

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Legal and policy context

This document is issued under Section 27(1) (a) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (the 2012 Act)<sup>2</sup>.

These statutory topic-specific guidelines need to be read in conjunction with the Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. These guidelines add to the core QA by addressing specific responsibilities for the quality assurance of apprenticeship programmes.

## 1.2 Purpose

This document offers specialised guidance to providers of apprenticeship programmes on good practice in the quality assurance of programmes for apprenticeship education and training and related services.

Providers are expected to have regard to these guidelines to inform the establishment or renewal of their quality assurance procedures for apprenticeship programmes and related services.

This document will also be of interest to the wider group of apprenticeship stakeholders, including all those directly involved in the education or training of apprentices; employers of apprentices; employers' associations; occupational bodies; regulatory bodies; trade unions; communities of practice; apprentices; teachers and other interested parties.

The focus of these guidelines on **providers** does not imply that providers necessarily initiate or lead the establishment of apprenticeship programmes. The decision to establish an apprenticeship programme is expected to be shaped by employers and the intended learning outcomes of such a programme are expected to be led by the requirements of the occupation concerned. Nevertheless, it is important to note that QQI's role here is to establish guidelines for providers (of education and training programmes). It should also be noted that the relationship between the Coordinating Provider, employers of apprentices that are not part of consortia, and the statutory regulator, will be clarified in the context of specific apprenticeship programmes.