



# ANNUAL REVIEW

September 2019 – August 2020

# Now as much as ever



Dalia Fleming,  
Executive Director



Benjamin Ellis,  
Chair of Board of  
Trustees

It's tempting to think that the past year has been a write-off. But at KeshetUK we're never so quick to write anything off.

Between September and March we were on track to work with more young people than ever before – helping and supporting the thoughtful and caring children and young adults who are the future of UK Jewish communities. KeshetUK was busy planning a strategy for the next five years. How would we make an even bigger difference and create a fairer, kinder world?

Then in March the UK went into lockdown. Schools and Jewish communal spaces were closed, and activities went online. Our programming and LGBT+ inclusion work was halted. Other events that KeshetUK takes part in were cancelled, including Pride in London, and Black Pride.

The response of the Jewish community was extraordinary. It would have been so easy for our community to say that working to improve the lives of LGBT+ people and their families was not a priority. Instead, community leaders and individuals reached out to explore new ways of working with KeshetUK. In the coming pages, you'll see how we responded.

The year has brought grief, anxiety, uncertainty and loneliness for many.

LGBT+ people who are closeted have struggled to manage in homes where they felt unsafe. Plans that would have made life easier and better for trans people in the UK have been shelved. It has been impossible to ignore the devastating consequences of racial inequality. And yet this year has also shown us strength in the face of trauma: our community's strength, our strength as individuals, and the strength of our mission to continue, despite everything, to work to change things for the better.

The coming year will challenge us to work with constantly changing health regulations and financial uncertainty and support communities that are weary and heartsick. How we do our work, what exactly we do, and where we do it – this will all change. What won't change is the why. Jewish LGBT+ people and our families still need to feel safe, welcome and included in Jewish communities. It is KeshetUK's mission to help make that happen.

Thanks to your support, we will still be taking determined steps towards a world where no one is forced to choose between their Jewish and LGBT+ identity. A world where people come together to create the change for the better. A world where no one will ever write anyone off.

*Dalia and Benjamin*

## What is KeshetUK's vision?

KeshetUK has a vision of a world where no one is forced 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 2019–2020?

## Working with schools

KeshetUK works with teachers and young people. This is to ensure that Jewish schools are safe places where all young people can flourish and enjoy learning. The aim is to create an environment that enhances wellbeing and supports identity development. KeshetUK provides inclusion training for teachers, support staff, as well as delivering school-specific activities for students to create a school culture where LGBT+ Jewish people feel valued and respected.

In 2019–20 KeshetUK:

- Ran workshops and assemblies for 1,995 students in three Jewish secondary schools, from September to March 2020.
- Delivered LGBT+ inclusion training to 46 teachers (one secondary school, two primary schools).
- Developed a new training programme, delivered to 95 pre-school teachers from nurseries affiliated to Movement for Reform Judaism.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

KeshetUK responded to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown by creating two new resources for students at two secondary schools (JFS and JCoSS). This included activities for ages 11–18 about the life of gay Jewish holocaust survivor Gad Beck, and the history of the UK LGBT+ Jewish community.

## Working with youth and young adult organisations

UK Jewish communities have a proud tradition of investing in youth organisations. These enable young people and young adults to explore identity and community through peer-led informal education. KeshetUK works with these organisations to support young leaders to create spaces where the needs of LGBT+ young people are met and they can feel valued and respected.

KeshetUK LGBT+ inclusion training includes work on developing brave spaces and allyship. In 2019–2020 we delivered this for:

- 20 professional staff and sabbatical workers from eight youth organisations.
- 100 local group leaders aged 14–16 years from Redbridge JCC<sup>1</sup>, Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue, JLGB<sup>2</sup> and Alyth Synagogue.
- 74 camp leaders aged 18–23 years from JLGB, LIY<sup>3</sup> and FZY<sup>4</sup>.



*“Thank you for the wonderful and vital work you do in the community.”*

Anna Shapira, Central Shlichah, FZY

<sup>1</sup> Redbridge Jewish Community Centre provides services to all age groups and members of the local Jewish Community. It is the largest of its kind in western Europe, delivering social, welfare, educational and communal programs to over 2,000 people each week.

<sup>2</sup> JLGB is a national Jewish youth organisation that trains and develops young people of the Jewish faith to reach their potential through active citizenship, within both the Jewish and wider community, empowering them to become future leaders of tomorrow.

<sup>3</sup> LIY-Netzer is the youth movement of Liberal Judaism.

<sup>4</sup> FZY is Britain's oldest Jewish, Zionist, pluralist youth movement.

“Given the wide range of people who come to Resource for support with their job search, it is vital that all of our team feel educated and comfortable discussing issues relating to LGBT+.”

Victoria Sterman, Chief Executive, Resource Centre

In 2019-20, KeshetUK also ran programming including:

- Workshops for 70 students from the University of Sussex, Cambridge JSoc and Birmingham JSoc (in partnership with JAMI<sup>5</sup>).
- Speaking on a human rights panel hosted by the European Union of Jewish Students.
- KeshetUK volunteers speaking to 20 bar/bat mitzvah-aged people at Alyth Synagogue as part of our *KeshetUK Voices* programme.
- Our Executive Director being interviewed by JLGB for their *Act of Kindness* segment on their evening programming, watched by thousands online (Facebook figure is 25,000).
- A presentation on UK LGBT+ Jewish history to 10 members of East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue.

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

KeshetUK responded to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown by creating [a guide for Jewish youth organisations](#) who were supporting Jewish LGBT+ young people online. Many Jewish LGBT+ young people were in lockdown with their families, or in spaces where they were not out or safe to be open about their LGBT+ identity. The purpose of this guide was to ensure that youth organisations were asking the right questions of themselves to support Jewish LGBT+ young people.

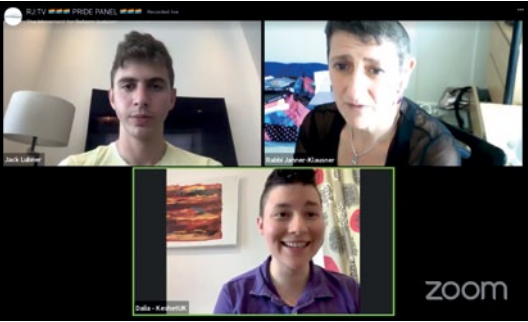
5 JAMI is a recovery-orientated mental health charity serving the Jewish community.

Working with synagogues and rabbis

Synagogues are important centres of Jewish life and experience for many Jews. KeshetUK works with synagogues and rabbis regardless of denomination, so that LGBT+ people and their families can feel included within the synagogue’s tradition.

In 2019-20, KeshetUK:

- Trained 13 members of the United Synagogue Community Team on LGBT+ inclusion.
- Presented to communities at Finchley Reform Synagogue, Westminster Synagogue, South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue, and East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue on topics such as allyship, the impact of silence in a community relating to including LGBT+ Jewish people, and the history of the Jewish LGBT+ community in the UK.
- Facilitated an online training for the Muswell Hill Synagogue community.
- Spoke about LGBT+ Jewish experiences in a panel with Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner and Jack Lubner, hosted by the Movement for Reform Judaism.



(Clockwise from top left) Jack Lubner, Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner and Dalia on a panel for the Movement for Reform Judaism

“The sessions have definitely helped us in our aim of creating understanding and a pro-active, inclusive and welcoming environment for all people we support.”

Lee Zucker, HR Manager, Kisharon

Working with the wider Jewish and LGBT+ communities

KeshetUK works with community organisations to become more inclusive of LGBT+ Jewish people. This aims to ensure that services and spaces meet the needs of LGBT+ people and their families.

In 2019-20 KeshetUK:

- Trained nine members of the senior leadership team at Jewish Care<sup>6</sup>, 30 staff at Redbridge JCC and 19 staff and volunteers at Resource<sup>7</sup>.
- Trained 68 staff members from Kisharon<sup>8</sup> including at their headquarter teams, and multiple houses and supported living centres across London.
- Facilitated [story telling training](#) for 17 Jewish LGBT+ people from across the UK, in partnership with JW3<sup>9</sup>. Of those, seven took up a KeshetUK offer of individual support to develop and share a five-minute story about their life. They later told their life story at an [online event](#) watched by approximately 200 people.
- Briefed six Yachad<sup>10</sup> fellows about KeshetUK’s mission and ways of working.

6 Jewish Care works mainly in London and South East England, providing health and social care support services for the Jewish community.

7 Resource Centre is a free and confidential service, funded by the Jewish community, for people looking to be an active member of the workplace.

8 Kisharon provides innovative support to children with complex learning disabilities, their families, teachers and other professionals.

9 JW3 is an arts, culture and entertainment venue, an educational facility and a social and community hub in north London.

10 The Yachad Activism Fellowship is an opportunity for young people who are pro-Israel and pro-peace to develop their leadership skills and acquire expansive knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Dalia with staff from the headquarters of Kisharon following training

- Presented to eight René Cassin<sup>11</sup> fellows about LGBT+ hate crime and allyship.
- Co-produced sessions with JAMI about the life experiences and mental health needs of LGBT+ Jewish people.
- Partnered with UJIA<sup>12</sup> for their Rainbow Israel week to produce and appear on *LGBT+ and Religious Identities in Israel* panel.
- Participated in panel discussions about LGBT+ people and faith with the Albert Kennedy Trust<sup>13</sup>, Switchboard<sup>14</sup>, Pride Wales and at a UK Civil Service event hosted jointly by their faith and LGB&TI networks.



A screenshot of all the students from the European Union of Jewish Students ‘Tikkun Olam in Action’ series, including a panel including KeshetUK

11 René Cassin is a charity working to promote and protect universal human rights, drawing on Jewish experience and values.

12 UJIA works with young people providing formal and informal educational programmes that aim to enhance young British Jews’ sense of Jewish identity and their connection with Israel.

13 The Albert Kenney Trust serves lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people who are homeless or living in a hostile environment.

14 Switchboard is a confidential listening service for the LGBT+ communities



*“The feedback from our headteachers was unanimously positive and we can’t thank the KeshetUK team enough.”*

Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers, Community Educator, Movement for Reform Judaism

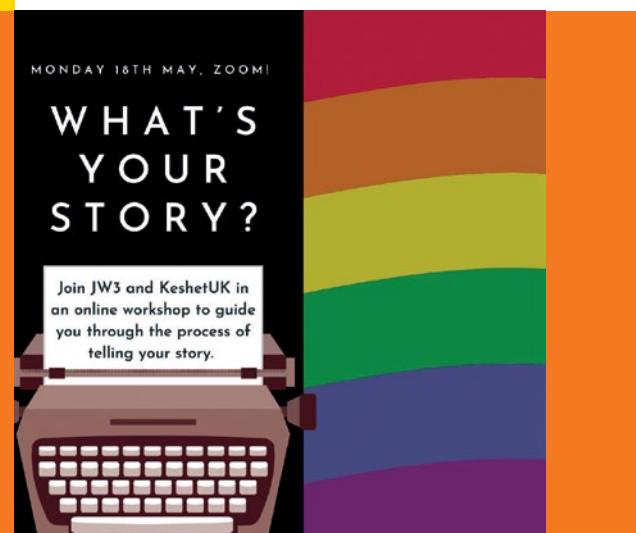


#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

Because of the Covid-19 lockdown, in-person Pride celebrations could not go ahead as usual. In May, KeshetUK worked with JW3 to develop a [short video with LGBTQ+ Jewish people](#) talking about their life experiences. People talked about the joys, worries, triumphs and challenges of the LGBTQ+ Jewish community in the UK. Although LGBTQ+ Jews could not come together physically for Pride this year, we were still visible. It has so far been watched over 13,000 times.

#### JEWISH LGBTQ+ STORIES

KeshetUK worked with JW3 to deliver a storytelling workshop for Jewish LGBTQ+ people. The workshop developed people’s understanding the importance of storytelling and the power in telling our own stories. Following that, seven of these people spent time with KeshetUK to refine their stories, which they then shared in a public online event. This was powerful not only for the 200 people who joined to listen and learn, but also for the seven people who had not publicly told their stories before, and who developed leadership skills as visible LGBTQ+ Jewish people.



*“KeshetUK continues to play an important role in educating our students to ensure that JCoSS is inclusive for those that identify at LGBTQ+. In addition to working directly with students, KeshetUK has trained our Kvutzah (PSHCE) team to deliver Relationships and Sex Education so that they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to educate and support our students. A big thank you from all of us at JCoSS to the KeshetUK team... we couldn’t do it without you!”*

Ben Abram, Informal Jewish Educator, JCoSS

## Organisational development and sustainability

#### Thank you and farewell to JHub

KeshetUK completed the fourth year of its JHub residency. We are very grateful to the Pears Family Foundation for providing desk space and development support.

Our residency at JHub has now come to an end but it was indispensable in our early years. JHub supported our transition from a volunteer organisation to a small, sustainable, highly productive and impactful charity. While we are sad to be leaving the JHub community in 2020, we are thankful for the support of all JHub staff and community. It has been a privilege to be a part of this for the last few years and we leave with learning and relationships that will last for years to come.

#### Volunteer recruitment and development

We have been working to grow our trustee board. We are delighted that in July 2020, Michelle Jacobs joined us as a trustee. We are looking forward to bringing in future trustees to support our work.

Volunteers continued to play a major role in our organisation and programming. In 2019–20 we received a grant from the *LGBT+ Future Grants Programme* to develop our volunteering programme, with a focus on recruiting volunteers from underrepresented groups. With that grant we recruited six new volunteers, created a new Volunteer Handbook and ran three activities for our volunteers. We have already planned four training modules and have continued with our mentoring programme.

#### Finance, fundraising and supporters

KeshetUK has been a registered charity since September 2015. We rely primarily on the generosity of individual and institutional donors. Building on a strong base of regular monthly donors, we have focused on creating

relationships with charitable trusts and foundations, while requesting fee-for-service from institutions. We are exceptionally grateful to the individuals who recognise and support our work.

In 2019–20 KeshetUK received approximately £128,200 income:

- £15,120 from individual major donors, regular monthly subscribers and community fundraisers (including one-off donations, raising money through sponsored events and High Holy Day campaigns)
- £400 from Grassroots Jews High Holy Days appeal.

Grants (including committed funds) amounting to approx. £97,600 including:

- £43,250 from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation (Unrestricted).
- £20,000 from the Pears Foundation (Unrestricted).
- £15,000 from Kobler Trust (Unrestricted)
- £10,000 from an anonymous family foundation (Unrestricted).
- £7,610 from Children’s Aid Committee for staff salary and their work in schools and youth and young adult organisations.
- £2,000 supporting schools work from the Shoresh Charitable Trust.

Fees for services delivered:

- £3,700 in fees for services delivered (routine KeshetUK activity or speaking events).

Furlough payments – Government money to support salaries for furloughed staff:

- £11,046

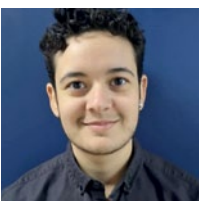
Gifts in kind:

- Supported by the Pears Foundation and part of the JHub network.
- Payroll support from The Payroll Bureau.



Michelle Jacobs  
New Trustee

Michelle has a background delivering complex programmes for government and non-profit organisations. She has a deep commitment to providing leadership in promoting inclusive values and creating change across the Jewish community and, as a Founding Governor of Alma Primary, helped to establish the country’s first cross communal, inclusive Jewish Primary school.



Luke Levine  
New Programme and Volunteer Officer

Luke left school and went straight to work, passionate about young people and making sure that everyone receives equal opportunities no matter their background. He is experienced in youth programmes and has worked with Jewish schools throughout the country. Prior to joining KeshetUK, Luke worked for JLGB starting as an administrator and going on to deliver youth awards at Jewish schools.

# Media and publicity

## Digital Engagement

Online activity has become the new normal in 2020. In response, KeshetUK has increased its use of digital formats. This included delivering programming via video conferencing and producing talking heads films. Our engaging content has been enjoyed by both UK and international audiences.

In 2019–20 KeshetUK updated our website. We have seen an increase in page sessions to 1.91 (1.49 in 2018–19) and decrease in bounce rate to 63% (78% in 2018–19). This suggests that visitors are finding relevant information more easily.



A joint video campaign created with JW3 in celebration of Pride month provided rich content for our social media channels, helping to increase audience engagement across all major platforms:



[Instagram](#) grew to 447 followers  
(+ 35% vs 2018–19)



[Twitter](#) followers increased to 1437  
(+7% vs 2018–19)



[Facebook](#) fans rose to 1502  
(+13% vs 2018–19)

*“The sessions they run are well planned, thought out and executed in a way that we would personally not be able to do with the topic. Young people fully engage with the sessions and the leaders of them and are not afraid to ask questions or be part of a discussion.”*

Emma Sennit, Youth & Family Coordinator,  
Redbridge JCC

*“KeshetUK have been understanding of LJY-Netzer’s specific needs when developing sessions, working together to tailor them to be the best fit for our movement.”*

Rosa Slater, LJY-Netzer, Movement Worker



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[@KeshetUK](https://www.facebook.com/KeshetUK)

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