

# Head of Legal

Job Description and Person Specification  
March 2023



**Job title:** Head of Legal

**Type:** Full-time (or at least 80% FTE)

**Salary:** c. £75,000-80,000 per annum (or pro rata)

**Location:** London, UK (mix of office-based and remote working)

**Reports to:** Chief Executive

**Application deadline:** 7 April 2023

**Ideal start date:** mid-May 2023 or as soon as possible

**Benefits include:** 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays and Christmas office closure, 7% employer pension contribution, flexible hybrid working, generous parental leave.

## 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 sexual conduct between adults of the same sex is criminalised. At present, 67 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 violate constitutional and international human rights law, including a person's right to dignity, equality, non-discrimination and privacy.

HDT provides pro bono technical legal assistance 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 these discriminatory laws. We also provide technical legal assistance on request to governments seeking to proactively reform their sexual offence laws and to enact protective legislation, impacting not only LGBT people but also women, children and persons with disabilities. Since our inception in 2011, we have supported strategic litigation or law reform with local partners in over 25 countries in all regions of the world. The vast majority of our work is in common law jurisdictions, though we work globally including within other legal traditions. We have secured multiple court victories in domestic, regional and international courts and tribunals on issues ranging from decriminalisation to freedom of association, and have drafted human rights compliant Bills for several governments on sexual offences, hate crimes and equal opportunities. Our work has won prestigious awards and is highly respected globally.

This work is highly sensitive and is often conducted entirely in confidence and not made public, in order to protect the best interests of our local partners and the wider LGBT community in countries where

we work. We understand the sensitivities and complexities of litigation and legislative reform as a tool for change and work holistically across legal, media, communications and security strategies, with our local partners always in the driver's seat.

## Purpose of the post

Reporting to the Chief Executive and as a key member of the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Head of Legal will lead on the development of and oversee the implementation of the Trust's global legal strategy and will contribute to organisational strategy, fundraising and donor reporting. The Head of Legal will lead and manage a small team of highly experienced, in-house senior lawyers and grow the team particularly through the engagement of new team members within the regions in which we work, and will coordinate work and relationships with members of the Trust's pro bono Legal and Bar Panels, local lawyers, external consultants and civil society groups. Our work includes developing and facilitating constitutional litigation to challenge laws criminalising consensual same-sex sexual conduct – as well as other repressive governmental actions that are justified on the basis of the criminal law – as a violation of domestic and international human rights law. It also includes providing technical legal assistance to governments and civil society to reform sexual offence laws to make them human rights compliant and to introduce protective laws such as equal opportunities and hate crime laws.

The Head of Legal will work both in close collaboration with the Chief Executive and with a high degree of autonomy. The Head of Legal will support the Chief Executive in reporting to the Board and working with its relevant committees, and will represent the Trust externally, drawing on a deep understanding and knowledge of all the Trust's legal work.

This is a core, senior role with immense opportunity for an experienced human rights lawyer with excellent strategic vision and management skills to make a real impact globally. The Head of Legal will be highly motivated and excited by the opportunity to be a vital part of an established and expanding organisation, helping to help maintain and further its excellent reputation in the field. The Head of Legal will be able to work in a fast-paced environment in which they will be expected to foster, manage and deliver high-quality work at a consistent rate.

The Trust is in an exciting phase of growing our team in the regions in which we work. The Head of Legal will lead recruitment into the Legal Department, line-manage members of the department and devise new line-management structures as the team grows.

Regrettably, as a consequence of the nature of the work that HDT carries out, the Head of Legal will be subjected to distressing critiques of LGBT people and will have to tolerate this with tact and professionalism.

## Duties

The Head of Legal's main duties include the following:

### Legal Work

- Leading the development and implementation of a global litigation and legislative reform strategy agreed by the Chief Executive and the Trust's Board and Legal Committee
- Overseeing the management of the Trust's existing portfolio of filed and planned legal cases and legislative reform initiatives
- Developing strategies to identify and prioritise new cases for litigation and opportunities for legislative reform, including commissioning legal and contextual analyses from our Legal Panel and paid consultants, and identifying and developing relationships with local partners
- Editing legal briefs and other litigation materials as required
- Commissioning and overseeing the Trust's thematic legal research
- Ensuring legal accuracy and excellence in all the Trust's legal documents, research and publications
- Assisting in the coordination of the Trust's complementary work on local media and communications strategies and local security assessments and planning, in connection with any of our legal work, in close collaboration with the Head of Strategic Communications

### Management

- Line-managing staff and recruiting into the Legal Department
- Variously leading on and contributing to the management of project-funded work, with responsibilities for oversight of spending and budgetary reporting and management
- Working closely with the SMT and the Trust's Development Manager on the production of reports on the performance of grants, particularly by providing updates on legal work
- Working with the Trust's pro bono Legal Panel to ensure appropriate legal documentation for all the Trust's contracts, memoranda of understanding and other corporate, commercial and governance documents

### Other

- Representing the Trust at meetings, conferences and workshops
- Providing material for the Trust's website
- Reporting to the Chief Executive, the Board of Trustees and any committees of the Board from time to time as may be required, including convening periodic meetings of the Board's Legal Committee
- Any other tasks/duties as reasonably required by the Chief Executive

## Skills, Experience and Qualifications

### Essential skills and experience

- Demonstrated experience working as a litigation lawyer in a common law jurisdiction
- Demonstrated and substantial experience with successfully managing complex strategic human rights cases
- A proven understanding of international human rights law and its mechanisms and application
- Extensive constitutional, human rights and / or public international law experience
- Litigation experience using domestic, regional and international human rights instruments
- An understanding of legislative reform processes and ideally experience advising on technical aspects of draft legislation
- Very high attention to detail and ability to critically assess and edit legal submissions, draft legislation and other legal documents
- Fluency in English with excellent writing, editorial and oral advocacy skills
- Demonstrated ability to work well in a diverse, multi-cultural environment and with sensitivity to diverse local cultures and contexts
- Ability to manage effectively multiple cases and legal projects in a fast-paced environment
- Proven ability to manage and work well in a small team
- Pleasant, diplomatic manner and disposition in interacting with senior management and colleagues at all levels, a diverse range of local partners, and the general public
- Ability to work well both independently and with others
- Integrity, professional discretion and ability to handle confidential matters
- Strong commitment to equality and human rights

### Desired skills and experience

- Demonstrated experience in managing multi-country legal and human rights programmes
- Familiarity with 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

### Qualifications

- Qualified lawyer in a common law jurisdiction
- Advanced degree in human rights law or equivalent experience
- Admitted to legal practice (not necessarily in the United Kingdom)

## To apply

To apply please send a CV of no more than four pages along with a covering letter of no more than two pages explaining how you meet the Skills, Experience and Qualifications for this position to: Christopher Price at [administrator@humandignitytrust.org](mailto: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 and attend any interview, please let us know.

All offers of employment will be conditional on the candidate having/securing the right to work in the UK prior to their employment commencing.

Please do not submit an application if you do not meet the Essential Skills and Experience and the Qualifications. Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we are only able to respond to those candidates who are shortlisted for an interview.

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. 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](#).