

# Kesher 2025 - FAQs

## About FZY & Kesher

### What is FZY?

The Federation of Zionist Youth UK (FZY) is a Jewish Zionist Youth Movement, strengthening Jewish and Zionist identity whilst creating a strong and vibrant Jewish community for tomorrow. At FZY we strive to challenge, stimulate, educate and excite British Jewish youth through an array of programming. FZY works within a pluralist framework and therefore welcomes and respects members from different Jewish and political backgrounds, whilst providing a space to explore your own Jewish identity and that of others. Check out this [short video](#) and the [FZY website](#) to understand more about FZY's ideology and programmes.

### What is Kesher?

FZY is a lifechanging journey and this summer we are offering a 17-day/16-night summer camp experience in Hungary for young people finishing school years 9 and 10. Kesher will provide a soft landing into the UK's oldest and largest Zionist youth movement for those who have not experienced FZY before, but also a fun and exciting way for participants to spend part of their summer holiday. **As an educational and ideological youth movement, Kesher reflects this framework.** The central component of Kesher is being part of the FZY/UK delegation at the 12-day [Szarvas](#) international Jewish summer camp based in Hungary. Either side of the Szarvas camp, the Kesher participants will spend a Shabbat together in Budapest, Hungary where the group will bond, prepare for/review the Szarvas camp experience, and engage in FZY's core values. The programme will include educational aspects and recreational/social ones. Kesher methods may include and range from learning through artwork and personal stories, dance, educational activities in a classroom setting, city tours, sport and activities revolving around drama and music. The Szarvas component of Kesher brings together young Jewish people from across the world providing a safe space to meet new friends whilst spending quality time within their existing relationships. For further information, explore [FZY's summer camp section of its website](#) and for more information on the Jewish international camp element, you can check out the [Szarvas website](#).

### What is Szarvas?

Szarvas Camp is a 12-day international Jewish camp where campers from various countries come together to explore and celebrate their Jewish identity. Szarvas is a joint programme of [JDC](#) Hungary and the [Ronald S. Lauder Foundation](#). The camp offers a diverse range of programmes aimed at community building, learning, and fun. Lifelong friendships are formed at Szarvas as participants discover the Jewish culture and traditions. The camp offers numerous exciting and varied programmes, including crafts, sports, music and dance activities, as well as opportunities to learn more about Jewish values, culture and traditions. Additionally, community programmes, team-building games, discussions, group singing, and campfires are integral parts of camp life. Various projects, games, and competitions also add to the daily excitement. These programmes and many more opportunities to help the participants learn new skills, make new friends, and gain a deeper understanding of their Jewish identity. For further information, explore [FZY's summer camp section of its website](#) and for more information on the Jewish international camp element, you can check out the [Szarvas website](#).

### Which countries send representatives to the Szarvas camp?

Although this may change slightly from year to year as there are independent international participants who sign up to Szarvas, a normal year will see participants from over 25 countries

join Szarvas. Here is a list of countries that participants have come from in recent years (in alphabetical order): Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, Ukraine, and the USA.

### What are the dates of Keshet?

Keshet is from the 25<sup>th</sup> July – 10<sup>th</sup> August. The Szarvas camp falls into the middle of this time, running from 27<sup>th</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> August, with the FZY/UK delegation having their own programming on the first and last two days of Keshet. Although not expected, dates are subject to change.

### What age participants is Keshet for?

Keshet is for young people that are finishing school years 9 and 10 (S3 and S4 in Scotland) at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. FZY are running other summer programmes for participants who will be concluding school years 8, 9, 11 and 12 this summer, plus providing leadership opportunities for our members who are graduating from Year 13 or are currently in university. To find out more about FZY's other summer programmes, visit [FZY's website](#).

### What will the participants do on Keshet?

A detailed schedule will be sent to applicants and their families nearer the time of departure. There will be a mixture of educational, fun and team-building activities which will be safe, engaging and ideological. Most of the activities will take place on the large grounds of the Szarvas camp site, although the first and last weekends the group will be out and about around Budapest safety and security permitting. The itinerary will include educational aspects and recreational/social ones. Methods may include and range from learning through artwork and personal stories, dance, educational activities in a classroom setting, city tours, sport and activities revolving around drama and music. For anyone who is familiar with a traditional Zionist youth movement camp and are looking for this type of experience will find this on Keshet, just with a very international feel plus exploration of Budapest and being part of a UK delegation at an international camp in addition. More details can be found in [FZY's summer camp section of its website](#) and also on the [Szarvas website](#).

### Where will Keshet be based?

This summer, Keshet is based in Hungary. For security reasons, the exact locations will only be provided to families after they have registered and been accepted on the programme. The central site FZY will be using has been used by Szarvas for many years. Other groups and Jewish organisations have stayed in the other sites we will be using for the other components of Keshet.

### What type of site will Keshet be staying on?

During the Szarvas camp, the site is built for a summer camp, with activity spaces, a dining hall, bedrooms, sports facilities and much more on the site. There is a natural river and an outdoor swimming pool also on the campus on this site. A full overview of what the site has to offer can be found on the [site-focused page on the Szarvas website](#). On the opening and closing weekends, the group will be staying in basic hotel accommodation in Budapest, which has all the facilities you would expect of a hotel of this description.

### Will Keshet be taking place indoors or outside?

All the sites we are using are indoors and have all its sleeping spaces inside. The Szarvas camp site also has large outdoor fields and space to use.

### How many participants will sleep in a room?

Rooming at the Szarvas camp site ranges from four people in a room to larger dormitories with 12 beds. All participants will share a room with at least one other person from Keshet. At the hotels, the bedrooms will also be on a shared-basis.

### How many participants will there be on Keshet?

The Szarvas camp is likely to have over 1,500 participants over the entirety of this summer in four different sessions. In the session where Keshet has been placed, the camp are expecting approximately 400 young people with a FZY/UK delegation of around 20 participants, although the final size of the FZY/UK delegation will partially depend on how many people apply from both the UK and across the globe. There are, however, limited spots on Keshet. Although we are hopeful that we can accommodate everyone who wants to go, this may not be possible.

### Will Keshet mix with any of FZY's other summer programmes?

Keshet will not mix with any of FZY's other summer programmes, however they will be a part of a much larger international Jewish summer camp experience with participants from around the world.

### Will the participants be with their friends?

FZY's plan is to place participants with their friends whilst at the same time ensuring they get to spend time with new people. The FZY/UK delegation to the Szarvas camp will remain together for many of the activities across the camp experience and will be just as an FZY/UK delegation for the weekends at the start and end of Keshet. In addition, as part of the application process, you will be asked to highlight some people you would like to be roomed with. FZY and the Organisers will then attempt to split the rooming as best as we can based on friendship requests. Throughout Keshet, participants will have plenty of time they can spend with all participants even if they are not placed in the same rooms or groups as them.

### Can I join Keshet for a selection of days or a shorter time?

The basic answer to this question is no. However, if you have a personal situation that you believe may be 'exceptional' then please be in contact with the FZY Office who can determine whether there is anything that can be done about your specific case.

### Will transport be provided?

Yes. FZY will provide flights to and from London and Hungary. Depending on the size of the FZY group and where they live, transportation may also be provided to/from the London airport to the main centres.

### Who are your staff?

FZY as a youth movement is 115 years old. We have decades of experience running activities for young people and we do so in a professional manner. Most of our staff are graduates of one of FZY's leadership development training courses and many have previous experience of leading activities for young people. The majority of FZY's leaders will have been a participant on an FZY summer camp or another FZY activity over the last decade so will understand where the young people are coming from. FZY's leaders will be no younger than graduates of secondary school, almost all of them being at least 18 years of age. In addition to the leaders of Keshet who will accompany the group from the UK, the Szarvas camp have staff with many years of experience, including many [full-time permanent staff](#). Each delegation to Szarvas brings their own staff with them, all with many years of leadership training and experience. Professional staff based between FZY's London and Israel offices, plus in Hungary itself, between them have decades of experience building these types of programmes.

### What are FZY's staff to child ratios?

FZY's [Safeguarding & Child Protection](#) policy aims for there to be at least one leader to every eight young people. We are likely to see a greater number of staff to young people than this so we can best cater for everyone's needs whilst also overseeing the camp generally, dealing with the logistics, and managing the group leaders.

### What is the price of Keshet and what does this price include?

FZY has an early bird price in addition to our standard price. These are the prices:

- Keshet Early Bird Price – £2,399 (Before Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025)
- Keshet Regular Price – £2,599 (From Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025)

The price includes accommodation, three meals a day, return flights between London and Hungary, travel to and from the site from major centres, staffing, activities, health and travel insurance, and security. The price does not include spending money (i.e., for tuck shop and merchandise) and a refundable damage deposit.

### Will the participants need spending money?

There will be a kiosk open at various times throughout the Szarvas component of the Keshet camp. It will also be possible for participants to purchase FZY merchandise / clothing. There will be some limited time on the programme when the group will be out and about around Budapest and the surrounding areas, so it is possible participants may want to purchase snacks and/or memorabilia. We recommend participants bring with them a small amount of money to purchase these things if they want.

### What food will be provided?

FZY provides a fully kosher camp and will provide three substantial meals a day. After decades of running seminars and camps, FZY understand what our participants want to eat, and we provide a nutritious menu of healthy tasty food.

### Can FZY cater for special dietary requirements?

FZY will cater for all dietary and allergy requirements if we are made aware of these in advance.

### What does Shabbat look like in Keshet?

There will be three Shabbatot throughout Keshet. The first and last will be just as an FZY/UK group staying in a hotel in Budapest. The middle Shabbat will be with hundreds of other young people in the Szarvas camp site. Shabbat is often one of the best days on Keshet as we create a real '*Shabbatmosphere*' that encapsulates the whole site. FZY is a pluralist youth movement, whilst the Szarvas camp aims to be as inclusive as possible. As such, we do not dictate or educate how participants should / shouldn't observe Shabbat. Where possible, we will provide different services / options for participants to engage in on Friday night and Shabbat morning and we will try to allow the participants to explore the different cultures of Jews in Hungary and across the world. All the activities that we offer operate within the laws of Shabbat. In public places we ask that the participants do not break Shabbat, but in their rooms and private spaces they are able to as they wish.

### Can participants use their phones?

Mobile phones, tablets and other communication devices will be limited during their time at Keshet. We do this to create a positive and inclusive environment where participants can focus on programming and each other rather than be distracted by technology. It is expected that at various times throughout Keshet, and in designated areas, participants will have access to their

phones to make calls home should they wish. The frequency of access to phones will be shared with families closer to the time of Keshet starting.

### What is the procedure if a participant is unwell?

On the Szarvas camp, there will be a nurse available at all times. On the opening and closing weekends, there will be first aiders with the group. If a participant is feeling unwell or requires extra support, these staff will be available to assist alongside the group madrichim (leaders).

### What happens with medication during Keshet?

FZY will collect all medication at the start of Keshet to ensure this will not get lost or misused. The first aiders and/or other relevant staff will make this medication available to participants as and when required. For those participants that have a headache or something similar, the relevant staff will have medication to provide participants. Parents/Guardians will need to approve through the online application form that these medications can be administered if there is a need during Keshet.

## Application Process

### How do I sign up?

To sign up you need to complete a short online application form which can be found on [FZY's website](#). This must be accompanied with a deposit which is also be paid online via the application form. A more thorough application and medical form will be sent later in the process.

### How and when do I pay?

A deposit is required upon initial application and there is a section in the initial online application that can process payment of this. The full balance of the Programme is due and must be paid no later than 23:59 on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Payment using credit / debit card through FZY's online payment system is preferable, although other payment methods are accepted. Contact Eliana ([eliana@fzy.org.uk](mailto:eliana@fzy.org.uk)) at the FZY office to explore additional payment methods.

### What if I can't afford the full cost of the Keshet?

FZY is an inclusive youth movement and we understand, especially during the challenging financial times brought about by inflation and the Covid-19 pandemic, that not everyone can pay the full price for Keshet. Therefore, there is some financial assistance available for families that are unable to pay the full price of the programme from FZY and the [Friends of FZY](#). As part of the initial online application form there is an opportunity to request financial assistance. If you require further information and/or your circumstances have changed and you did not request financial assistance on the initial application form, please contact Claire ([claire@fzy.org.uk](mailto:claire@fzy.org.uk)) at the FZY office in confidence. She will be able to explain the financial assistance process further and answer any questions you may have.

### Are there limited spaces on Keshet?

Yes. The FZY/UK delegation has a limited number of spaces. FZY is hopeful we can cater Keshet for all those that want, and we have built Keshet with more than double the number of spaces we had participants on these year groups in the summer of 2024, but there may be limits as to the number of participants that we can cater for based on applications and other factors.

### Will my child have priority if they have been on an FZY programme this year or within the last 12 months?

Yes. Those participants that have been on an FZY programme this past year and/or were on another FZY camp in the last 12 months will receive priority if they apply before 23:59 on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025. After this deadline passes, FZY can no longer provide priority to anyone. Even within the time allocated for priority placement, FZY will still operate on a first-come first-serve basis and there may be other factors, i.e., ensuring a balanced camp with regards to gender, etc. or governmental regulations that may impact the acceptance process. We recommend applying quickly to maximise your chance of getting a place.

### Will there be an information evening?

Absolutely. FZY will be setting dates for an information evening closer to the time, approximately 4-6 weeks before the start of Keshet. We will share this date and other information about the meeting with parents/guardians in due course.

## Cancellation

### Will I get a refund if FZY cancels the programme before or during camp?

If it is not possible to operate Keshet for legal, safety or other reasons, FZY will be forced to cancel. FZY will use its best endeavours to safeguard money paid to it to be able to offer as close to a full refund as possible should the Programme have to be cancelled by FZY. Read FZY's [cancellation policy](#) for details on cancellation.

### Do I need to take out my own insurance?

FZY will provide a basic medical and travel insurance policy, some details of which can be found in the [Important Information Booklet](#). FZY suggests the participant understands what is and what is not covered by this policy to determine whether they want to take out additional cover for pre-existing conditions or anything else. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to take out any additional insurance policies and to check whether cancellations or curtailments for reasons relating to Covid-19, security cancellations, etc., will be covered.