

Regional Legal Advisor

Job description and person specification
April 2026



Job title: Regional Legal Advisor

Region: Southern Africa (with potential work outside the region)

Type: 12-month Fixed Term Part-time (0.8) with potential for extension (subject to funding)

Salary: Competitive

Benefits: Competitive

Reports to: Deputy Head of Legal

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 people of the same sex is criminalised. At present, 65 jurisdictions worldwide maintain these criminal laws.

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.

We provide expert legal technical assistance, complemented where appropriate by media, communications and advocacy assistance. We work with LGBT+ activists and local lawyers around the globe to challenge discriminatory criminal laws in constitutional courts and in supra-national courts and treaty bodies. We assist civil society organisations and governments who want to remove discriminatory criminal laws and to develop new protective legislation, primarily to protect against hate crime.

The role

Reporting to the Deputy Head of Legal, the role will be based in Southern Africa and focus on legal opportunity scoping, building country – and region – specific networks and partner relationships, and contributing to legal strategies and the delivery of technical legal assistance.

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

You will be able to work in collaboration with the Trust's staff teams and our world class pro bono legal teams. You will be able to maintain a high degree of autonomy and professionalism where required in working directly with LGBT+ litigants, local lawyers, attorneys-general, government

officials and civil society partners, with whom you will be able to work sensitively and persuasively. Our work is guided at all times by the interests of LGBT+ communities in-country with whom we work.

You will be expected to travel frequently (approximately six to eight times per year) to work with LGBT+ activists, lawyers, litigants, government representatives and other stakeholders in your region, including to help plan and deliver legal workshops and high-level legislative reform stakeholder engagements. There could also be occasional further travel beyond your region, including for London-based events. You may, as needed, manage consultants based in the main region of focus for your work.

Regrettably, as a consequence of the nature of the Trust's work, this position will be subjected to distressing critiques of LGBT+ people and the successful candidates will have to tolerate this with resilience, tact and professionalism.

Job description

Under the direct supervision and guidance of the Deputy Head of Legal, and with further oversight from the Head of Legal, you will carry out the following duties, working closely and collaboratively with other members of the Trust's legal team:

- Build and strengthen the Trust's relationships with existing and potential stakeholders in civil society, government, international agencies, the legal profession and academia within the region
- Monitor the regional and local legal, political and civil society environment and context for opportunities to strengthen and expand the Trust's work in the region
- Represent the Trust at key regional and international conferences and events to network with stakeholders and to monitor and advise the Trust on relevant developments
- Contribute to the development of strategic litigation and / or legislative reform, including by coordinating with relevant stakeholders, such as civil society partners, litigants, consultants, pro bono lawyers, in-country lawyers and government representatives
- Contribute to the development of compelling, context-specific legal strategies, including by carrying out legal and situational research
- Build strong professional relationships with LGBT+ communities and civil society partners across the region
- Alongside colleagues and external lawyers, help to oversee, review and ensure the technical integrity and persuasiveness of legal pleadings and submissions and / or draft legislation
- Develop and deliver compelling and technically sound strategic legal workshops for civil society and/or government partners, both online and in-country
- Collaborate with the Trust's strategic communications team to develop compelling communications strategies to support litigation and / or legislative reform work
- Contribute to activity and financial reporting, internally and externally
- Deliver any other tasks as reasonably required by the Trust

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

- Demonstrated experience delivering legal or human rights policy work, whether as a litigator, legislative drafter or policy advisor, in one or more common law jurisdictions in the region
- Experience working in or on several jurisdictions within the region, though not necessarily in a litigation or legislative drafting capacity
- Experience in holding partner relationships with marginalised and vulnerable persons
- 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
- Experience and confidence in public speaking
- Ability to communicate effectively, persuasively and sensitively with senior figures in politics and the legal profession
- Ability to communicate complex legal issues to a wide range of stakeholders
- Ability to understand and adapt to differing and often sensitive social and cultural contexts, whilst employing compassion, tact and discretion
- Ability to manage effectively multiple workstreams in a fast-paced environment
- Integrity, professional discretion and ability to handle confidential matters
- Ability and willingness to undertake regional and international travel, sometimes at short notice

Desirable skills and experience

- Additional relevant languages, in particular Bantu languages, Portuguese, and/or French
- Experience in African jurisdictions outside the Southern Africa region
- Knowledge and experience of the local/regional/global LGBT+ human rights movement and developments
- Experience in combining legal work with strategic communications and advocacy strategies

Qualifications

- Law degree
- Qualifications or substantial experience in the field of human rights

Recruitment process

Closing date for applications: 9am BST, 10 June 2026

Ideal start date: 17 August 2026

To apply, please send a CV of no more than three pages, along with a covering letter of no more than two pages, outlining how you meet the job description. Applications should be emailed 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 by email to administrator@humandignitytrust.org.

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 successful applicant will be asked to provide a basic criminal record 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.