



Timeline

with Jewish LGBT milestones

1957

The **Wolfenden Report** published which recommended the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

1967

The **Sexual Offences Act** decriminalised homosexuality (proposed by Jewish MP Leo Abse).

1969

Starting from New York City's LGBT and drag bar, The Stonewall Inn, the **Stonewall** riots were prompted by the relentless harassment of LGBT people. Led by drag queens, trans people of colour and many other people who challenged gender binaries, these riots are felt to have been the beginning of the modern western LGBT rights movement.

1970

Creation of **Gay Liberation Front**, one of the major UK LGBT rights groups.

1972

The **Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group** was founded.

First UK **gay Pride** happened in London.

1980s (early)

Jewish lesbians played a key role in both non-religious and Jewish feminist movements. Projects like the Half Empty Bookcase pushed for better representation of a diversity of women in Jewish text. Conferences and groups were organised to support Jewish lesbians who experienced a double marginalisation, within the feminist movement as Jews and the Jewish community as lesbians.

1981

Rabbi Lionel Blue is the first UK rabbi to publically come out.

1984

Sheila Shulman and **Eli Tikvah Sarah**, the first openly lesbian rabbis in the UK, begin their training at Leo Baeck College.

1988

Jewish Aids Trust is formed to support those in the community with HIV and Aids, challenge the stigma around the disease and educate around sexual health. Many in the Jewish LGBT community were affected by the disease as well as active in campaigning for improved health, alongside remembering those who died.

In 1988 a piece of legislation was introduced which forbade local authorities from "intentionally promoting homosexuality" as well as barring schools from teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretend family relationship". This piece of legislation came from a section of the local government act, becoming infamously known as **Section 28**. The effects of this legislation are still being felt with education on LGBT issues in schools often underdeveloped as its teaching was banned for many years.

1990

Beit Klal Yisrael, an LGBT synagogue, was founded with the mission of creating an inclusive and welcoming synagogue for LGBT Jews. Over the years they have challenged mainstream Judaism through ritual, diversity and engagement and continue to evolve as a community. They are the only synagogue of its kind in the UK.

1993

Emeritus **Chief Rabbi Jacobovits** claimed that homosexuality can be cured.

1994

The **age of consent** for gay men lowered from 21 to 18.

1996

Parents of Jewish Gay and Lesbians group is set up.

Keshet is founded in the USA. Originally a volunteer organisation in Boston, Keshet has grown to become the leading Jewish LGBT organisation in the USA. It works to promote the full integration of LGBT Jews into Jewish life.

2000

Ban on LGB people in the **military** is lifted.

2001

Age of consent for gay men is equalised.

2003

Section 28 is repealed.

2004

Civil Partnerships are introduced.

The **Gender Recognition Act** provided a first step for trans people to gain legal recognition of their gender identity.

2005

Rabbi Chaim Rapoport's book is published: *Judaism and Homosexuality: An Authentic Orthodox View*. This book was one of the first challenges to mainstream thinking in the orthodox community on LGBT inclusion.

The UK's first **Jewish Civil Partnership** took place in 2005 in a Reform synagogue; supported *halachically* and ritually by the Reform movement this ceremony broke boundaries in allowing LGBT Jews to be a more equal part of Jewish ritual. At the same time the Liberal movement created a '*brit ahava*', renewing the Jewish wedding ceremony to make it inclusive for LGBT couples.

2010

A group of rabbis from the USA released a **statement of principles** on the issue of gay inclusion and Orthodox Judaism. These principles provided a new platform for Orthodox rabbis and communities to push for LGBT inclusion and although not universally accepted many rabbis have since signed up. The principles argue for full inclusion of LGBT people in participation of *mitzvot*, that treatment of everyone with dignity and respect is of critical importance

and that damaging therapy should not be enforced upon anyone.

The **Equalities Act** was a piece of legislation that ensured anyone with a protected characteristic could not be discriminated against, this included the workplace and as a consumer. It also forbade denial of service based on religious belief.

2011

Bringing together individuals and organisations from across the LGBT Jewish community, **Keshet UK** is founded with the mission of providing a representative voice for LGBT Jews in the UK.

2012

Keshet UK defines itself as the organisation working within the Jewish community to promote the **full inclusion of LGBT people in all aspects of Jewish life** and launches a programme of workshops for Jewish community organisations and leaders.

2013

Keshet UK holds its first **Chanukah reception in Parliament**.

2014

Same-Sex Marriage is legalised in the UK, with an opt-in system for religious institutions.

Liberal Judaism was the first to join the campaign for same-sex marriage and when the legislation was introduced immediately opted in to perform same-sex marriages.

Reform Judaism changed its position on same-sex marriage in 2012 and during the legislative campaign was vocal in its support for same sex marriages. The first same-sex marriage held in a synagogue was at a Reform Synagogue.

The **Masorti movement** voted to support same sex marriage after it had been introduced, however individual synagogues make the decision as to whether they want to perform the ceremonies or not.

2015

United Synagogue **Chief Rabbi Mirvis** meets with Keshet UK and highlights the need to combat homophobia.

References and Further Reading

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