

Plymouth Soup Run Report for April 2026

The month in numbers

- 2,747 meals were served on the nightly runs, averaging 92 per night, plus 201 meals (breakfasts and lunches) served at Saturday morning rough sleeper sessions at Shekinah. The total number of meals served, at 2,948, is 3% more than April 2025 and 13% more than March 2026.
- 79 sleeping bags, 7 blankets and 8 roll mats were given out.

Key points

- **Improving weather, continuing need:** The arrival of spring was definitely felt, with teams typically reporting *"Busy but dry and calm evening"*. Overall numbers continue to grow year-on-year, and seasonally. Despite rising temperatures and drier weather, there was still a high demand for sleeping bags and warm clothing. Several people met during the month had, often unexpectedly, found themselves without accommodation due to domestic disputes or exclusion from supported accommodation, turning to the Soup Run for crisis support. Despite the general calm mood, there were pockets of frustration-fuelled individual behaviour and aggression between clients. Teams are well practised in moderating when possible and leaving the run location when not.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Teams noted continuing and *"obvious alcohol and substance addiction and complex mental health needs"*, all difficult to deal with in the street environment. So, support from HIPP and Transforming Plymouth Together was invaluable. Physical health needs were evident too: first aid was dispensed, a client was helped with GP registration, information was passed on about medical appointments, a rough sleeping wheelchair user was provided with transport to Derriford, and an assault victim recently discharged from hospital was supported. Many clients suffer from a lack of family or other support in their daily lives. Hence, joining colleagues from Plymouth Food Access Network at the recent Plymouth Social Isolation Forum was a welcome opportunity to raise awareness of the service that we offer, and network with other organisations providing community support.
- **Resourcing the runs:** Despite good information sharing from night to night on numbers, there were still times when emergency food stocks had to be tapped into, plus the occasional *"dash to Lidl for more supplies"*. Clients and teams alike were pleased with support from businesses that meant that pizza and sausage and chips were on offer on two nights. Windfall donations of food brought to the run by supporters, as well as Easter eggs and goody bags were welcome extras for clients.
- **Spotlight on Saturdays:** The morning rough sleeper sessions at Shekinah managed by the Soup Run attracted on average 25 people who took the opportunity to relax in a safe space indoors or in the garden, chat to each other and volunteers, and have a shower and clean clothes. All are offered a cooked breakfast and packed lunch, plus laundry vouchers and bus tickets as needed. The raw hardship of street homelessness is very evident; just as during evening runs, some long-term rough sleepers voiced their concerns that there seems to be no solution for them. One client *"turned the garden pond into a wishing well. When asked what he wished for he replied: 'for my life to get better than it is now'"*. These sessions allow for focused conversations and follow up such as referrals to Path, PCC, HIPP or the Community Dental Clinic. A valued addition to the Saturday service is the fortnightly footcare clinic courtesy of the charity Forgotten Feet's volunteer podiatrists, providing much-needed specialist care and advice for up to 10 people per session.