



ANNUAL REVIEW

September 2018 – August 2019

Listen up...



Dalia Fleming,
Executive Director

It takes courage to listen.

This year, like every year, KeshetUK has worked in our community to help achieve our vision of a world where no one is forced to choose between their Jewish and LGBT+ identity. And listening is at the heart of our work.



Benjamin Ellis,
Chair of Board of Trustees

KeshetUK listens to the aspirations and concerns of those we work with – Jewish schools, youth and young adult organisations, synagogues and community organisations. We create brave spaces where people can speak openly, building trust so we can work together for the inclusion of LGBT+ people and their families.

The human stories shared by our trained volunteers are a powerful force in a world filled with stark opinion and loud argument. By creating opportunities for people to listen to these stories with open hearts, KeshetUK helps communities remain focused on meeting the needs of LGBT+ people and their families.

Last year Chief Rabbi Mirvis, together with KeshetUK, published a Guide for the Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils in Orthodox Jewish Schools. Our task since then has been to respond to the surge in demand in our community for our work, while maintaining our trademark quality and sensitivity to the needs of LGBT+ people and the Jewish communities in which they live.

In the pages of this report, you will see how this year we have worked in Jewish secondary schools to deliver workshops and assemblies for 3,100 students (up from 1,800 last year), trained 96 staff in five Jewish schools, and delivered LGBT+ themed youth leadership training to over 200 youth leaders across eight youth organisations.

This year for the first time we created a survey so we could listen more closely to LGBT+ people in the UK Jewish community and better understand the need for the work that we do. We've included a brief summary in this report. Some of the responses were uplifting – people who had good experiences at school, others who have finally found a place for themselves in a part of the Jewish community. Many more though were devastating, heartbreaking accounts of exclusion and pain.

It's not always easy to listen. Where there are stories of sadness and hurt we must hear these and reflect on how we as a community will respond. If we as a community commit to listening, then people will speak up and healing conversations can begin. And at the same time we must also celebrate the stories of inclusion. Thanks to the generous commitment of KeshetUK's supporters, in the years ahead we will be able to listen to even more of these.

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.

Understanding the need

In 2018/19 KeshetUK created a survey to better understand the experiences of LGBT+ Jewish people in the UK. Most of the LGBT+ people who responded (around two thirds, 63%) felt that in the majority of Jewish spaces in the UK they were unable to express their LGBT+ and Jewish identities without permission or fear.

We have previously heard that LGBT+ people are invisible in our communities. Our survey confirmed this, with one in five people (19%) of LGBT+ respondents feeling that there were no Jewish spaces where Jewish LGBT+ people and their families were positively visible, and only one in eight (12%) agreeing that Jewish LGBT+ people were positively visible in either the majority or all Jewish spaces.

We asked people to share more about their experiences of being LGBT+ in the Jewish community. A number of themes emerged:

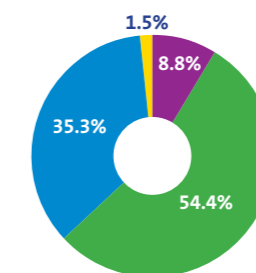
Difficult childhood experiences were very common, with long-lasting consequences

There were many accounts of inclusive spaces where people felt they can express their LGBT+ and Jewish identities

Many respondents described poor experiences in adulthood

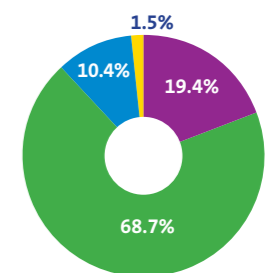
Some described better childhood experiences, and noted that things are improving for LGBT+ Jewish people in UK Jewish communities

In the UK Jewish community currently, do you feel able to express your LGBT+ and Jewish identities without permission or fear?



Not in any Jewish spaces
In some Jewish spaces but not the majority
In the majority but not all
Yes, in all Jewish spaces

Do you feel that Jewish LGBT+ people and their families are positively visible within Jewish life?



This is from a set of 72 valid respondents

“I felt like an outsider most of my childhood. The anguish it caused my family when I came out who felt it was a negative reflection on them and on their standing in the community was a heavy burden to bear in particular.”

Survey participant

KeshetUK and Friends at Pride in London 2019



What has KeshetUK achieved in 2018/19?

Working with schools

KeshetUK works with teachers and students to ensure that Jewish Schools are safe places where all young people can flourish and enjoy learning in an environment that enhances their wellbeing and supports their identity development. To create cultures where LGBT+ Jewish people feel valued and respected, we provide inclusion training for teachers, support staff, and deliver school-specific activities for students.

IN 2018/19 KESHETUK

- Ran workshops and assemblies for 3,100 students in Jewish secondary schools
- Delivered LGBT+ inclusion training to 88 Jewish Studies, pastoral, technical and administrative staff in four Jewish secondary schools

- Trained eight teachers around LGBT+ language from an Orthodox Jewish Primary School
- Worked in-depth with secondary schools including Kantor King Solomon High School, JCoSS and JFS to co-produce LGBT+ inclusion curricula spanning Years 7–13



Kelly standing in front of a display at JCoSS having run workshops for Year 7, 8 and 9 in March 2019

Working with youth and young adults

UK Jewish communities have a proud tradition of investing in organisations enabling 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 can feel valued and respected. We co-produce context specific leadership training and other learning activities with the Jewish youth movements, synagogue youth groups, young adult groups and the Union of Jewish Students (UJS).

IN 2018-2019 KESHETUK DELIVERED LGBT+ THEMED YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR

- 203 camp and tour leaders aged 18-23, from Noam¹, FZY², LJY-Netzer³, Habonim⁴ and BA⁵
- 105 young leaders aged 14-16 from Noam, FZY, JLGB⁶, EHRS⁷ and Alyth Synagogue
- 20 senior leaders aged 23 and over, from Noam, BA and FZY
- 12 UJS sabbatical workers
- 7 Moishe House⁸ residents

We also piloted a new activity, working with Marom⁹ to co-produce a film series exploring Jewish LGBT+ themes in the film 'Pride'.

¹ Youth movement of Masorti Judaism
² Federation of Zionist Youth
³ Liberal Judaism Youth
⁴ Socialist Zionist Culturally Jewish youth movement
⁵ Bnei Akiva – Modern Orthodox and Religious Zionist youth movement
⁶ Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade
⁷ Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue
⁸ Moishe House is a young adult Jewish community hub, staffed by its residents
⁹ Masorti organisation for students and young adults

“Thank you for helping to educate and create an environment where all feel safe.”

Bnei Akiva participant



Dalia speaking on a panel at René Cassin about the Human Rights Acts



Members and leaders of West London Synagogue joining KeshetUK at Pride in London

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 2018/19, KESHETUK

- Contributed a workshop for ten practitioners at the Movement for Reform Judaism's Mental Health conference
- Ran a workshop for Leo Baeck Student Rabbis on trans inclusion
- Co-produced the LGBT+ content for West London Synagogue's Liberation Seder
- Gave talks for Pride in London at both Westminster and Alyth Synagogues
- Continued to engage with Orthodox rabbinic leadership and community rabbis
- Began engagement with Masorti rabbis

Recognising KeshetUK's achievements and impact to date, in May 2018 Benjamin and Dalia were funded by Eshel (who work to create community and acceptance for LGBTQ Jews and their families in Orthodox Jewish communities in USA and Canada) to deliver a five-city USA speaking tour, addressing public and confidential audiences about KeshetUK's work with Chief Rabbi Mirvis.^{10 11}

Working with the wider Jewish and LGBT+ communities

KeshetUK works with community organisations to become more inclusive of LGBT+ people, so that services and spaces meet the needs of LGBT+ people and their families.

IN 2018/19 KESHETUK

- Trained 26 staff from CST¹² in both London and Manchester, 18 people in the Social Work team from Norwood, and the 14 person staff team at the Board of Deputies
- Ran activities for Sadeh¹³ and Lavio¹⁴ exploring how LGBT+ people can find meaning in the Shavuot story
- Co-produced sessions with JAMI¹⁵ on LGBT+ Jewish people and their mental health
- Participated on a panel hosted by René Cassin¹⁶ about the Human Rights Act
- Co-ordinated the presence of the Jewish group at Pride in London and for the first time supported LGBT+ Jews of Colour to have a stall at Black Pride
- Held the sixth KeshetUK celebration in Parliament hosted by Mike Freer MP and Andrew Percy MP, attended by 90 supporters
- Delivered a programme of events at Limmud Festival attended by over 110 participants
- We have also given lunchtime and evening talks at the Bank of England Jewish Network and Macquarie

“I recommend the KeshetUK training to all communal organisations.”

Simon Johnson, Chief Executive, Jewish Leadership Council

¹⁰ https://jewishjournal.com/news/los_angeles/community/299294/uk-guide-offers-safe-space-to-orthodox-lgbt-students/

¹¹ <https://washingtonjewishweek.com/54396/well-being-of-orthodox-lgbtq-students-considered/featured-slider-post/>

¹² Community Security Trust – charity working against antisemitism in British society

¹³ UK's Jewish farm and environmental community

¹⁴ Social group for Queer Jewish women

¹⁵ Mental health service for the Jewish community

¹⁶ Charity working to promote and protect universal human rights, drawing on Jewish experience and values

Organisational development and sustainability

Organisational development and sustainability

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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

In January 2019 Kelly Waldorf joined us full time as our Programme and Volunteer Officer. Kelly has experience of creating and facilitating training in areas such as equality, diversity & inclusion, sexual consent, mental health and LGBT+ topics. She worked on improving the representation and engagement of oppressed, marginalised and minority student groups.

Kelly works with Dalia Fleming (Executive Director) and Neil Levitan (Director of Programmes). They're supported by a trustee board of five.

Volunteer recruitment and development

Volunteers continued to play a major role in our organisation and programming. In 2018/19 we reviewed our volunteering strategy and maintained a core team of 15 volunteers. We inducted 10 new volunteers and delivered training on facilitation skills and storytelling. Last year we produced a volunteer strategy which identified two types of volunteers, each needing different support and structures: educational volunteers delivering programming, and operational volunteers supporting our operations. We were also awarded a grant from LGBT+ Futures Fund to develop our volunteering programme, with a focus on recruiting volunteers from underrepresented groups.

Finance, 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, 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 2018/19 KeshetUK received approximately £120,000 income from:

- Individual major donors and regular monthly subscribers amounting to approximately £47,000:
 - £16,500 from individual major donors
 - £13,100 from other one-off donations, including raising money through sponsored events, many in response to the release of the LGBT+ Welfare Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools" published with Chief Rabbi Mirvis
 - £11,600 from monthly online subscriptions via our website
 - £5,500 from Finchley Reform Synagogues High Holy Day appeal

“Through the talks today I came to a better understanding of who needs an ally and how to be an ally.”

RSY participant

“The training our staff received was not only informative, but allowed us to ensure our policies and procedures are appropriate for every member of the community. We will continue to engage with KeshetUK and wish them every success in the work they do.”

Leesa Mather, CST

- Grants amounting to approximately £61,000 including:
 - £25,000 from the Kobler Trust (Unrestricted)
 - £10,000 from the Pears Foundation (Unrestricted)
 - £5,000 from an anonymous family foundation (Unrestricted)
 - £2,600 from Children's Aid Committee for our new staff member and their work in schools and youth and young adult organisations
 - £8,000 supporting our schools work and youth and young adults from the Oxford & St George's Jewish Youth Trust
 - £5,000 supporting youth organisation work from the Jewish Youth Fund
 - £3,360 from the LGBT+ Futures Fund which supports our volunteer programme
 - £1,500 supporting schools work from the Shoshon Charitable Trust
- Fees for services delivered
 - £4,344 in fees for services delivered (routine KeshetUK activity)
 - £8,300 in fees for one-off overseas activities
- Gifts in kind
 - Supported by the Pears Foundation and part of the JHub network
 - Received half a day communication strategy workshop from IPG Mediabrands organised through the Media Trust



Dalia and Neil, both alumni of JFS, after running our first teacher training sessions there in January 2019



Volunteers at JHub following some training there in January 2019



Dalia trained up 36 CST staff in Manchester and London

“Training with KeshetUK has provided our PSHE team with the knowledge and skills to facilitate LGBT+ inclusive lessons. KeshetUK understand the school context well and have tailored the training to meet the needs of our staff and students. I would highly recommend undertaking their training.”

Ben Abram, JCoSS

Media and publicity



The Guide at our Chanukah event in Parliament 2018



Dalia and Benjamin talking in Washington DC as part of their speaking tour in the USA

KeshetUK's 2018/19 media presence has included print, online, radio and outdoor media:

- Press about the launch of the "The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils: A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools", covered in mainstream UK and international press^{1 2 3 4 5 6}
- Interviews by The Jewish Leadership Council (JLC)⁷.
- Executive Director interviewed by "The Bagel Podcast" for LGBT History Month⁸
- In-depth interview on the Jewish Views podcast with our Executive Director on the specific issues affecting LGBT+ people in the British Jewish community⁹
- Executive Director spoke at Camden Council about the work we are doing¹⁰

1 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/gay-pride-at-chief-rabbis-landmark-new-lgbt-tolerance-guide/>

2 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/chief-rabbi-ephraim-mirvis-guidance-orthodox-schools-lgbt-pupils-1.469278>

3 <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/lets-resolve-to-be-there-for-all-our-young-people/>

4 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-45435583>

5 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/05/dont-tell-children-gay-sin-says-chief-rabbi-first-lgbt-guidance/>

6 <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/09/06/chief-rabbi-supports-lgbt-rights-in-unprecedented-move/>

7 https://www.thejlc.org/interview_with_keshetuk

8 <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/dalia-fleming-bagel-bite/id1448404613?i=1000441691348>

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

10 <http://camdennewjournal.com/article/people-choosing-between-being-gay-or-religious-councils-lgbt-debate-told>

- Our work has also been referenced in articles discussing LGBT+ inclusion education in schools^{11 12}
- Press coverage from the USA Wellbeing Tour from Los Angeles and Washington DC^{13 14}

Website and Social Media

KeshetUK stays in touch with our supporters and reaches new audiences in the UK Jewish community and beyond through our website and social media presence.

IN 2018/19 WE HAVE SEEN

- 57,000 unique visitors to our website, with a record 12,000 unique visits the week after the guide for 'The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils' was released (+39% Vs 2017/18)
- 130,000 page views to the website (+42% vs 2017/18)
- The introduction of our Instagram account, attracting 332 followers
- Our Twitter following grew to 1339 (+20% vs 2017/18)
- An increase in Facebook fans to 1329 (+16% vs 2017/18)

11 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/jonny-benjamin-same-sex-ed/>

12 <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/sex-education-is-not-a-crisis-for-jewish-schools-it-will-save-lives/>

13 https://jewishjournal.com/news/los_angeles/community/299294/uk-guide-offers-safe-space-to-orthodox-lgbt-students/

14 <https://washingtonjewishweek.com/54396/well-being-of-orthodox-lgbtq-students-considered/featured-slider-post/>



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

Registered Charity Number (England): 1163398

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