PRESCRIPTION PRICING AUTHORITY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The PPA is committed to equality of opportunity for all employees and is committed to employment practices, policies and procedures which ensure that no employee, or potential employee, receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, religion, political affiliation, trade union membership or criminal record.

1.2 The promotion of equal opportunities will be actively pursued through policies which value diversity and ensure that employees receive fair, equitable and consistent treatment and ensure that employees, and potential employees, are not subject to direct or indirect discrimination.

1.3 This policy is complimentary to the General Whitley Council Equal Opportunities Agreement.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, religion, political affiliation, trade union membership or criminal record etc. An example of direct discrimination would be dismissing a female employee because she is pregnant.

2.2 Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable condition or requirement is applied which has a discriminatory effect, as the number of people who can comply with the condition or requirement is smaller among a particular group. An example of indirect discrimination would be only sending full time employees on training courses (as more female employees than male are likely to be part time).

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 It is a condition of employment that all employees respect and act in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy. Failure to do so will result in the disciplinary procedure being instigated, which could result in dismissal.

3.2 The Director of Human Resources has ultimate responsibility for monitoring the operation and implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring that monitoring records are maintained.

Responsibilities Of Authority Members And Directors

3.3 Authority Members and Directors will adopt appropriate strategies to support equal opportunities.

Responsibilities Of Managers

3.4 Managers are required to exercise leadership in this field by discouraging prejudice and by modelling appropriate behaviour. They must ensure that the policy is clearly communicated to their employees and take speedy and appropriate action to deal with any breaches of the policy, or behaviour that could lead to a breach of the policy.

3.5 Any identified breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy should be dealt with using the Disciplinary, Grievance or Harassment polices.

3.6 Managers are responsible for applying employment practices, policies and procedures fairly and consistently, and for highlighting and addressing any practices which could lead to discrimination.

Responsibility Of Employees

3.7 All employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Equal Opportunities Policy and for complying with it. Employees should inform their manager if they know or suspect that discrimination is occurring.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The PPA will promote, through the provision of training and guidance, the impartial application of all employment policies and procedures, and will take action to deal with all inappropriate behaviour. Courses will be developed to meet specific training needs in relation to equal opportunities and appropriate training events will be provided for all employees involved in selection for recruitment or training. The responsibilities of the employer and employee for equal opportunities will be positively incorporated into employee training at all levels from induction courses to Senior Management workshops.

5. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION

5.1 Any employee who feels that they have been discriminated against on any the grounds set out in this policy should initially raise their concerns with their line manager. Where an employees concerns relate to their line manager, the employee should raise their concern with the next more senior officer. Alternatively, employees may wish to discuss their concern with a member of the Human Resources Department. Where resolution cannot be achieved through

informal discussion, an employee may put forward a grievance in line with the guidelines set down in the Authority's Grievance Procedure. At all stages of the procedure, employees can be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

6. MONITORING

6.1 The Human Resources Department will maintain records of gender, ethnic origin, age and disability for all employees and for internal and external job applicants. This information will be collected and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only be used to monitor compliance to the Equal Opportunities Policy. The information will be analysed regularly.

7. REVIEW

7.1 The policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically by the Human Resources Department and UNISON giving due consideration to legislative changes.