

# ANNUAL REVIEW

September 2020 – August 2021



# Listening, learning and trying



Dalia Fleming, Executive Director



Benjamin Ellis, Chair of Board of Trustees

Mostly, people really want to get things right.

But we all make mistakes sometimes. Great leaders, organisations and communities recognise when they've got it wrong, and work hard to do better next time. This is part of our Jewish tradition. Every year has its Yom Kippur; a day to think about the ways we haven't lived up to our highest values and to recommit to them.

In our workshops, KeshetUK strives to create compassionate, reflective and honest spaces where people can make mistakes and learn. We encourage people to ask questions, using the words that they are familiar with. And when opinions differ, we encourage respectful disagreement that leaves room for discussion and learning.

In this Annual Review, you will see the feedback about the impact we are making. Jewish community organisations tell us that they value our respectful and non-judgemental approach, that they feel safe and encouraged when they work with us.

Our research also showed that Jewish community organisations want even more from KeshetUK. We want to be able to provide it.

This year, supported by your generous donations, we launch our Community Life programme which will develop our work

with Jewish community organisations and synagogues. We will provide tailored support to individual organisations, working with them to develop policies and programmes that create more welcoming spaces for LGBT+ people and their families.

Over the past year KeshetUK has connected with thousands of young people and dozens of young leaders in youth organisations, and delivered training to teachers, to synagogue leaders and members, and to summer camp leaders.

KeshetUK remains the only UK organisation that provides education and training to Jewish community institutions and leaders to create a world where no one is forced to choose between their Jewish and LGBT+ identity. We do this work because we know and believe that every Jewish organisation can become more inclusive of all LGBT+ people and our families.

We know that many of us won't get things right first time, or even every time. There will never come a Jewish year with no need for the soul-searching of Yom Kippur. But while repentance has its place, so does the work of tikkun olam, repairing the world. Where there are communities that want to commit to exploring and learning, KeshetUK will be there to listen, learn and work together.

*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.

## FIVE YEARS ON

### What do UK Jewish organisations think of KeshetUK?

In 2021 we hired an external consultant to interview leaders from 13 UK Jewish community organisations and synagogues. Seven of these were Jewish community organisations delivering services or working directly with Jewish communities. Six were from synagogue or synagogue linked bodies across multiple denominations.



# What has KeshetUK achieved in 2020–2021?

## 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. We provide inclusion training for teachers, support staff, and deliver school-specific activities for students to create a school culture where LGBT+ Jewish people feel valued and respected.

In 2020–21 KeshetUK:

- Adapted our programming materials to enable school teachers to deliver KeshetUK content with support from KeshetUK, or for KeshetUK volunteers and staff to run the sessions remotely.
- Ensured delivery of workshops and assemblies for 3,540 students in three Jewish secondary schools (aged 11-18 years); just under half of these students had their sessions run by teachers in the school with support from KeshetUK staff.
- Delivered LGBT+ inclusion training to 30 teachers in an Orthodox Jewish secondary school.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

For the first time, we were able to support school teachers to deliver KeshetUK content. We were asked to create short sessions for teachers to run to address the reported increased homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language following the extended lockdown and students being away from school, and we were able to react quickly to produce and share this new content. We offered teachers drop-in sessions and produced and shared detailed facilitator packs. Although the trigger for this was Covid-19, combining this with our direct delivery is an important step towards our sustainable growth and impact.

## Working with youth and young adults

UK Jewish communities have a proud tradition of investing in youth organisations which 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 co-produces context specific leadership training and other learning activities with Jewish youth organisations, synagogue youth groups, young adult groups.

We created novel programming this year, including workshops on allyship and bystander behaviour. To meet the needs of our different audiences, the workshop was created at three different levels of complexity, so organisations could receive the training that most suited their needs.

In 2020–21 we delivered LGBT+ inclusion training and sessions for eight youth movements or organisations, including:

- 35 LJY<sup>1</sup> *madrichim* [leaders]
- 90 FZY<sup>2</sup> *madrichim*
- 6 BBYO<sup>3</sup> members
- 65 Habonim Dror<sup>4</sup> *madrichim*
- 20 members of MIKE (Redbridge JCC)<sup>5</sup>,
- 5 members of Marom<sup>6</sup>
- 26 Noam<sup>7</sup> members, and
- 10 leaders of Alyth Synagogue Summer Camp.

<sup>1</sup> The Youth Movement of Liberal Judaism.

<sup>2</sup> Federation of Zionist Youth.

<sup>3</sup> B'nai B'rith Youth Organisation.

<sup>4</sup> Socialist Zionist culturally Jewish youth movement.

<sup>5</sup> Motivation, Inspiration, Knowledge and Education, a youth leadership programme at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre.

<sup>6</sup> Masorti organisation for students and young adults.

<sup>7</sup> Masorti Judaism's Zionist Youth Movement.



Panelists for the KeshetUK panel on so-called 'conversion therapy'

In 2020–21, KeshetUK also worked with youth and young adult organisations including:

- The University of Arts London, running a programme on Jewish LGBT+ people in the arts.
- The student summit of the Council of Christians and Jews<sup>8</sup>, participating in a panel on the impact of faith-based student societies and how they can support their LGBT+ members.

## 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 2020–21, KeshetUK:

- Worked with Masorti Judaism, who have secured a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to work in partnership with KeshetUK. This three-year-long project will work on LGBT+ inclusion across their communities.
- Ran a visioning session for ten members of the newly formed Masorti New North London Synagogue LGBT+ Group and then ran a story-telling workshop for six of their members, of whom three went on to share their stories with the wider community.
- Hosted a session on general LGBT+ inclusion and a focus on trans inclusion for six trainee rabbis in their final year of rabbinical school at the Progressive Leo Baeck College.
- Delivered an LGBT+ inclusion 'taster session' for six members of staff at the London School of Jewish Studies whose president is Orthodox Chief Rabbi Mirvis.

<sup>8</sup> The Council of Christians and Jews is a leading player in interfaith engagement.

- Run a 'conversation with KeshetUK' session for the Liberal Finchley Progressive Synagogue to 20 members specifically focusing on language, kind conversations, and trans inclusion.

## Working with the wider Jewish and LGBT+ communities:

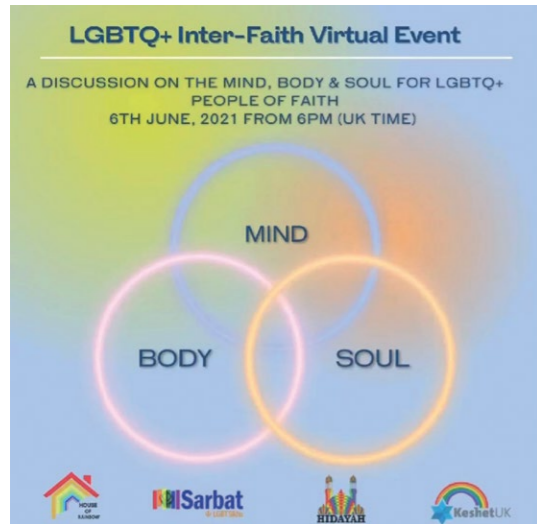
KeshetUK works with community organisations to become more inclusive of the LGBT+ Jewish people. This aims to ensure that services and spaces meet the needs of LGBT+ people and their families.



Gabi and AD from the KeshetUK and JW3 Pride Video 2021

# “Keshet UK have created a valuable role supporting LGBTQ+ people in helping us interface with the everyday world.”

Moira, member of New North London Synagogue LGBT+ group



Social media ad for interfaith event

In 2020–21 KeshetUK:

- Trained eight members of the JW3<sup>9</sup> Senior Leadership Team, followed by training for 10 members of their Programming team.
- Spoke at multiple JW3 activities including an exploration of the meaning of the High Holy Days for LGBT+ people, and events listening to intergenerational LGBT+ voices.
- Ran a session for 15 summer camp professionals as part of Yesod<sup>10</sup> training on LGBT+ inclusion.
- Spoke on panels for Keshet (USA – no relation to KeshetUK), and another for the European Union of Progressive Judaism with other LGBT+ Jewish organisations, on our activities and how to share knowledge.
- Our Chair presented at an Eshel<sup>11</sup> conference about the KeshetUK approach to working with Orthodox communities.
- Trained Mermaids<sup>12</sup> staff on how they can support Jewish people who use their services.

- Took part in an interfaith session run by Hidayah<sup>13</sup>, Sarbat Sikhs<sup>14</sup> and House of Rainbow<sup>15</sup> and KeshetUK. We created an online space for LGBT+ people of faith to talk about their relationship to their faith and mind, body and soul.
- Ran a panel [Experiences of so-called Conversion Therapy: Panel for the UK Jewish community](#) with over 100 people joining to watch it.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Because of the Covid-19 lockdown, the majority of in-person Pride celebrations in the UK have been cancelled or postponed this year. We have continued from last year a project with JW3 to develop a [short video with LGBT+ Jewish people](#) talking about their life experiences. People talked about the joys, advice, and hopes for the future of the LGBT+ Jewish community in the UK. Although LGBT+ Jews could not come together physically for Pride this year, we were still visible. The video has been watched over 3,000 times.

*“Our participants felt that they could ask questions they had but didn’t know how to get the answers to.”*

**Leah Winslow, Relief Youth Club Leader, MIKE Redbridge JCC**

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

<sup>10</sup> Yesod supports Jewish community professionals and educators in Europe in gaining knowledge and skills to feel confident expressing Jewish language and values.

<sup>11</sup> Eshel’s mission is to create a future for Orthodox lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and their families.

<sup>12</sup> Mermaids supports transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children, young people, and their families.

<sup>13</sup> Serving queer Muslims in the UK and the US – Providing support, education and welfare for the Muslim LGBT+ community, as well as friends and family.

<sup>14</sup> Sarbat is a volunteer led group addressing LGBT issues from a Sikh perspective.

<sup>15</sup> House of Rainbow Fellowship, a safe space for the spiritual growth and inclusion for black LGBTQ+ people.

# Organisational development and sustainability

## Organisational structure

KeshetUK has left our residency at JHub, and we will always be grateful to the Pears Foundation for giving us our first feel of stability and a community. We are planning on joining a new office space in late 2021.

We have been working on growing our trustee board and we are delighted to welcome three new trustee board members: Stephen Shashoua, Simon Solomon and Robin Moss.

## Volunteer recruitment and development

Supporting KeshetUK is a passionate and committed group of volunteers who assist with community engagement, programme development, delivery and fundraising. We are very grateful to all those who have volunteered with us in 2020–2021. We will be doing another volunteer recruitment campaign in 2022. We are committed to supporting and developing our volunteers, and making sure they have a good experience with us.

### VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Due the pandemic some of our volunteers have moved away from our main volunteer locations and so we are looking for more people who would like to be trained up and supported to go into schools and youth settings to deliver our pre-planned curriculum – ensuring they see LGBT+ Jewish people and our allies in person.

## 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 2020–21 KeshetUK received approximately £152,000 income:

- £13,000 from individual major donors, regular monthly subscribers and community fundraisers (including one-off donations, raising money through sponsored events and High Holy day campaigns).

Grants (including amount committed) amounting to approx. £137,000 including:

- £42,000 from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation (Unrestricted).
- £30,000 from the David & Ruth Lewis Family Charitable Trust (mixed restricted and unrestricted funding).
- £20,500 from the Greenbaum Family Foundation (restricted).
- £20,000 from the Pears Foundation (Unrestricted).
- £15,000 from Kobler Trust (Unrestricted)
- £7,500 from Children’s Aid Committee for staff salary and our work in schools and youth and young adult organisations.
- £1,500 supporting schools work from the Shores Charitable Trust.
- £500 LGBT Consortium Intersectional Fund.

Fees for services delivered:

- £2,000 in fees for services delivered (routine KeshetUK activity or speaking events).

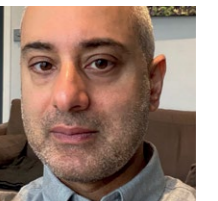
Gifts in kind:

- Payroll support from The Payroll Bureau.



**Stephen Shashoua**  
New Trustee

Stephen is a programme designer, trainer and capacity-building specialist working at the intersections of the arts, identity and culture in order to promote better social relations and inclusion.



**Simon Solomon**  
New Trustee

Simon has an MBA from Cass Business school and has worked for 25 years in the technology sector in a number of commercial and business development roles and also as an investor in several enterprises.



**Robin Moss**  
New Trustee

Robin worked professionally in the Jewish community for many years, including almost a decade at UJIA. He is now the Chief Executive of Unitas (Barnet Youth Zone), a purpose-built facility in Burnt Oak providing high-quality activities and support to young people in Barnet from the ages of 9 to 18

# Media and publicity




Scrabbling to thank our volunteers on social media

## Digital engagement

With much of KeshetUK's 2020–21 programme being delivered digitally, traffic to these platforms has showed strong growth this year. The number of website visitors rose to 3.4K (+178% vs 2019/20) and individual website visits increased to 4.8K (+123% vs 2019–20).

Awareness of our work is high, with 77% of website traffic from direct visits and organic search combined. Whilst social media accounts for only 17% of the remaining traffic, KeshetUK's own social media channels have continued to grow their audiences this year:

 [Instagram](#) grew to 714 followers (+60% vs 2019–20)

 [Twitter](#) followers increased to 1544 followers (+7% vs 2019–20)

 [Facebook](#) fans rose to 1638 (+9% vs 2019–20)

*“KeshetUK are an important asset to our Jewish and LGBT+ communities, and the intersection of the two.”*

Daniella Shaw, LGBT+ Inclusion Manager, Masorti Judaism

*“Over the last year we have consulted with KeshetUK's leadership on a number of issues, and brought in their skilled educators to work with our team, including our Senior Leadership Team, in order to train and develop JW3 staff. Their non-judgemental approach and commitment both to best practice and to Jewish values and community has helped ensure JW3 can best serve the needs of the wider Jewish community in a more inclusive way.”*

Raymond Simonson, CEO, JW3



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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.