



# RESHET

The Network for  
Jewish Youth Provision

## Safeguarding in the Jewish Community

כל ישראל ארבים זה בזה

Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh BaZeh  
All Israel are responsible for one another



## About Reshet

Reshet: the Network for Jewish Youth Provision, is a central hub, established by the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) and the Jewish Leadership Council. (JLC). Reshet builds capacity and confidence in the provision and delivery of informal education to children and young people across the Jewish community. Such education is at the heart of the community with over 8,000 children and young people engaged on a weekly basis in enriching their Jewish identity and/or strengthening their relationship with Israel.

With substantial shifts in provision, it is more important than ever to ensure we deliver the highest standard of provision to the community's future generation. Reshet builds its services on one of the core recommendations of the Commission on Provision for Young People in the Jewish Community<sup>1</sup> – that of improving skills and resources and bringing together providers and stakeholders. Reshet works throughout and across the community, aiming to develop cohesive, strategic relationships with and for those who offer Jewish youth provision. Reshet has addressed safeguarding with educators who are in the non-statutory sector and therefore outside the formal school structure. Reshet's training has been accessed by all denominational streams from the community.

Reshet is the only organisation of its kind with the sole focus of ensuring that high quality educational training and support is provided to every informal Jewish educator and organisation across the country. This safeguarding initiative has benefitted from Reshet's ability to bring together expertise from within, and external to, the Jewish community. This work has been developed and delivered in conjunction with colleagues from the Reshet Safeguarding Network Forum, as well as with colleagues from NSPCC and SCIE, who have generously shared their knowledge and expertise.

- Martin Berliner Maccabi GB
- Sharon Daniels RSY Netzer
- Becca Fetterman LJY Netzer
- Daniel Gillis Camp Simcha
- Roy Graham UJIA
- Yehudis Goldsobel Migdal Emunah
- Deborah Harel UJIA
- Shirley Maginley NSPCC
- Claudia Mendoza JLC
- Lucy Milich SCIE
- Dolyanna Mordohai Norwood
- Jessica Overlander Kaye Maccabi GB
- Ben Wayland JLGB
- Yoni Zlotogorski JLC

With grateful thanks to all those who have supported this work

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<sup>1</sup> <http://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=1306>

## Introduction

In 2016, over 58,000 children in the UK were identified as needing protection from different forms of abuse.<sup>2</sup> There is limited research regarding Jewish children affected by abuse, however there have been national and international cases of child abuse within the Jewish community.

Since its inception in April 2015, Reshet has brought together organisations that work with children and young people throughout the community, in order to identify, discuss and improve gaps in safeguarding and other areas of importance to Jewish youth provision. As a result, Reshet has become a significant first point of contact for safeguarding consultancy in the non-statutory sector of the Jewish community.

The National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and local authorities with a high Jewish population regularly contact Reshet, the network for Jewish Youth Provision, to understand Reshet's perspective on safeguarding in the community.

Reshet recognises the need to ensure colleagues in the non-statutory sector who work with children and young people are able to access child protection and safeguarding training and receive support to implement appropriate safeguarding framework and policies.

Reshet's work has culminated in this position paper, which aims to reflect key concerns of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Jewish community and identify solutions towards addressing them.

## Safeguarding in the Jewish community

The Jewish community has a rich tradition of helping and caring for others, based on the principles of *chesed*. The concept of *chesed*, translated as kindness/compassion, must include our approach to supporting and caring for children and young people. We have a high volume of local and national organisations that support Jewish children and adults to flourish to their full potential. However, there are individuals within our community who seek to abuse these positive characteristics.

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<sup>2</sup> Bentley, H., O'Hagan, O., Brown, A. et al. (2017) 'How safe are our children? 2017', London: NSPCC.

Grooming, online abuse, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse as well as abuse between young people, affect all communities. It is therefore imperative that we recognise that as a community we are not immune to abuse and neglect. This in turn requires us to have the proper safeguards in place. It is essential to recognise all forms of abuse that have happened in the past and continue to happen within the Jewish community.

In 2015, in Hertfordshire, charges relating to four counts of possession of indecent images of children were brought against the leaders of a holiday play scheme. The immediate investigation led to the camp being closed and the main leader being given a suspended two-year prison sentence. He was also added to the national sex offenders register.

The photographs included naked images of three and four-year-old girls who attended the camp. The majority of children at the camp were Jewish, the camp itself having close affiliations to two Hertfordshire synagogues. This camp was not officially under the auspices of a Jewish organisation, yet it is important to note the sense of trust families had in its leader.<sup>3</sup>

In another example, a 2017 investigation led by the *Independent* noted “Hackney Council is at the centre of a child protection scandal after an investigation by The Independent found more than 1,000 boys in the borough are currently missing from registered schools and are instead thought to be educated in illegal ultra-Orthodox Jewish yeshivas.”<sup>4</sup>

Although the two examples provided are very different, they highlight that safeguarding and child protection are very real concerns for our community.

## **Child protection and safeguarding: key principles**

Key safeguarding principles for any organisation engaging with children and young people include:

- An on-going commitment to providing safe and risk assessed provision for children and young people
- Knowing how to identify different types of abuse and, where appropriate, refer concerns to local authorities

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/childrens-summer-camp-closed-down-after-man-is-held-on-indecent-images-charge-10446249.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/london-risks-another-rotherham-child-sexual-abuse-scandal-without-action-on-missing-children-in-a7519621.html>

- A safeguarding and child protection policy
- Training staff in safeguarding and child protection
- Having a designated safeguarding officer
- A safer recruitment policy and procedures
- Completion of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- Keeping up to date with statutory safeguarding requirements and best practice

Reshet has:

- Fostered dialogue and a community of learning around safeguarding and child protection in Jewish youth provision
- Developed and built safeguarding and child protection resources for those on the front line and in senior leadership
- Spearheaded a community safeguarding forum with strong links to external safeguarding organisations
- Established the collection of data and information on safeguarding in the community, to help identify and monitor where support and resources are needed

Reshet's safeguarding work has included:

- Working with external agencies to provide accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and training days on safeguarding and child protection
- Delivering the first accredited CPD Designated Safeguarding Lead training as a cross-communal initiative
- Developing a strong understanding of where resources are needed through directly liaising with over 40 organisations which have contacted Reshet for safeguarding information
- Sharing models of good practice which have been established in the community, such as the United Synagogue's innovative online film and training structure as well as other models of good practice which improve safeguarding implementation
- Signposting organisations to specialist safeguarding support and advice

- Cultivating on-going relationships with the NSPCC and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) who are at the forefront of child protection and safeguarding best practice
- Contributing to and attending the National Safeguarding Youth Forum, which works with more than 30 UK-based youth charities and organisations to share best practice and engage in active dialogue with central government on safeguarding

## **Innovation in safeguarding**

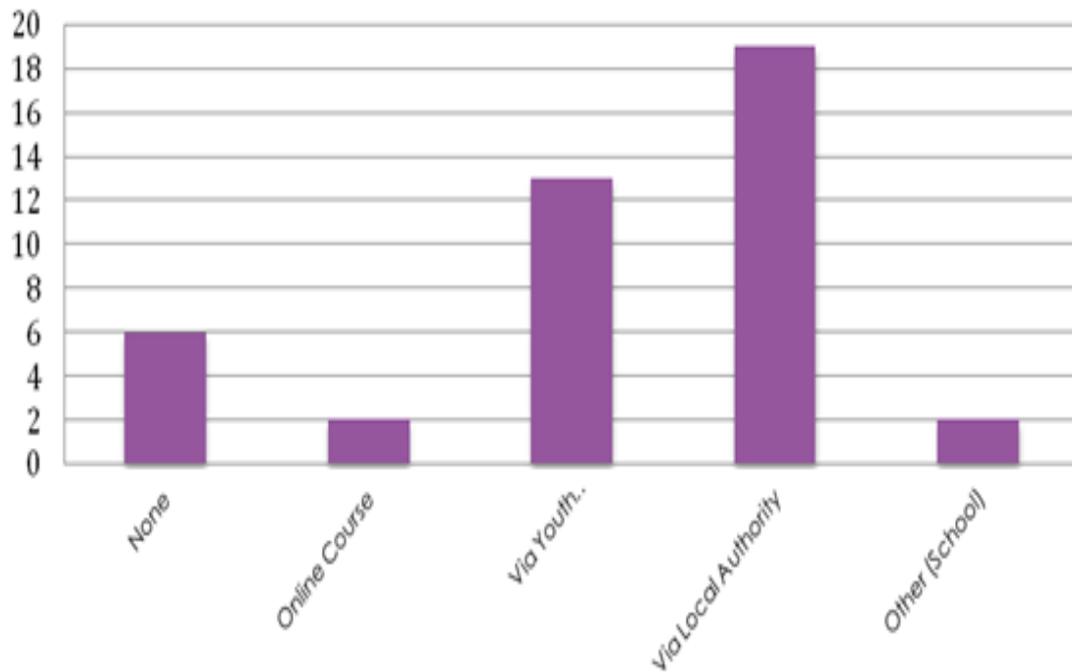
Building on its knowledge and network of relationships across the safeguarding and child protection community, Reshet has developed and spearheaded a Safeguarding Network Forum, chaired by Martin Berliner, CEO Maccabi GB. It brings together colleagues with experience, expertise and interest in safeguarding from Camp Simcha, Jewish Leadership Council (JLC), LJY Netzer, Maccabi GB, Migdal Emunah, Norwood, RSY Netzer and United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA).

In order to understand the level of need in the Jewish community, Reshet launched a national safeguarding and child protection survey in April 2016. The survey was designed to understand where those working with young people had previously accessed safeguarding and child protection training and what organisations would choose to commission for future training. The survey was sent to the Reshet database and shared via social media. Forty-five organisations participated in the survey, with over sixty-four individuals responding (from London and regional organisations).

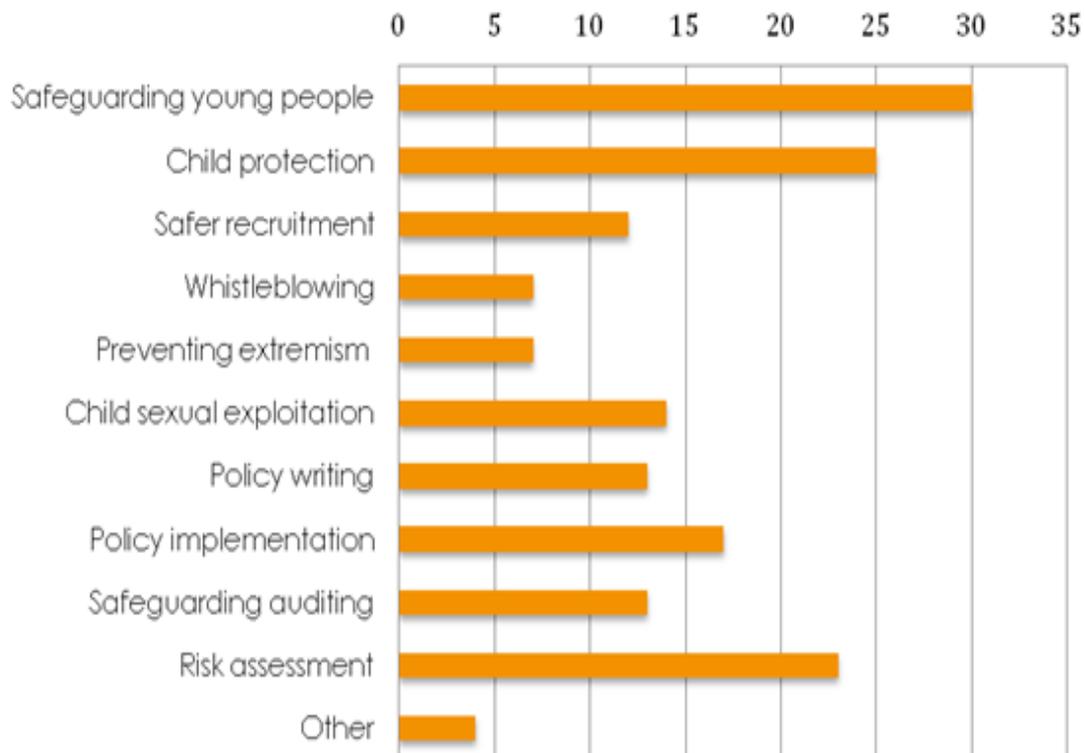
In addition to the survey, colleagues from the Reshet Safeguarding Network Forum shared their current policies and procedures, which were reviewed by an experienced colleague from Norwood. This gave Reshet a snapshot view of the strengths and challenges in organisational policy and how additional safeguarding training might further support the field.

The response rate to the survey and policy audit request, highlighted the willingness of organisations to foster and contribute to a communal dialogue on safeguarding, as well as Reshet's ability to engage with the Jewish youth work professionals. The learning outcomes from the survey have led to high calibre training being accessed by organisations throughout the community. **Together those organisations are responsible for educating over 5,000 children.**

## What safeguarding training have you already had?



## Which of the following would you like training in?



## **Level of knowledge**

Reshet's research identified there are communal organisations that are leading the way and delivering the required commitment, practice and legal framework for keeping children and young people safe from abuse. However, it was also evident from the research that there were organisations which did not have appropriate policies and procedures to comply with the current legal requirements for safeguarding and child protection. In some cases, they were not even aware of this duty.

A separate matter raised in this area of work was the need to educate and encourage Jewish parents to be aware of the questions they might ask regarding safeguarding policies and procedural implementation, when they sign their children into informal youth activities.

There are a number of private holiday scheme providers that operate in localities with a significant Jewish population. A number of these providers (sporting/drama activities during school holidays) advertise through synagogues and other communal institutions. Encouraging parents and carers to approach all youth provision with due diligence, requesting information on safeguarding policies, appropriate ratios and DBS checks is an effective measure that should be more widely encouraged.

## **Policies and procedures**

There are beacons of excellent practice emerging across the Jewish community. For example, there are a number of synagogue central bodies, which have created systems and introduced regular safeguarding and child protection training for both rabbis and staff.<sup>5</sup>

Conversely, Reshet's research found evidence that there are a number of communal organisations that have some procedures in place but:

- 1) Do not have fully developed safeguarding child protection policies
- 2) Do not have the associated policies needed to support effective organisational safeguarding. This includes policies on the recruitment of ex-offenders, safe recruitment, whistleblowing and allegations against staff.
- 3) Do not have implementation procedures in place

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<sup>5</sup> Leo Baeck College, Liberal Judaism, Reform Judaism, The S & P Sephardi Community, The United Synagogue as well as others noted above

It is apparent that for some colleagues working in non-statutory settings (such as synagogues, youth centres, and youth movements) there is a need for greater systematic processes within the community to ensure that there is an understanding of safeguarding and child protection legislation. In some settings there is also a need for additional guidance on how to disseminate policies and procedures to staff and volunteers. **The legal responsibility to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place is with the trustees of each organisation.** However, the audit and survey demonstrated that this is not consistently implemented in all settings.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service**

It is a legal requirement that staff and volunteers regularly working with young people are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service. This is currently happening in the majority of organisations throughout the community, with some ensuring all staff (even those not working directly with young people) are checked, for example, administrators in some synagogues. Colleagues are encouraged to contact the Disclosure and Barring Service directly to ascertain whether specific staff members are eligible to be checked under the current DBS system.

There were examples of home hospitality programmes (hosting young people for *Shabbat/chaggim*, hosting youth on their way to/from camps) and twinning/exchange programmes where there was evidence of few or no requests for such checks from families offering home hospitality. Equally, UK-based programmes which place young people in Israeli home hospitality do not all appear to have safe recruitment checks in place since the Israeli system is different. **The difference is noted and it is incumbent upon UK organisations to take reasonable steps to address this matter.**

Anecdotal evidence and information gathered through the survey and round-table discussions suggests volunteers and trustees are not all checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service prior to staffing youth activities. There are a number of organisations that continue to feel uncomfortable about asking volunteers who have access to children and young people to undertake this process. These organisations, the majority of which are charities, are in breach of Charity Commission guidelines, as they are failing to ensure beneficiaries of their organisation are being protected.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to highlight the necessity for people in positions of power (trustees, rabbis, CEOs) in communal organisations to undertake Disclosure

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/611342/Safeguarding\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611342/Safeguarding_strategy.pdf).

and Barring Service checks. If the role of trustees (or others in each organisation) does not meet the criteria to require a Disclosure and Barring Service check, it is essential that individuals are made aware that they should not have regular direct access to children and young people. This would help to create increasing levels of safeguarding and an awareness that safeguarding is taken seriously throughout the community.

## Barriers to reporting

Within faith-based groups, including the Jewish community, there remains a culture of reporting safeguarding concerns internally rather than reporting to the appropriate authorities. The NSPCC and local authorities with a high Jewish population have been proactive in contacting Reshet to question the lower levels (per capita) of safeguarding referrals received from the Jewish community.

It was evident that certain submissions of organisational policy to Reshet were focused on the principle of maintaining and protecting the reputation of the community, rather than the welfare of the child or young person. This is supported by anecdotal conversations that Reshet has had with frontline and senior members of the community, where it was clear that there remain concerns regarding communal reputational damage. Reshet has received 32 telephone calls from rabbis and informal Jewish educators, relating to a wide range of safeguarding concerns<sup>7</sup>. Such concerns reflect the belief that abuse 'could not happen in our community'. Sociologist Nancy Nason-Clark refers to this as 'a holy hush'.<sup>8</sup>

From the perspective of Migdal Emunah<sup>9</sup>, survivors of sexual abuse express:

- There is a misguided but overriding sense within the community that Jewish people would not and do not abuse children/young people
- Survivors of sexual abuse in the Jewish community do not perceive they are being heard and/or believed
- Survivors of sexual abuse in the Jewish community are not confident they will be able to remain or feel safe within the community after reporting an abuser
- The Jewish community continues to have a strong desire to resolve issues of abuse internally, rather than reporting to external authorities

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<sup>7</sup> Since its inception, April 2015

<sup>8</sup> Nason-Clark: Professor and chair of sociology at the University of New Brunswick. Quoted from lecture delivered May 2013.

<sup>9</sup> An organisation in the Jewish community which formally supports survivors of sexual abuse

- There is currently no structure or guidance for communal leadership regarding how to re-integrate those on the Sex Offenders Register into the Jewish community
- This lack of guidance for communal leaders creates further challenges for survivors of abuse, for the leaders themselves and for perpetrators of abuse who wish to return to the community.

## Keeping our community safe

It is essential that children and young people in the Jewish community are educated on what abuse is and who to tell if they are being abused. Equally, those who are responsible for working directly with children and young people and the management that oversees these services, must report disclosures of abuse externally. **Not reporting abuse to child protection and safeguarding teams at the relevant local authority is against the law.** We need communal leaders to ensure that our communities imbue a culture where children are heard and believed, where concerns are acted upon. **The welfare of children and young people must always be our paramount concern.**

## Reshet's training provision

Over the past two years Reshet has arranged training for communal organisations, professionals, volunteers and trustees. In total, 37 organisations have accessed safeguarding training and support from Reshet. **This has impacted on approximately 5,000 children and young people.**

Reshet continues to receive requests for on-going support and signposting for all aspects of safeguarding training. Reshet has facilitated training with external colleagues including SCIE, NSPCC and Norwood<sup>10</sup> as well as signposting Jewish organisations to these bodies for support and policy reviews.

- Reshet and the NSPCC have delivered training for trainee rabbis in July 2016
- Reshet facilitated NSPCC training for 20 colleagues as part of a bespoke two-day safeguarding 'training the trainers' initiative in December 2016

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<sup>10</sup> Migdal Emunah, JWA and social services from local authorities have also provided support and acted on referrals.

- Reshet collaborated with both JVN and Lead to facilitate NSPCC delivery of a workshop for trustees in June 2017. Following on from the trustee training, there was substantial interest from communal organisations to re-visit their safeguarding policies and procedures
- Reshet commissioned Designated Safeguarding Lead training from SCIE in October 2017 for all designated safeguarding leads in the community. Colleagues from 13 separate organisations participated
- Following on from the audit, survey and forum, Reshet has signposted 26 organisations which have requested policy reviews towards colleagues at Norwood, SCIE and the NSPCC. These organisations have subsequently delivered appropriate training

The Reshet website contains safeguarding resources and highlighted safeguarding in its *Chanukah* 2017 e-newsletter. There is evidence that organisations are discussing safeguarding more widely and have been willing to share models of practice. While each organisations needs its own policies and implementation procedures, there is much to be gained through shared knowledge and experience.

## Future action

*‘Leaders need to know their organisations well and constantly identify what needs to be realigned in order to improve performance and manage change. They have to satisfy the needs of both today and tomorrow. They provide day-to-day stable and consistent management but they also exercise leadership to challenge and bring about change and improvement focused on securing a better future.’*

*Eileen Munro, 2011<sup>11</sup>*

Reshet is uniquely placed to increase awareness of safeguarding within the community, however, this is work that must engage the entire community. **It is imperative that the community acts together in all areas of safeguarding.** It is essential that each communal organisation ensures incidents of child abuse, along with any failure to comply with legalisation/official guidelines, are eliminated.

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<sup>11</sup> Munro, E. (2011) ‘The Munro review of child protection: final report – a child-centred system, CM 8062, London: The Stationery Office, SS 7.4, 7.6

**Reshet's recommendations to further advance safeguarding in the Jewish community are:**

- For each organisation to include a safeguarding induction module at the commencement of a new role for trustees, rabbis and communal professionals as well as for volunteers. Those who are new to the UK would also benefit from this training, including those who are working in the UK on *shlichut*.<sup>12</sup>
- To provide tailored training for rabbis and community leaders, focused on safeguarding and leadership.
- To promote the understanding that safeguarding is an essential element of young people's well-being and mental health.
- To ring-fenced funding which will enable the delivery of centrally provided safeguarding training for organisations in the community.
- To give further consideration to the delivery of additional support to youth organisations in making appropriate referrals, particularly over the summer residential period.
- To further develop a community forum which enables the development of practice to the highest standard in safeguarding and child protection. Within this, there is a need to consider community practice on the re-integration of convicted abusers into the community.
- Through the development of the communal safeguarding forum, to assess the effectiveness of local and national safeguarding arrangements across the community. This includes highlighting the responsibilities trustees hold in this area.
- To further develop safeguarding support for communal organisations which offer home hospitality/exchange programmes as well as create specific policies with overseas suppliers to ensure home hospitality offered to British Jewish youth in other countries is appropriately managed.
- To instigate a publicity campaign for parents, highlighting the safeguarding questions they should be asking prior to booking their children into a holiday scheme or residential activities.
- To establish a code of practice for Jewish youth activity providers to consider how they advertise the implementation of their policies. This may take time to gain communal wide momentum but will be a significant step forward for organisations wishing to highlight excellent safeguarding practice.

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<sup>12</sup> Professionals employed on short term contracts

With the support of the community, Reshet is well positioned to spearhead a nationwide campaign highlighting the responsibility we all hold in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Such a campaign would aim to emphasise the legal duty to report abuse to a local authority and help parents and extended family networks to recognise and identify signs that a child might be being abused - with the ultimate focus of keeping our children and young people safe.

Reshet prides itself on bringing together informal Jewish educators from across the community spectrum of schools, synagogues, youth movements, organisations and clubs to learn and reflect on practice. Within this learning comes the responsibility of safeguarding our children and youth.

**The welfare of children and young people is crucial to our community and together we have a legal responsibility under the Children Act 1989 and 'Working together to safeguard children' (2015)<sup>13</sup> guidance to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and maltreatment.**

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2015/>

I am privileged to work in a community that invests in its Jewish future – its young people. Informal Jewish educators working in the non-statutory sector, utilise powerful methodologies to enable young people to grow into confident adults. It is essential that our community is a nurturing and caring environment, where our youth know they are safe to play, safe to learn, safe to pray and safe to develop into the people they have yet to become.

Dr Janusz Korczak (1878 – 1942) wrote:

*"Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have a right to be treated by adults with tenderness and respect, as equals."*

Korczak laid out his vision. To actualise Korczak's vision our community must look, we must hear and we must act to ensure children and young people are treated with tenderness and respect.

Thank you for taking time to read this paper and your commitment to continuously improving safeguarding provision in the Jewish community.

Many thanks to the Reshet Board for their constant support and insightful guidance:

Martin Berliner	Maccabi GB
Kira Blumer	BBYO
David Collins	Tribe, United Synagogue
Rabbi Andrew Davis	Yavneh College
Dr Roy Graham	UJIA
Josh Martin	Reform Movement
Neil Martin OBE	JLGB
Simon Johnson	Jewish Leadership Council
Rachel Sklan	Noam Masorti Youth
Raina Sheaf	The Zone
Joe Woolf	ZYC representative

My personal thanks, as always, go to Elliott Goldstein, Reshet Chair, for his wisdom and leadership.



Shelley Marsh  
Executive Director, Reshet

February 2018



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Established and supported by

