



KeshetUK Annual Review

September 2017 –
August 2018

Just a word...



Dalia Fleming,
Executive Director



Benjamin Ellis,
Chair of Board of
Trustees

Words can hurt, and words can heal.

There are still far too many hurtful words spoken in our community. When KeshetUK works with people in schools, synagogues, or youth organisations, some share with us their stories. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) people tell us about the misery that they have experienced because of cruel or thoughtless speech. We hear the same thing from concerned parents, who contact us asking for our help. Often these moments are not a one-off, but are part of a pattern of bullying, or repeatedly dismissing the experiences of LGBT+ people. Sadly, the negative impact of these words is often long-lived.

KeshetUK works with teachers, rabbis, and youth and community leaders to help people find the words to show their care and commitment to all in their community, including LGBT+ people.

In this, our fourth Annual Review, we're particularly proud to celebrate the increasing reach and depth of our work with youth movements, while we have steadily grown our work with schools' leadership, teaching staff and young people and in community organisations.

Thankfully, this year has also been an extraordinary one for healing words. Over the last twelve months, KeshetUK has worked closely with schools, Jewish LGBT+ people, headteachers, heads of pastoral care, heads

of kodesh (Jewish Studies), schools rabbis, and Chief Rabbi Mirvis and his team to produce in partnership a guide for orthodox Jewish schools, aimed at improving the welfare of LGBT+ students. The care, thoughtfulness and commitment of all involved have resulted in the publication of this important document. We believe it will serve as the foundation for many healing words and conversations in the years to come.

All this work is only possible because of the generous support of individuals donors, trusts and foundations who share KeshetUK's belief in creating a world where no one has to choose between their LGBT+ and Jewish identity – thank you. As well as our staff, we also thank our incredible volunteers who give their time and energy to this work. Demand for our work just grows and grows. Without our volunteers we wouldn't be able to deliver nearly as much as we do.

KeshetUK has ambitious plans for the year ahead. Better worlds are created from better words. By working together in our communities, and creating spaces where all can speak and be heard, KeshetUK is transforming Jewish life for Jewish LGBT+ people and their families in the UK. Thanks to your support KeshetUK is already creating a more inclusive Jewish community. One where Jewish LGBT+ people can live in pride.

Dalia and Benjamin

What is KeshetUK's vision?

KeshetUK has a vision of a world where no one has to choose between their LGBT+ and Jewish identity. KeshetUK engages schools, youth and young adult organisations, synagogues, and wider community organisations about the importance of LGBT+ inclusion. KeshetUK then enables these organisations to become more inclusive of LGBT+ people through education and training.

What has KeshetUK achieved in 2017/18?

Working with synagogues and rabbis

Synagogues are important centres of Jewish life and experience for many Jews. Many synagogue teams want to be more inclusive, but struggle to know how, or what they can do. KeshetUK works in a bespoke way with all synagogues and rabbis, both traditional and progressive, to create more welcoming and inclusive synagogue experiences for LGBT+ people and their families. In 2017/18, KeshetUK:

- Worked with West London Synagogue, delivering LGBT+ inclusion training for staff and lay leaders
- Delivered LGBT+ inclusion training for staff members of Masorti Judaism and the New North London Synagogue Education Department
- Gave a presentation to Finchley Reform Synagogue youth and young adults on a timeline of UK Jewish LGBT+ activism

Over the last year KeshetUK has worked in close partnership with Chief Rabbi Mirvis and his team to produce a guide addressing the welfare of LGBT+ pupils in Orthodox Jewish schools. This work demonstrates the strong commitment of both the Chief Rabbi and KeshetUK to making sure our schools are safe for LGBT+ young people. Together, we have produced a guide that we believe will help reduce harm and increase our schools' confidence and ability to support young Jewish LGBT+ people.

The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils
A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
produced with LGBT+ Jews
September 2018

Working with schools

Jewish schools should be safe places where all young people can achieve their potential free from bullying, discrimination and fear, while learning to live in a diverse, inclusive world. By working directly with students as well as training staff, KeshetUK reaches young people at a time when they are forming views about gender, sexuality and community. In 2017/18, KeshetUK worked with:



KeshetUK volunteer Ben Kaye
inspires students at JCoSS

JCOSS, NEW BARNET

- Designed and delivered LGBT+ themed workshops and assemblies for over 780 Year 7-9, 12-13 students, including celebrating famous Jewish LGBT+ people throughout history, comparing and contrasting LGBT+ rights in the UK and Israel, the inclusion of trans and non binary people and combatting gender stereotypes
- Young adult Jewish LGBT+ role models attended JCoSS to tell their personal stories to 780 students to mark Pride in London. Speakers included a member of the Rainbow Rabbis group – an informal group of LGBT+ rabbis and cantors
- As part of new, multi-year LGBT+ inclusion curriculum, piloted activities for Succot (such as how *lulav* and *etrog* represent diversity) and Purim (such as the theme of 'coming out' in the Megillah)

“KeshetUK provided first class training to the JLC and PaJeS staff. It was comprehensive, instructive, extremely useful and, at all times, conducted in a welcoming and supportive environment. I recommend the KeshetUK training to all communal organisations.”

Simon Johnson, CEO, JLC

KANTOR KING SOLOMON HIGH SCHOOL, ILFORD

- Worked in close cooperation with the Jewish Studies and school leaders to deliver in depth LGBT+ inclusion workshops for 720 students, with assemblies for Year 7-11, and workshops and assemblies for Year 8-10 – ensuring they’re sensitive to the school’s needs. Topics included the contribution of LGBT+ people through history, the power of language and how hateful language was used during the Holocaust and its consequences, and the how language has been used to heal wounds and to fight injustice, and combatting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and the relevance of equalities legislation

YAVNEH COLLEGE, BOREHAMWOOD

- Ran LGBT+ inclusion training for 30 teachers and senior leadership

ALMA PRIMARY, WHETSTONE

- Delivered LGBT+ inclusion training for 10 teachers in partnership with Stonewall

DEVELOPING A GUIDE FOR ORTHODOX SCHOOLS

- Worked in close partnership with Chief Rabbi Mirvis and his team to produce a guide to promote the welfare of LGBT+ pupils in orthodox Jewish schools
- As part of work to develop this Guide for orthodox Jewish schools, KeshetUK also met with staff at North Cheshire Jewish Primary (Cheadle), King David High School (Manchester), ran joint focus groups in London with PaJeS (Partnerships for Jewish Schools), and undertook a survey with primary heads of *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) through PaJeS

Organisations that work with youth and young adults

Many young Jewish people discover and explore their identity in organisations who

work with youth and young adults, where – away from parents and teachers – lifelong behaviours and future leaders are formed. KeshetUK works with these organisations to promote LGBT+ inclusion as an important value, supporting leaders to create nurturing communities for LGBT+ people and their families. In 2017/18, KeshetUK delivered:

LGBT+ INCLUSION TRAINING FOR:

- Thirty staff and volunteers from JLCB
- Twenty-five senior leaders for summer camp from RSY
- Ten Noam summer camp senior leaders
- Incoming Union of Jewish Students (UJS) national leadership team
- Eight Tribe Youth Directors and support staff
- Eight new Movement Workers and staff from FZY
- Five Youth Workers and senior management at the Zone, Leeds
- Jewish Chaplaincy rabbis and staff

PRE-SUMMER CAMP ‘CORE LGBT+ INCLUSION TOPICS’ TRAINING FOR MADRICHIM (YOUTH LEADERS) AT:

- Bnei Akiva, FZY, Habonim Dror UK, LJY-Netzer, Noam and RSY-Netzer, delivered at each camp venue to approximately 200 people, at five sites in England and Wales, looking at LGBT+ inclusive programming, being an effective ally, the timeline of Jewish LGBT+ activism and tackling bystander behaviour (those who witness an event/action but do not act).
- Co produced UJIA Israel tour training seminar, attended by 80 British and Israeli madrichim from 8 movements

BESPOKE PROGRAMMING INCLUDING:

- A workshop for 10 BBYO chapter leaders on making local chapters more LGBT+ inclusive
- A course of ten leadership sessions for 20 Noam youth leaders on building an ethos of LGBT+ inclusion across the movement
- A Jewish Society (J-Soc) LGBT+ inclusion audit activity at UJS summit

“I learnt a lot about how hateful language can hurt LGBT+ people”

Kantor King Solomon High School Year 9 pupil after KeshetUK workshop

Working within the wider Jewish and LGBT+ communities

KeshetUK works with community organisations to become more inclusive of the LGBT+ Jewish people, so that services and spaces meet their needs. In 2017/18, KeshetUK:

- Ran an LGBT+ inclusion training workshop, open to all professionals working in the UK Jewish community, attended by five people from three organisations
- Delivered LGBT+ inclusion training for 17 staff and senior leadership at the Jewish Leadership Council
- Provided a written submission to the Court of Appeal in a case of a transgender Jewish parent denied face-to-face contact with her children
- Participated in the Relationship and Sex Education Forum, hosted by Jewish Women’s Aid and Streewise
- Participated in a West London Synagogue workshop about supporting the mental health of LGBT+ people
- Coordinated the presence of 150 people at Pride in London
- Held the annual KeshetUK celebration in Parliament hosted by Mike Freer, MP, attended by 90 communal leaders and KeshetUK supporters, with special guest Jonny Benjamin, MBE
- Delivered a full programme of events at Limmud Festival attended by over 65 participants, including an LGBT+ inclusion training workshop, study sessions on LGBT+ themes in Purim and Chanukah, hosted a panel hearing the lived experiences of non-binary people, and ran an non-binary organising space for Limmud Festival participants



KeshetUK was joined by over 90 people at its fifth Parliamentary reception
Top: Executive director – Dalia Fleming, Intern – Naomi Bloomer, director of programmes – Neil Levitan and volunteer – Emma Grant

Middle: Host Mike Freer MP with guest speaker Jonny Benjamin, MBE and a supporter

Bottom: KeshetUK Board of Trustees and executive team, L-R: Benjamin Ellis, Caroline Beck, Allison Zions, Dalia Fleming, Neil Levitan, Alma Reisel and Dave Shaw





Jewish LGBT+ groups, individuals and allies march in the 2018 Pride in London parade



“LGBT inclusion within faith communities can be a difficult topic to broach. The training by KeshetUK did so with intelligence, candor and in a non-judgemental spirit. They communicated effectively with a group who were diverse in their ideological views, their experience of working with the LGBT community and their understanding of the issues. We would strongly encourage all Jewish organisations to take advantage of this training for their professional and lay leadership teams.”

Jon Pam, Community Development Director, Masorti Judaism

“I learnt that society often has ideas of what we should do/we/be like based on our gender or perceptions of our gender, which means people who don’t fit the box feel judged. It made me realise that I need to be more careful about this in my own life”

JCoSS Year 9 pupil after KeshetUK workshop

“I now understand the different challenges that LGBT+ people experience in different parts of the Jewish community and how to be a better advocate”

JCoSS Year 13 pupil after KeshetUK workshop

With thanks to support by West London Synagogue, Jewish groups had a small float in the parade, allowing those who needed to use it the ability to journey the whole parade route for the first time



“The training session was hugely informative and relevant and will help JLGB to ensure that needs of the LGBTQ community can be met within the organisation. The trainers were knowledgeable and engaging and we would highly recommend the training to other youth organisations.”

Joanne Rams – National Volunteer Manager JLGB

Media and publicity

Print and broadcast media

KeshetUK promotes LGBT+ inclusion in Jewish communities through an active media presence spanning print, online, radio and outdoor media. In 2017/18, this included:

- Our executive director commenting on accusations in the Jewish press that Charedi schools are ‘censoring homosexuals’ from text books^{1 2}
- Highlighting the dangers of conversion therapy as reported by the Jewish News³
- An in-depth interview on the Jewish Views podcast with our executive director on the specific issues affecting LGBT+ people in the British Jewish community⁴
- KeshetUK’s director of programmes Neil Levitan being interviewed on the Stonewall blog discussing the inclusion of LGBT+ people of faith at Pride events⁵
- A Pride in London board member mentions KeshetUK in reference to London’s ethnic diversity on BBC Radio London⁶
- KeshetUK volunteers featured in Pride in London’s digital advertising campaign across London Underground stations and on Facebook
- In celebration of Pride in London, a feature in the Jewish News celebrating the achievements of 10 LGBT+ Jews in the UK⁷ and supporting op-ed by our executive director⁸

1 <https://www.thejc.com/education/education-news/charedi-school-accused-of-censoring-out-homosexuals-from-textbook-hits-back-at-critics-1.460436>

2 <https://www.thejc.com/education/education-news/faith-schools-should-teach-about-same-sex-relationships-government-says-1.460850>

3 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/conversion-therapy-jewish-lgbt/>

4 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/jewish-views-podcast-homosexuality-and-hoax-threats/>

5 <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/blog/prides-all-keshetuk>

6 www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0swjtjy

7 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/pride-in-london-ten-lgbt-jews-inspiring-change/>

8 <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/this-will-be-a-very-proud-weekend-for-lgbt-jews/>

- Coverage of the presence of Jewish LGBT+ people and allies at Pride in London, in both the Jewish News⁹ and Jewish Views¹⁰
- Mention in the Gay Times on the representation of queer Jews in the British LGBT+ community¹¹
- Shortlisted for Community Group of the Year, Pink News Awards 2017
- Shortlisted for The Community Organisation Award, National Diversity Awards 2018

Website and social media

KeshetUK stays in touch with its supporters and reaches new audiences in the UK Jewish community and beyond through its website and social media presence. In 2017/18, KeshetUK has achieved:

- A 13% growth in its social footprint with 1,143 followers on Facebook and 1,114 on Twitter
- A fourfold increase in web traffic between September 2017 and July 2018, with over 55,506 page views



9 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/lgbt-jews-show-diverse-and-inclusive-community-at-pride/>

10 <https://www.mixcloud.com/TheJewishViews/keshet-uk-raising-sparks-and-walking-for-kidneys/>

11 <http://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/107859/rabbi-buttmitzvah-and-tradition-a-coming-of-age-for-queer-jews/>



Above: KeshetUK supporters in a digital advert on London Underground

Left: A tweet from the Jewish News highlighting its showcase of 10 LGBT+ Jews in celebration of Pride in London

Organisational development and sustainability

Organisational structure

KeshetUK is now in the third year of its JHub residency, the Jewish social action hub in London providing desk space and development support. Since November 2017, KeshetUK has been led by our first executive director, Dalia Fleming, supported by a trustee board of five. In 2017/18, KeshetUK's programming activities continued to be led by our part-time director of programmes Neil Levitan, supported by Emma Grant who volunteers as KeshetUK's volunteer coordinator.

Volunteer recruitment and development

KeshetUK's professional team is supported by a passionate and committed group of volunteers who give generously of their free time. To support our volunteering programme, in 2017/18 KeshetUK:

- Inducted four new volunteers, increasing our team of active education and training volunteers to 17 people
- Developed a new training programme to develop the skills of lead trainers who can lead KeshetUK sessions and support other volunteers to deliver KeshetUK programming
- Ran training for volunteers to tell their personal story for educational purposes

- Began a programme of mentorship to support existing volunteers' personal development
- Developed our internship programme, hosting our first intern

Finances, fundraising and supporters

KeshetUK has been a registered charity since September 2015, and relies primarily on the generosity of individual and institutional donors to support its work. Building on a strong base of regular monthly donors, the trustees focused on creating relationships with charitable trusts and foundations, while requesting fee-for-service from institutions. In 2017/18 KeshetUK received approximately £43,000 (+ £20,000 committed) income from:

- A mix of regular and one-off donations from supporters, including Finchley Reform Synagogue's High Holy Day appeal, as part of a three-year partnership and JCoSS (as one of their chosen charities this year) amounting to £28,200
- Grants amounting to £19,500 including:
 - Unrestricted grant of £10,000 from the Kobler Trust
 - Grant of £2,500 supporting youth organisation work from the Jewish Youth Foundation
 - Grant of £2,000 supporting schools work from the Shoresh Charitable Trust
 - One foundation that prefers to remain unnamed provided an unrestricted grant of £5,000
- Income of £5,300 in fees for services delivered
- Supported by the Pears Foundation and part of the JHub network



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To get involved in any of our projects, **start a conversation** with your organisation or **make a donation**, please get in touch.