

Senior Lawyer

Job description and person specification
May 2021



Senior Lawyer

We are looking for two dynamic lawyers who will use their knowledge, experience and passion within an influential international human rights organisation to bring change to the lives of LGBT people globally through strategic litigation and legislative reform.

You will be a talented and detail-oriented lawyer with substantial experience either as a litigator or in a legislative policy/drafting capacity in a common law system, and with education or experience in human rights, as well as a strategic thinker and a problem solver.

Job title: Senior Lawyer (two positions)

Type: Permanent full-time (part-time / job share considered)

Salary: In the region of £50,000 p/a (London) or commensurate market rate for candidates based elsewhere

Location: London, UK (remote working arrangements considered)

Reports to: Head of Legal

Application deadline: 5 June 2021

Interviews: Week beginning 14 June 2021

Ideal start date: As soon as possible

Organisation Overview

The Human Dignity Trust (the Trust) is a legal charity based in London, UK that supports local lawyers and human rights defenders to uphold human rights and constitutional law in countries where private, consensual same-sex sexual conduct is criminalised. At present, more than 70 jurisdictions worldwide maintain these criminal laws, a figure that is gradually decreasing due to a combination of litigation and legislative reform. Legal provisions that criminalise lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people put them beyond the protection of the law, fostering a climate of fear, stigma and violence. These provisions also violate constitutional and international human rights law, including a person's right to dignity, equality, non-discrimination and privacy.

The Trust provides pro bono technical legal assistance and advisory services at the request of, and in collaboration with, local human rights defenders, their lawyers and other partners who wish to use the courts to challenge the laws that discriminate against and persecute LGBT people. Since our inception in 2011, we have worked with local partners in 21 countries in all regions of the world. As a key component of our work, the Trust also works with local partners to provide specialist strategic media and communications technical assistance, in order to support them to build skills, confidence and capacity in managing local and international communications around any litigation they decide to pursue.

The Trust also supports the legislative reform of laws that criminalise, discriminate against or fail to protect LGBT people and other vulnerable groups. Laws criminalising LGBT people in the Commonwealth are often part of a wider set of sexual offence laws that discriminate against and do not adequately protect women, children, LGBT people and other vulnerable groups, such as laws relating to rape, sexual assault and ages of consent. Many of these are rooted in colonial-era laws that have long since been reformed in the UK. Building on pan-Commonwealth legal

analyses that the Trust has been spearheading since 2016, and on request from governments, the Trust provides technical assistance to governments seeking to deliver legislative reform.

The role

We are looking for two dynamic lawyers who will use their knowledge, experience and passion within an influential international human rights organisation to bring change to the lives of LGBT people globally through strategic litigation and legislative reform.

You will be a talented and detail-oriented lawyer with substantial experience either as a litigator or in a legislative policy/drafting capacity in a common law system, and with education or experience in human rights, as well as a strategic thinker and a problem solver. You will have the confidence, skills, tact and gravitas to be a persuasive and culturally sensitive advocate and an authoritative strategic advisor to a range of audiences on the substantive and procedural processes of litigation and legislative reform to eradicate discrimination in compliance with human rights standards.

You will be able to work in close collaboration with the HDT staff team and our world class pro bono legal teams, whilst maintaining a high degree of autonomy and professionalism in working directly with local lawyers, attorneys-general, government officials and local civil society partners around the world. COVID-permitting, you will be expected to travel several times per year to work with LGBT activists, lawyers, government representatives and other stakeholders around the world including to plan and deliver strategic litigation workshops and high-level legislative reform stakeholder engagements.

Regrettably, as a consequence of the nature of HDT's work, the Senior Lawyer(s) will be subjected to distressing critiques of LGBT people and the successful candidate will have to tolerate this with resilience, tact and professionalism.

Full details of the post can be found on the attached job description or on our website here: <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/who-we-are/jobs-internships>.

Job description

Under the direct supervision and guidance of the Head of Legal, the Senior Lawyer will carry out the following duties:

- Assisting in the development of compelling legal strategies to further HDT's aims including legislative reform and / or strategic litigation
- Guiding, overseeing and ensuring the technical integrity of legal and contextual research by consultants and pro bono lawyers
- Overseeing the development of strategic litigation and / or draft legislation, working with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society partners, plaintiffs, consultants, pro bono lawyers, local lawyers and government representatives

- Overseeing, reviewing and ensuring the technical integrity and persuasiveness of legal pleadings and submissions and / or draft legislation
- Developing and delivering compelling and technically sound content for strategic legal workshops for civil society and/or government partners
- Assisting other HDT leads (in particular the Head of Strategic Communications and the Senior Advocacy Advisor) to develop and deliver communications and advocacy strategies to support litigation and / or legislative reform work
- Leading on procurement, contracting and management of consultants, with the administrative support of other HDT staff
- Ensuring that programme deadlines are met and consistently excellent outputs are delivered, and contributing to and implementing any necessary programme course corrections
- Contributing to activity and financial reporting, internally and externally
- Representing HDT at meetings, conferences, workshops and other international events
- Any other tasks as reasonably required by the Head of Legal

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

- Minimum five years' experience working as a litigator or in a legislative policy/drafting capacity in a common law system
- Education or experience in the fields of human rights and/or public international law
- Very high attention to detail and ability to critically assess and edit legal documents and submissions
- Fluency in English with excellent writing, editorial, and oral advocacy skills
- Ability to communicate effectively, persuasively and sensitively with senior figures in politics and the legal professions
- Ability to communicate complex legal issues to a non-expert audience
- Ability to work well in a diverse multi-cultural environment and with sensitivity to local cultures and contexts
- Ability to manage effectively multiple workstreams in a fast-paced environment
- Pleasant, diplomatic manner and disposition in interacting with colleagues at all levels, a diverse range of local partners and the general public
- Integrity, professional discretion and ability to handle confidential matters
- Strong commitment to equality and human rights and to the mandate of HDT

Desirable skills and experience

- Experience in legislative reform and / or strategic human rights litigation
- Experience in managing multi-country legal and human rights programmes
- Experience working in any of the geographic regions in which HDT works
- Experience of working in different legal systems
- Knowledge and experience of the global LGBT human rights movement and developments
- Languages – especially French or Arabic would be an asset

Qualifications

- Law degree
- Advanced degree in human rights law or equivalent experience
- Admitted to legal practice (not necessarily in the United Kingdom)

Recruitment process

Closing date for applications: 5 June 2021

Interviews and tests to be held: week beginning 14 June 2021

To apply please send a CV of no more than three pages along with a covering letter of no more than two pages, using the person specification as a guide, explaining why you are an ideal candidate for this role to: administrator@humandignitytrust.org.

If you meet the essential criteria, have a disability and would prefer to apply in a different format or would like us to make reasonable adjustments to enable you to apply, attend any interview and complete any tests, please let us know.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive we are only able to contact those candidates who are shortlisted for an interview.

The Trust's head office is located in London, as is the legal team and the role in question; but we would consider any location, subject to local law compliance and operational viability.

The successful applicant will be asked to provide a basic DBS security check.

Equal Opportunities

The Human Dignity Trust is an equal opportunity employer and we are committed to diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons and are particularly seeking applications from LGBT people and People of Colour / BAME people. Our aim is to create a safe and secure working environment where a commitment to diversity, opportunity, quality and excellence is part of our guiding values.

Our employees and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability (including HIV status), gender identity and expression, intersex status, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We recognise that everyone is different and value the diversity of the people who work for us. We are committed to maintaining and building an inclusive culture in our workplace. To help us achieve this, we ask applicants to complete the attached, optional, diversity monitoring form. If you would prefer not to do so, then please select that option when filling in your form.