

ANNUAL REVIEW

September 2021 – August 2022



Five years on



Dalia Fleming,
Executive Director

A month after I started working for KeshetUK in 2017, I had a conversation which I carry with me every day.

I spoke to an Orthodox rabbi who acknowledged the harm Jewish communities had caused LGBT+ people. I grew up Orthodox, but I'd never had a conversation like this with a rabbi before. It was clear how much he cared, how he was committed to helping his community change. I saw in that moment that authentic conversations, real expressions of emotion, genuine relationships with the most expansive range of community leaders could happen. More than that: they are essential.

KeshetUK's role is to support Jewish communities in having challenging and compassionate conversations about LGBT+ lives. Our work can be tough – not just for communities and leaders but also for our LGBT+ staff and volunteers. Creating respectful, non-judgemental, brave spaces can bring up topics that are painful for LGBT+ people to revisit. Yet despite the pain, I feel honoured and privileged to do this work. Since that first meeting, I've had hundreds of genuine conversations with people who want to ensure Jewish LGBT+ people and our families have better experiences in UK Jewish communities.

Over the last five years KeshetUK has gone from delivering school sessions to 1,000

young people in 2016/17, to over 3,300 school students in 2021/22. We have worked with hundreds of professionals in Liberal, Masorti, Orthodox and Reform synagogues and community organisations of all types. Last year we asked the community what else it needed from KeshetUK. In the coming pages you can read about the Community Life programme we've developed in response.

As I reflect on the past year, I wonder which of this year's conversations I'll still carry with me in five years' time? Thanks to KeshetUK's work, many Jewish LGBT+ people are creating joyful, meaningful experiences within UK Jewish communities. At the same time, there is a rising drumbeat of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in wider society, the echoes of which are heard in Jewish communities too. This work – building trust, listening and learning together, having conversations that are brave and kind – feels more vital than ever.

KeshetUK's success means that there is a higher demand for our training and services. We need to meet this. We need to offer a greater breadth and depth of programming. We need to work more outside London. Thank you for your support – we couldn't do this without you.

Dalia

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 Jewish 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.

KeshetUK Community Life Programme

This year we created our 'Community Life Programme'. This provides more varied and in-depth resources and training around including LGBT+ people for synagogues and community organisations. Our new **Training Menu** allows organisations to meet their needs by choosing modules from a basic Tier 1 and a more advanced Tier 2. A future Tier 3 will support more complex conversations.

We piloted Training Menu Tier 1 with one synagogue and over five community organisations including the Jewish Leadership Council, Mitzvah Day, Jami and Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

Participants were highly satisfied with the training, reporting an increase in their knowledge and confidence to act:

CURRENT TIER 1 MODULES

Understanding Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

Reviews LGBT+ terminology and improves skills in compassionate conversation

First Thought, Second Thought: Questioning Assumptions

Explores participants' thoughts and values and how these align with actions

An Introduction to Trans Inclusion

Provides strategies to support trans people

97%

of respondents agreed they now had better knowledge of key terminology for understanding LGBT+ identities;

100%

of respondents agreed they felt more confident to have conversations to support LGBT+ people in their organisation;

92%

of respondents agreed that they felt they could better support trans people they may encounter in their organisation.

In 2022/23 we will pilot our new **Consultation Support Service**. This will help organisations set their own objectives for being inclusive of Jewish LGBT+ people and their families, and then agree how to achieve these goals and sustain the change with minimal ongoing input from KeshetUK. Consultations could include reviewing, rewriting and implementing organisational policies; assessing and improving organisational culture; designing and delivering activities and events; and enhancing engagement with their existing LGBT+ members or users.

Our **Project Partnerships Work** will support Jewish community organisations and synagogues to work on defined projects and activities. Our first planned project is to bring together approaches to more LGBT+ inclusive Jewish lifecycle rituals. This work aims to co-create and develop LGBT+ inclusive spaces and activities, bringing together several organisations in wider partnership.

If you have questions about our Community Life Programme, please email alex@keshetuk.org

"KeshetUK works in a sensitive and understanding way to make sure that no member of our community ever feels excluded or as if they can't be who they are. We are indebted to KeshetUK for its services"

Claudia Mendoza, Co-Chief Executive, The JLC

What has KeshetUK achieved in 2021–2022?

Working with schools

KeshetUK works with teachers and young people 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 2021–22 KeshetUK:

- Delivered workshops and assemblies for 3,300 students (aged 11-18 years) in four Jewish secondary schools;
- Piloted training for nine JCoSS personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) education staff for the first time;
- Trained safeguarding leads at two orthodox primary schools.

Sarah giving an assembly at Yavneh College

Posters made by students in King Solomon and JFS



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.

In 2021–22 we delivered LGBT+ inclusion training and sessions for more than ten youth movements or organisations, including:

- 40 Reform Judaism cheder¹ teachers on gender inclusion in the classroom;
- 17 LJY-Netzer² *madrichim* (leaders);
- 29 FZY³ *madrichim* and 34 FZY members on *hadracha* training;
- 49 RSY-Netzer⁴ *madrichim*;
- 45 Habonim Dror⁵ *madrichim*;
- 25 Noam⁶ members;
- 26 Tzofim⁷ members;
- 50 UJIA⁸ Israel Tour leaders;
- Talks at Reshet⁹ Conference to 30 attendees;
- Pre-camp training for BBYO¹⁰ members.

In 2021–22, KeshetUK also worked with youth and young adult organisations including:

- Presenting at University of East Anglia JSoc for a 'Pride Day Night Dinner' about allyship;
- Delivering a talk to UJS LGBT+ students;
- Speaking to members at Brighton and Hove Reform Synagogue Youth Group.

- 1 Classes for children in the basics of Judaism and Hebrew.
- 2 Youth movement of Liberal Judaism.
- 3 Federation of Zionist Youth.
- 4 Reform Synagogue Youth.
- 5 Socialist Zionist culturally Jewish youth movement.
- 6 Youth movement of Masorti Judaism.
- 7 Israeli Scouts group in London.
- 8 United Jewish Israel Appeal.
- 9 Network for Jewish Youth provision.
- 10 B'nai B'rith Youth Organisation.

“The KeshetUK training course gave us the skills to relook at our existing policies, procedures and language with fresh eyes and ensure that our tone of voice and choice of wording was inclusive and non-gender specific.”

Mitzvah Day staff team

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 2021–22, KeshetUK:

- Trained six members of the leadership at Muswell Hill United Synagogue;
- Piloted a session on trans inclusion for Ark Synagogue to 12 of their members;
- Trained seven members of Masorti Klei Kodesh;
- Gave a talk at Liberal Judaism on so-called 'conversion therapy' practices;
- Spoke at the Council for Liberal Rabbis and Cantors around terminology;
- Contributed by invitation into the Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue paper on 'Reimagining Shul'. One of the priorities they identified was to start [“a conversation around the content of an LGBT+ policy to publicly show inclusion and to address halachic boundaries”](#)¹¹.

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 2021–22 KeshetUK piloted Tier 1 of our Community Life Training menu with:

- 12 Jami¹² staff members;
- Eight members of JVN¹³;

¹¹ <https://www.borehamwoodshul.org/assets/pdfs/BES-Reimagining-Shul-FINAL.pdf>.

¹² Mental health organisation serving the Jewish community.

¹³ Jewish Volunteer Network.

- 12 JLC¹⁴ staff members and separately for seven communities at the JLC Professionals Day;
- Four Mitzvah Day¹⁵ staff members;
- 17 Holocaust Memorial Day Trust staff;
- 12 members of staff at the Board of Deputies;
- Religious communities, such as Ark Synagogue and Masorti Klei Kodesh.

In 2021–22 KeshetUK also:

- Supported and spoke at a JW³¹⁶ Friday Night Dinner for Pride month, with over 60 people in attendance;
- Ran a mental health roundtable with Jami for Jewish LGBT+ people;
- Gave a presentation to members of the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre about KeshetUK's work;
- Participated in panel discussions about LGBT+ people for JLC International Women's Day, as well as at the Out @ Prayer conference;
- Spoke on panels about the intersection of faith and being LGBT+ for various corporate hosts, including Mazars, Omnicrom Group, G-Work and Clifford Chance;
- Co-ordinated the presence of the Jewish group at Pride in London with over 70 attendees.

¹⁴ Jewish Leadership Council.

¹⁵ Social action day.

¹⁶ Jewish community centre in London.

Dalia having spoken at the International Women's Day Event at the JLC



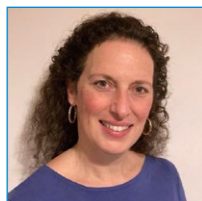
Organisational development and sustainability

Organisational structure

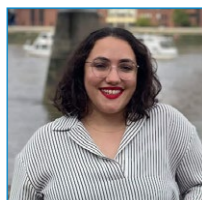
In 2020/21 we undertook a strategic review and recognised the need to grow our team to four full-time staff members, to better meet the demand for our work. After securing additional multi-year funding support from two family foundations, in July 2021 we created a Head of *Community Life* role, to build our Community Life Programme, and in September 2021 appointed Alex Foley to this position. This year we also welcomed two new members of staff: Sarah Bronzite (Head of Education) and Leora Kurtzer (Programme and Volunteer Officer).



Alex grew up in Maine, USA and moved to the UK in 2011 to attend university. Following the completion of their DPhil in Molecular Cell Biology of Health and Disease, Alex decided to pivot to the charity sector. They now work as the Head of Community Life in a new role that will focus on working with community organisations and synagogues to create and enhance spaces for Jewish LGBT+ people in Jewish community and religious life.



Sarah is a primary school teacher and a social researcher. Across both professions, she brings a commitment to inclusion and equity; she is passionate about harnessing knowledge, and in particular central principles within Jewish ethics, to enable transformational change. Growing up originally in modern orthodox communities in London and Brussels, more recently she lived within a small Jewish community in north-east Scotland before returning to London to join the KeshetUK team.



Leora is an experienced project manager with a passion for learning new things and teaching others. She has her BSc in marketing from the University of Texas at Dallas and recently graduated with an MA in History of Art from University College London.

Talia Fogelman will be our Programme and Volunteer Officer from October 2022.

At our November 2021 Annual General Meeting, two of our three founder Trustees (Alma Reisel and Dave Shaw) stepped down after many years' service. We are grateful to them for all of their work and dedication to KeshetUK.

We are recruiting new trustees in 2022/23, so **please let us know if you're interested, or see our website for more information.**

Volunteer recruitment and development

Supporting KeshetUK is a passionate and committed group of volunteers who assist with community engagement, programme development and delivery and fundraising. We are very grateful to all those who have volunteered with us in 2021/22. We are committed to supporting and developing our volunteers, and making sure they have a good experience with us.

Since our new Programme and Volunteer officer started in December 2021, we have completely reinvigorated our volunteering programme. We have created a new induction programme and training for volunteers, and we have started to have our volunteers attending session in schools once again.

This year we have had eight new volunteers start their induction with us, and we currently have 19 active volunteers (including those who have started their induction).

If you would like to find out more about volunteering please go to: www.keshetuk.org/volunteer.



Top: KeshetUK and Friends in the Pride in London parade

Left: Rabbi Emily from West London Synagogue in Pride in London parade with other members of the Jewish group

Right: Leora presenting at 'prideday night dinner' at University of East Anglia JSoc

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 2021–22 KeshetUK received approximately £144,000 income from:

- £12,100 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 approximately £130,000 including from:

- the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies (unrestricted);
- David & Ruth Lewis Family Charitable Trust (restricted funding)
- Greenbaum Family Foundation (restricted);
- the Pears Foundation (unrestricted);
- Kobler Trust (unrestricted);
- two family foundations (unrestricted);

- All Aboard (restricted);
- the Shores Charitable Trust (supporting schools work);
- the National Lottery (supporting work with Masorti Judaism).

Fees for services delivered:

- £1,730 in fees for services delivered (routine KeshetUK activity or speaking events).

Gifts in kind:

- Payroll support from The Payroll Bureau.



KeshetUK's first ever volunteer picnic



Leora with five KeshetUK volunteers during a training session

Media and publicity

Press engagement

This year KeshetUK has been included in articles around a panel that included our Executive Director and also the Chief Rabbi of Poland in which he said 'LGBTQ+-free zones is against Halacha'. Benjamin Ellis, one of our co-founders, wrote a piece in the *Jewish Chronicle* about Pride Month.

Digital engagement

The number of website visitors rose to 9.6K (+81% vs 2020/21) and individual website visits increased to 7.1k (+69% vs 2019/20).

Awareness of our work is high, with 76% of website traffic from direct visits and organic search combined. Whilst social media and referrals from other website accounts for 24% of the remaining traffic, KeshetUK's own social media channels have continued to grow their audiences this year:

 [Instagram](#) grew to 874 followers (+22% vs 2020–21)

 [Twitter](#) followers increased to 1635 followers (+6% vs 2020–21)

 [Facebook](#) fans rose to 1677 (+2% vs 2021–22)

“We had a wonderful session tailored to our needs.”

**Gil Reshef, Head of Education,
West London Synagogue**

“Working with KeshetUK this year has been an absolute pleasure. With UJS being the voice of Jewish students, it feels like a natural pairing to work closely with KeshetUK, who work hard to represent the voices of LGBTQ+ Jews. Having experts there to shape and mould our activities and resources to make sure it's as inclusive as possible was super useful, and I'm so lucky to have had that this year.”

Shayna Wise-Till, Sabbatical Officer, UJS



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

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