies to meet needs. *"People are feeling the cold - lots of warm clothes needed"*. *"A man turned up last minute with no socks and he was freezing"*. *"[J] desperately needs some warm trousers"*. Comfort food befitting the colder weather was appreciated: *"Many more requests for soup than usual"*.
- **The client community:** Recently, as well as an increase in the number of female clients, teams have noticed a lot of newcomers, including some in distress. *"Some new faces tonight amongst our regulars"*. *"A calm evening but a few people needing extra support"*. *"Quite a few people struggling on the Hoe ... including newly homeless"*. Some were finding it difficult to cope with being repeatedly moved from their rough sleeping locations. An increase in the number of dogs was noted with some management needed to maintain harmony. Welcome support from StreetVet volunteers helps keep the dogs healthy.
- **Individual needs and behaviours:** As we get to know people, their particular needs become apparent. One client routinely has dairy-free food provided. Another with additional needs finds it very difficult to keep hold of his possessions and *"always needs extra food to keep him going"*. Whilst teams occasionally have to deal with verbal aggression and threatening behaviour between the people we serve, it is rarely targeted at our volunteers. However, one person's behaviour was exceptionally challenging recently, and on three nights in succession, he threatened volunteers resulting in one having a panic attack. Ongoing efforts to strengthening volunteers' ability to manage situations on the ground and support clients include safeguarding and bystander training.
- **Attention to health:** Teams are very aware of the fragile state of health of many of our clients and we were grateful for the regular mental health support from the HIPP team and Livewell. Vapes were also a welcome offer one night. As usual, there was a need during October for first aid, bus tickets to get to medical appointments, and signposting to GPs, A&E or Minor Injury Units, plus one paramedic call-out. With winter ailment risks rising, we were pleased to be joined by the NHS Mass Vaccination team twice during the month, dispensing flu, and for those eligible, Covid vaccinations. BBC Spotlight featured the fortnightly podiatry clinics held during our Saturday morning rough sleeper sessions at Shekinah, and offered by volunteers from the charity Forgotten Feet.
- **Community support:** We are thankful for support from many sources including those who regularly drop off surplus food from supermarkets or order goods from our Amazon Wish List, the knitters making warm hats, the schools who responded to our Harvest appeal and past donors who have enquired about our upcoming Christmas Reverse Advent Calendar appeal. A highlight of the month was when the Lord Mayor and her team joined a run. Their interest, engagement and active involvement were really appreciated.