

# Jeremy Swain

My father, Jeremy Swain, who passed away just seven months after being diagnosed with a brain tumour at 65, had a career spanning 40 years working to end homelessness.

He graduated from Aberystwyth University with a degree in modern history in 1980 before starting as an unpaid outreach volunteer for charity [Thames Reach](#) in 1984. I recall my dad telling me in recent years that he initially began working as an outreach volunteer simply because it seemed like an interesting thing to do, before he became completely absorbed in a dream of ending homelessness. His role at Thames Reach shifted over the years, and in 1999, he became CEO, a position he'd remain in for almost 20 years.

In 2017, Jeremy received a [City Lit](#) Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to empowering people who have experienced homelessness, helping them develop the skills and confidence necessary to gain employment.

In 2018, Jeremy stepped down from Thames Reach and served as the Deputy Director at the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](#). He then worked as a Senior Adviser for the MHCLG's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Directorate and Covid-19 Rough Sleeping Task Force. The "Everyone In" campaign he worked on during the pandemic provided nearly 15,000 homeless people in England with emergency housing by May 2020.

Then, until his passing, Jeremy was a self-employed consultant and adviser, supporting voluntary sector, local authority, and central government partners in eliminating homelessness and tackling social injustice.

Aside from his enduring commitment to ending homelessness, my dad had a huge love of West Ham, reading, cooking, and taking long walks across England's coast and national parks. He'll be remembered among family and friends for his sharp wit and humour, deep humanity, and calming demeanour. He had a rare and wonderful way of connecting with almost anyone and was known for taking chances on people. Despite his high-status roles, he always treated everybody the same.

My dad loved the sea, and after living in London for over 40 years, he moved to Teignmouth, Devon very shortly before his passing into the home he chose with my mum, artist Octavia Milner (Tish). They had been together for 42 years after meeting at [London Cyrenians Housing](#) in their early twenties where they were working on separate projects.

Jeremy is survived by my mum, Tish, my brother Tom, and me.