

Plymouth Soup Run Report for March 2026

The month in numbers

- 2,516 meals were served on the nightly runs, averaging 81 per night, plus 187 meals (breakfasts and lunches) served at Saturday morning rough sleeper sessions at Shekinah. The total number of meals served, at 2,703, is 5% more than March 2025 and 1% more than February 2026.
- 66 sleeping bags, 9 blankets and 2 roll mats were given out.

Key points

- **Improving weather:** With almost half of the March nights free of rain, teams and clients felt some relief from the challenging weather earlier in the year. However more than a quarter of the month's rainfall fell on one night. That night's team remarked: *"It was hard to believe how many people were out ... given the horrendous weather. The wind was so strong it was almost blowing us along and a tree was down near the Kings Road stop"*. Even when dry, it was very cold, averaging lower temperatures than February.
- **The run environment:** Most nights were *"calm and quiet"*, with *"lots of good conversations and all service users in good spirits"*, being grateful for the food and other forms of support provided. However, there were a small number of incidents involving heightened emotions, aggression, and offensive behaviour towards other clients, and (albeit rarely) volunteers. On one occasion, support was sought from the police. With the impact of alcohol on behaviour, teams are vigilant about only serving clients who are not carrying alcoholic drinks. As well as interpersonal tensions, individual stresses were sometimes evident, such as the case of someone released from prison without accommodation in place. Most nights bring new faces to the run. This month it was remarked that we also met some people who had not been seen for some time, even years, suggesting recurrence of hardship.
- **Partnership working and teamwork:** Project 58:7 which ended in late March, was a positive example of partnership among the participating churches, Transforming Plymouth Together (TPT), Path and the Soup Run, with clients becoming used to the opportunity to access sleeping spaces via evening runs with Path staff present. Clients' health was supported by staff from HIPP and TPT, with Livewell using the opportunity to shoot footage for a film on collaborative working. Forgotten Feet volunteers provided footcare fortnightly at our Saturday morning sessions at Shekinah. StreetVet volunteers were kept busy when they joined Monday teams to treat clients' dogs. Our wider network of partners and supporters includes the people who regularly bring surplus food to runs or make spontaneous donations such as the kind passerby who donated £50 one night, and the businesses who generously provide food, often at short notice. We are pleased to thank them individually via social media. Every month we welcome new volunteers, and one Friday night saw the first outing of a new team and team leader.
- **Supporting individual needs:** The Soup Run offers support in many forms, from signposting, or making medical or housing referrals, to responding to specific moments of need. The current Household Support Fund grant from central government/DWP via PCC came to a close at the end of March. Over its one-year lifetime, it has enabled us to support more than 150 people with items to help them set up home, to relieve the hardship of rough sleeping, or to deal with unexpected domestic emergencies. Above all, we seek to be a constant reliable presence in the lives of isolated people, with whom they can share their worries as well as their good news, such as the clients who were moving into accommodation during March.