Principles to Promote Meaningful Engagement:
A response to Health Education England (HEE) authorisation framework for local education and training boards (LETBs)

The ATDG welcome the release of the an authorisation framework for LETBs[1] as although reform in funding for postgraduate medical education is welcome there are considerable risks in implementing new structures during periods of widespread transition. Ensuring high quality governance structures at the outset will aid LETBs to deliver effective and structured education and training to health care professionals to the standards set by HEE. In order for this to occur it is vital health care professionals (HCPs) in whatever stage of training have the ability to engage with LETBs strategies. In "Principles to guide postgraduate medical education" the ATDG note:

"...*Processes to enable trainees to raise concerns regarding the quality of their training in a confidential manner, and receive feedback on action taken, should be in place at both a local and national level..*"

Although most concerns, and resulting feedback, occur best at a local level with national oversight (via the Royal Colleges and the GMC national survey) it will be equally important to ensure providers are meeting all the standards set by LETBs. The ATDG is therefore very pleased to see engagement with a broad variety of stakeholders being including in the six domains that make up the authorisation criteria. We note however 'meaningful' is not clearly defined and wish to ensure that this domain is as relevant and credible as the others. We believe the following principles could apply to any HCP in training and note this group were missing from the list of key stakeholders listed in appendix C.

1. "*The Board must demonstrate evidence to reflect stakeholder input into the delivery of opportunities and their review of performance*." [item 6.2.3 p55] This evidence is best demonstrated by the formation of specific representative groups who are given administrative support and appropriate time-release to function. Those on these groups must respect the professional responsibility that being part of such an organisation brings and be prepared to contribute on a proactive and reactive basis.

2. "*The Board can demonstrate that it has used feedback transparently and can demonstrate how stakeholder engagement has contributed to decisions made and actions taken*. " [item 2.1.4 p27] For this to occur there must be the opportunity for representation at board meetings in person by relevant groups or individuals. Obviously this must be within the governance structure of the board and is best ensured by drafting standing items or terms of reference at the outset. LETBs should be transparent and report to all trainees on the aggregate of their engagement activities to demonstrate how they contribute value to its strategy and operations.

3. "*Evidence of stakeholder engagement could include letters of support as well as communications audits, metrics on stakeholder events, nomination and election processes, etc.*" (p.25). Hosting stakeholder events and forming committees evidences a process not an outcome. Meaningful engagement, which involves an interactive dialogue rather than just listening, may be evidenced by board level documentation of change as a result of stakeholder input.

1. LETB Authorisation Framework: Health Education England. http://bit.ly/OcDz26