**EMBRACE FOSTERING**

**1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**OFSTED REGISTRATION NUMBER:**  2661954

**Document reviewed and updated: 22/08/2023.**

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**Introduction**

This statement of purpose has been compiled in line with relevant legislation and guidance which includes the Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 and relevant amendments, Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011, The Children Act: Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: fostering services 2011 and 2013 amendments.

The statement of purpose is in line with the Fostering Regulation 3, and this covers the aims and objectives of Embrace fostering and the services that can holistically be provided to foster carers and their families and young people and children that are fostered within Embrace. The statement of purpose explains how Embrace fostering is managed and staff composition, it will explain how foster carers are recruited assessed, trained, and supervised from source to present day, any useful contact details for foster carers, it also evidences how positive outcomes for children and young people will be accomplished.

The information within the statement of purpose is accessible and available to all parties that are involved with Embrace fostering, for example-

* the chief inspector
* local authorities looking to place children.
* foster carers either approved or within the assessment process,
* any child or young person who is in foster care, information found within the children’s guide which is given at the start of their placement,
* parents, guardians, or persons with PR of any children young people placed within the agency.
* Any member of staff working for Embrace fostering Services.
* Any Members of the public

The Statement of purpose will be kept under review and, where appropriate, revised by the registered manager, responsible individual and will be approved by Embrace fostering Board of Directors.

**Status and constitution**

Embrace fostering services was established and registered with Ofsted in January 2022 by section 4(4)(a) of The Care Standards Act 2000 - an independent fostering agency. An undertaking which discharges the functions of local authorities in connection with placing children with foster carers.

Here at Embrace fostering, the aim is to provide both a high standard of care in a needs-led fashion to any child or young person and ensure that foster carers receive the recognition, appropriate therapeutic support, training, and supervision by the Embrace team. Embrace fostering will offer a diverse range of needs-led placements that will meet the external referrals trends/needs.

Embrace therapeutic fostering services Ltd has been registered at companies’ house on the 28/04/2021 company registration number is 13362525. This is in accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and 1989. Embrace therapeutic fostering services Ltd has a memorandum of Association and Articles of Association (copies which are available to the government commissions which regulate independent fostering agencies in England).

Embrace fostering works in partnership with Absolute Children's Services which is a residential childcare resource.

Embrace fostering is a member of Foster Talk, NWG network and National Youth agency, National Association of Therapeutic Parents and a “Positive about Disabled People” symbol holder.

Our management team have a driving ambition and development strategy to develop a fostering service that under pins a therapeutic approach, in line with National requirements and affording all the best possible practice. We will keep a child-focused annual business development plan, ensuring any new guidance and research occurs in practice. Embrace Fostering focuses on strong principles and values of outstanding care and support, showing legal compliance, responsibility in financial and environmental matters and incorporating quality assurance. We will constantly monitor all outcomes for children and foster carers, along with local authority satisfaction to meet holistic targets and maintain positive outcomes.

**Aims, objectives and principles of care.**

Embrace fostering will always prioritise the needs of any child in foster care. The fundamental principle is that all children have a right to positive, nurturing, and safe family life, when they are not able to live with their own birth family members. Foster carers will be recruited based on skill or supported to learn skills to ensure that they can offer understanding, empathetic, therapeutic ethos parenting within the placement and are supported to develop a resilient and empathetic approach. Embrace fostering’s objective will be to exceed the requirements of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and Regulations 2011, to provide children with the outstanding experience of being looked after in needs-led holistic diverse, therapeutic ethos fostering settings, where they will have the opportunity to grow and develop in an enriched family setting.

Foster children will be supported to achieve holistic positive outcomes, develop confidence, safety in all key areas of their life and wellbeing. Embrace fostering underpins a strong emphasis on individualised skills and strengths-based matching, bespoke quality support and supervision, an ethos of therapeutic parenting over seen by therapist and proactive safeguarding to all parties.

**Key principles for practice**

Embrace fostering aims to supply a diverse range of placements to meet physical, cultural, and emotional needs of each unique child.

Every child and foster carer will be seen as an individual and the placement match meets the need, and any shortfalls will identified/actioned/recorded for growth and betterment of each party.

The ethnic origins, cultural, religious backgrounds, language, gender, sexuality and disability of foster carers, their family and foster Children and Young Persons will be respected, valued, and recognised.

Embrace fostering will work in partnership with birth families and local authorities, to implement positive outcomes in relation to children's care plans.

Embrace fostering will support the local authority in their corporate parenting role, rehabilitation back to birth family if appropriate, or provide long-term placements, whatever this may be deemed to meet the child’s needs.

All person's will be supported and encouraged to have respect and mutual respect for others.

All children will feel a part of their foster family and should experience childhood as any other child would.

Foster children will have the opportunity to participate in day-to-day life, with their views acknowledged and involvement in their own care planning.

Foster carers will be supported and encouraged to promote best outcomes in terms of health, social, education and leisure needs, the welfare of the child will always be paramount in care planning.

Embrace fostering and foster carers will monitor all progress young children make, support child focused care planning, and decision making at every step along their journey.

The safeguarding of children will be of paramount importance and support to foster carers, to implement effective and needs led strategies to ensure best practice safeguarding is afforded.

Foster carers will be supported to develop into skills valued professional carers encompassing a therapeutic ethos and be recognised for this.

Quality of care and recognition is awarded to both staff and foster carers.

Retention will be a key focus with staff and foster carers acknowledged and supported, in terms of Personal developments. Training will be needs led and ongoing using a range of different mediums to meet individual learning needs. A strong focus will be on training of therapeutic models.

Short Break resource will be developed and on offer to foster carers, whereby they can have access to a Mockingbird/ buddy carer, or use their own support network to ensure consistency, and avoid disruption for a foster child.

Foster carers will be supported to meet the requirements of the foster carers charter.

All achievements and Improvements will be judged positively and acknowledged for staff, foster carers, and foster children.

Embrace Fostering will offer a high quality, cost-effective service.

The Embrace ethos is to have an integrated open culture for communication and a working environment for staff and foster carers.

All practice for any party will be continuously reviewed, embracing reflective practice, and improving skills and knowledge bases.

**Quality standards**

**Monitoring**

The quality standard of Embrace fostering will be monitored using various mediums, for example, inspection by Ofsted, internal audits, or external quality visits. The registered manager and any other managers will continue to monitor performance of all Embrace staff, and the outcomes that are being achieved for children and young people. The effectiveness of placement plans matching to ensure that any appropriate action is Taken, and feedback provided to regular meetings (NMS 25.7).

Embrace fostering conduct regular consultations with Embrace staff, placing social workers, foster carers, foster children, and birth children. Written reports are made to the registered person under Schedule 6 of the fostering services regulations. Reports under regulation 35 are also produced as appropriate.

Foster carers are supported and required to produce written recordings, for children and young people and their care, using the Charms system.

School attendance/nonattendance, attainment and achievement for foster children is monitored regularly by the Registered person.

Local authority monitoring requirements will be fully supported and complied with.

**Child protection**

The paramount aim of Embrace Fostering is to ensure child protection policies and procedures are to keep children safe and always protected in every situation. Embrace fostering staff will be made aware of the procedure and will know how to act upon it. The Registered Person is available to ensure that responsibilities are maintained. Any child protection issues will be dealt with promptly and in accordance with any local authority procedures. Child protection procedures will be sent to local authorities in which Embrace fostering operates. This will ensure compatibility, compliance, and support a multi-agency, working together approach, to protect all children, foster carers, and Embrace staff. All staff will receive a rigorous recruitment and vetting process, above and beyond the requirements of guidance and legislation, to ensure suitability to work with vulnerable children. Both prospective and Embrace foster carers will complete child protection training prior to becoming approved. They will receive regular annual updates on this training topic, on top of this being on the supervision agenda.

**Legal compliance**

Embrace fostering will meet all the requirements of The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards. Embrace fostering continual compliance with the above legislation and guidance is monitored by Ofsted, who usually inspect the service once in every 3 years.

**Support and supervision**

Embrace Foster carers will receive regular supervision and support on a needs-led basis. There will be a 24-hour support helpline, and an annual review. Foster carers will access regular training and be given opportunities for their own personal development, using a range of different training, and learning mediums. Additional needs led support will be provided to foster families through support groups/ therapeutic support groups led by a therapist, direct work with support workers and through the integrated fostering residential step-down centres within Absolute children's services.

**Confidentiality and information requests**

Prior to a placement being offered/agreed/made, foster carers will be provided with full information about the child and young person due to be placed with them. Matching will be ongoing during the placement, and foster carers can access training, in matters of confidentiality and information sharing requirements and expectations. Foster carers along with Embrace staff, will be expected to have a full understanding and work in accordance with data protection and confidentiality records pertaining to staff, foster carers and foster children. Records will be kept in accordance with legislative requirements. All requests for information will be considered by Embrace fostering in accordance with GDPR.

**Policies and procedures**

Embrace fostering has a comprehensive policies and procedures manual, and foster carers handbook via Trix online procedures. Access will be given to all approved foster carers after approval is recommended at panel. The handbook will supply all necessary information on health and safety, education, health, and record keeping. This will receive annual review and updated when necessary and can be covered in foster carers supervision. This can be accessed in differing formats on request.

**Information for children and young people**

There are a range of children's guides that are available prior or at the time of placement. The children’s guides can be geared for different ages or needs of children, for example, could be produced in other languages or auditory formats. This is in accordance with The Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards. Foster carers and/or supervising social workers, will be supported/enabled to explain the children's guide to any foster children, which include information and how a child make’s a complaint or has access to important phone numbers.

**Development of staff and manager's**

Embrace fostering will ensure that regular training is provided to Embrace staff, managers, and panel members. This will be achieved using a range of different mediums, this is to ensure that all parties are up to date with research, changes and best practice about guidance and regulations.

**Research and practice**

Embrace fostering is a member of organisations such as Foster Talk, NWG network, CSE prevention service, NATP and the National Youth agency. Working with these organisations, supports Embrace fostering staff to keep ahead of new research, developments, and best practice about fostering/childcare etc.

Embrace fostering also aims to use research using various sources to improve practice e.g., attending National and Regional independent forums, Department of Education and Ofsted, Rees Centre, University of Oxford, NSPCC, research in practice, social care Institute for excellence, a range of children's charities and organisations for example Barnardo's, The Who Cares trust, NLCAS and NYAS and Community Care.

**Equal opportunities**

Embrace fostering totally supports the principle of equal opportunities in practice and in employment. Embrace fostering would oppose all types of unlawful and unfair discrimination, either indirect or Direct about gender, gender reassignment, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, marital or civil partnership, sexual orientation, disability, religious or non-beliefs, pregnancy maternity or paternity.

Discriminatory behaviour of any type will be challenged and dealt with appropriately. We believe here at Embrace fostering, in the best interests of every person and Child, whether you work or Foster or are fostered within Embrace. A demographic of society will be considered for employment and for foster care opportunities, recognising their individual and unique Talents, skills, and strengths. At Embrace fostering we value diversity. During our recruitment process we fully acknowledge, that the children and young people that need foster placements, also come from a diverse range of backgrounds. All foster children have their own unique and individual needs. Embrace fostering will strive to take every step to ensure that every person/individual, are treated equally and fairly, and that decisions on Recruitment, training, promotion, and Career Development are taken on objectives or employment/task-related criteria.

Embrace fostering policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed so the policy statement operates effectively and transparently in practice. That all employees and foster carers are given equal opportunities where appropriate. Embrace fostering will strive to provide bespoke and practical specialist training, to enable persons to progress, develop, improve skills and knowledge base.

Foster carers will be provided with training necessary to ensure they are able to provide the best possible care, to achieve outcomes and promote all heritage, cultural, holistic, individual needs of the children that they Foster.

There is a more detailed equal opportunities policy held within the main policies and procedures, which is regularly updated by TriX and overseen by RI and RM. This fundamental ethos is embedded into daily working practice with children, employees, other professionals, and foster carers.

Embrace fostering intend to hold support groups for foster carers caring for young people with disabilities.

**Management Structure**

Embrace fostering has a registered office. Conference suites are used for panel to convene or virtual forums. During the pandemic, the panel will be held virtually, and administrative staff are able to work from home, with a high level of communication and supervision. There is frequent communication between all levels of the organisational structure, in particular the Directors, the Responsible Individual, Registered Manager, and Panel Chairperson.

Regular meetings occur in the following formats:

* quality development,
* business strategy meetings senior managers to meet the requirements of NMS 25.7,
* area supervision meetings with the directors and registered managers,
* staff training,
* Therapeutic group supervision lead by the Therapist,
* Recruitment and assessment meetings,
* staff supervision and appraisal,
* foster carer and children's groups with the registered manager,
* support groups,
* training with social work staff and support workers,
* foster carers consultation and activity days for children and young people,
* panel meetings,
* annual general meeting.

Responsible Individual

Director

Agency Decision Maker

Panel Chair

Registered Manager

Therapist

Medical Advisor

Panel Members

Supervising Social Worker

Support Worker

Fostering Households

**Fostering Panel**

The central list will be completed and include people with experience from a variety of backgrounds including social workers, health, Education, foster carer, care leaver. Panel composition also ensures that there is a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with a balance of all genders.

Panel will meet the requirements of NMS 14 Regulations 23,24,25,26,27 and 28.

Panel will strive to develop a reputation for independence, and the aim is to develop its role in quality assurance in relation to assessments and foster carers reviews. All panel members will be fully checked and trained, and Panel meetings are subject to written procedures over decision-making. Panel has access to medical advice as appropriate, however the panel chair, ADM, Panel advisor and health panel member will only see a foster carer full medical and feedback on a needs-led basis.

Although the Regulations require only the first-year annual review of a carer to go to panel, as part of Embrace fostering commitment to ongoing quality and independent oversight, promoting safeguarding and positive outcomes, each review will normally go to panel.

The independent chairperson qualifications and experience will meet Foster **Regulations** 2011, the Children Act 1989 and the **Care** Standards Act 2000.

**Staff**

All Embrace fostering staff are appropriately checked and vetted following The Fostering Regulations 2011. They have the relevant and recognised qualifications and experience to complete their role satisfactorily.

This may include the following:

* Diploma in social worker, BA, MA, BSC /MSc, PhD,
* A1 assessor award,
* NVQ /Diploma level 4/5 in leadership and management,
* Experience of residential and EBDS childcare and management is desirable.

In addition, staff may have specialist qualifications and experience. This may include counselling, psychotherapy, postgraduate diploma, practice educators etc. All social work staff are registered with Social Work England. Embrace fostering employs a variety of individuals having a diverse range of experience, in the care sector, management, or administration. This is to ensure a high standard of quality skill and knowledge in service delivery. All Embrace fostering staff receive the right levels of support, training, supervision, and are consulted with and have an annual appraisal.

**Responsible individual:** Derrell Crump

**Responsible Individual qualifications**

Diploma level 5 awards in Leadership and Management of care settings.

NVQ4 in Leadership and Management of care settings.

Enhanced DBS with Ofsted and CQC.

NVQ assessor (A1) award.

Hold first aid and basic food hygiene certificates.

Qualified trainer in various subjects and specialise in ‘Positive Behaviour Support and safeguarding training.

IOSH certificate.

Restorative foundation practitioner.

Community of community peer reviewer.

**Experience**

I started my career in care in 2003. I have experienced supporting in a secondary School on a voluntary basis. I have also tutored on several occasions about breaking down barriers to communication, using critical thinking skills, awareness, and sign language.

During my first steps into care management, I was a Team Manager with a large service provider. I went on to expand my career knowledge and experience by taking on the role of a Deputy Care manager for a Domiciliary care provider, followed by Registered Manager position with the Options Group. After a successful 9 months there I was approached by the directors and asked to take up a secondment management role at the New Options Barton School. This was a 26 bed residential children’s home and education facility that supports children with Autism, severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviours. I was asked to remain at Barton School as the residential Registered Manager. I improved the residential Ofsted rating to GOOD within 6 months and kept a GOOD under a new set of descriptors the following year. I have further extended my training, knowledge and skills in human resource procedures and have an excellent track record in investigation and disciplinary matters. In June 2016 I move back into child services with ACS as the Registered manager of The Old Barn achieving outstanding. Further career development came when I took up a position with Autism Plus as Head of Services for adult residential, supported living and education services. This role included the oversight of a large residential services, 10 supported living homes and 3-day service provision throughout South Yorkshire. In December 2019 I was happy to be offered the opportunity to return to Absolute Children’s Services as their area manager and Responsible Individual which I continue to enjoy.

**Registered Person:** Jeanette Robertson

**Registered Persons Qualifications**

Dip SW

Registered on level 5 BTEC Leadership and Management

Welfare Officers certificate

NNebs intro to management

A1 assessor

Practice teacher award

Residential childcare – 6 years

Fostering senior area manager- 18 years

Supervising social worker – 18 years

Regional team Leader – 16 years

I commenced my career in 1994 when I started to do voluntary work at a residential school for children with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. This occurred after the school day, I helped with homework, teatime, evening activities and the bedtime routine. I also spent some days supporting children within the classroom environment. This was the experience that encouraged me to seek full time employment working with children. I then secured a fulltime position working with children with autism at a residential school. This too involved supporting children in a classroom setting and supporting children before and after school. This role involved supporting children with autism to gain autonomy and independence in achieving outcomes. This could be from supporting them to meet basic selfcare skills to supporting them on activity in the community /residential setting. This role involved in house training in topics e.g., autism, behaviour management, epilepsy. I then secured a position at a private ran Children’s residential settling. Here I worked up to the operational manager within 2 years. I was responsible for ensuring compliance for inspections, besides ensuring children’s holistic needs were met. I lead and mentor a staff team. After 3 years in post, I was seconded to complete the social work training. Once I had successfully completed this, I felt driven for a new challenge and was offered the prospect to work in the sister company. This was a private ran fostering agency. I worked has a supervising social worker for 2 years before I became the team leader. I later progressed to the post of the regional team leader covering East Midlands, west Midlands, Staffordshire, and Cheshire East. I was responsible for overseeing compliance, ensuring care plans were met, assessment and review of foster carers, supervision and training of foster carers, case auditing, panel member. I lead and supervise a large team of social workers. I ensured safeguarding and positive outcomes were achieved for all children. Alongside this I ensured foster carers received the highest level of support/needs led support and recognition for the amazing role/task that they fulfil.

**Services Offered:**

At Embrace fostering, we offer a range of carers to meet the needs of each unique and individual child. There is a skills strengths-based career structure that foster carers can access with career progression included in this. Embrace fostering can offer placements with carers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Embrace fostering intends to offer foster placements across Staffordshire, Manchester, the West Midlands, East Midlands, and Yorkshire.

The foster placements supplied can be emergency or planned, short, medium, long-term, respite, bridging, task centred, step down, parent and child, adoption planning, siblings, solo and cater for the ages of 0-18 years.

Embrace fostering focuses on children who have experienced several placements disruptions and can exhibit challenging behaviour and complex needs. To meet these needs, Embrace fostering endeavour to train and support foster carers to insure they develop and gain experience with the demands of fostering, whilst receiving the highest level of support, supervision, training, and guidance. This includes an intrinsic therapeutic ethos underpinning each aspect of the service. Embrace fostering is conscious that there is an immense need for children to step down from residential living into family living. This is something that Embrace fostering would really like to focus on, supplying bespoke support packages to enable this service provision. We wish to ensure that each member of the fostering household has time to recharge and reflect, particularly at times of difficulty by offering respite, buddy carer, Mockingbird model.

**Types of placements offered:**

Embrace fostering will offer placements for children with challenging behaviour, physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and complex needs are provided with the following options:

* assessment of parenting skills and child protection placements.
* Children with disabilities or complex health needs,
* Short break,
* permanent placement,
* unaccompanied asylum seeker, UASC
* solo placements,
* step-down placements,
* rehabilitation placements,
* Foster to adopt.
* Foster to move on to adoption placements.
* Parent and Child placements
* children needing a therapeutic parenting ethos.

Children who may be perpetrators of abuse (subject to risk assessments) appropriate placement will be sourced.

**Referrals and Matching:**

Embrace fostering referral system is adept at obtaining full, factual, and up to date information to ensure the utmost careful matching. At the point of referral, Embrace fostering requires the following information: a referral form, LAC documentation, including a care plan, placement plan, medical consent, delegated authority.

This is requested prior to placement; however, exceptions would occur in the case of emergencies. The documents will be required as soon as possible here after. Any other relevant documents for example CAMHS reports would be beneficial also.

Under NMS 15.1 and 15.2, the supervising social worker will compile a written foster placement agreement. This will contain specific reference of elements of matching, taken into consideration in agreeing the match/ placement. The matching will also identify areas where foster carers need additional support to meet any gaps in the match between the child and the foster carer. This will be clearly evidenced in the action plan. This is of paramount importance with emergency placements. A planning meeting should occur within a maximum of 72 hours of the child being placed. This is to consider the matching and appropriateness of the placement, including detailed plans that are clear for the foster carer. Also, specialist therapy input should be discussed before the placement occurs and set up should this be needed.

Foster carers should be fully included in completion of the placement plans. In the event of an emergency placement care planning is given immediate focus and attention. Embrace fostering and the foster carer intend to complete an introduction prior to the child being placed wherever possible. As much information as possible should be shared with the foster child pertaining to the foster family and home.

All placements are matched by the supervising social worker for the foster family or the area team, due to them knowing the foster carers skills, strengths, attributes, and the matching considerations household circumstances of the foster carer. The referral lead person will provide detailed and relevant information about the foster carers, family, household, and circumstances to the local authority. The supervising social worker is heavily involved at the beginning of the placement, providing needs led support, and ensuring the continued appropriateness of the match. Ongoing support and training are provided to maintain the placement.

**Additional Services available:**

Psychological counselling, play therapy support work, external education support work, positive steps intervention input from the fostering resource centres at Absolute Children's Services.

All staff and foster carers are members of the National Association of Therapeutic Parents. This organisation supports foster carers. They provide listening circles, training, webinars on current and topical issues pertaining to fostering. Meetings are local and cover nationwide. There is a large focus on supporting foster carers on the parenting task, to ensure they do not become compassion/empathy fatigued.

**Direct work:**

If necessary, the social work/support team can provide additional support, recreational activity to maintain positive placement stability. Direct work may include outreach work, days out with a support worker, supervised contact, contact occurring in specialist onsite venues, specific pieces of needs led work such as life story, independence work, risk awareness and management, parenting support etc. Direct work is needs-led and can be provided daily from Embrace and Absolute children's services. Fun days, forum, seasonal parties are organised on a regular basis in each area providing an opportunity for informal consultations. This includes regular school holiday activities. Foster children’s achievements are acknowledged and celebrated through newsletters, certificates, and praise postcards.

**Support for Education:**

Embrace fostering is passionate that each foster carer promotes and supports the educational attainment of their foster child, in line with the foster child’s uniqueness i.e., age, ability, needs, interests, aspirations and potential. T

“The Education and Achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for Adulthood” DFE- National Minimum Standards 2011)

Embrace fostering prioritises the need to ensure that all foster children and young people have access to appropriate education provision that meets their statutory entitlement of 25 hours per week. When children are no longer in education they are encouraged and actively supported to participate in further training, employment, or higher education. Embrace fostering supports education by supporting foster carers to identify schools and working with schools in partnership. Offering advice and support and linking with the LEA virtual head person, support for alternative education provision, support with EHCP process.

Foster carers will access education training and a clear education policy via Trix, and this will be monitored during foster carers supervision and support visits. Foster carers are supported to ensure foster children are punctual in attendance, have appropriate uniform and resources, foster children are encouraged to participate in after-school clubs and extracurricular activities, afford time and interest in to learning journey and homework, access to appropriate educational resources such as a computer and local library, attend carers/parents evening, work closely with school, children are afforded age-appropriate quiet time so they can study. The carers will be supported at PEP by agency staff, active link up will occur with the educational placement and ensure that targets are realistic achievable and can be met.

If a local authority educational provision is not available an appropriate needs-led package is provided. Embrace fostering will support the foster carer to link with and have direction and guidance off the LEA virtual head person. This may explore education packages as a short-term alternative with the aim of reintegration to mainstream school or college.

**Family Time**

Embrace foster carers are supported to facilitate family time between the child and their birth family or significant others. This will be discussed at the planning meeting and within the care plan. If supervision of Family time is required a member of Embrace staff can be requested or use of a specialist Family time facility within the Embrace fostering resources. Support workers or supervising social workers will undertake this task to promote family time and ensure continuity of persons involved so they can offer support and reassurance if the child is upset or distressed.

**Independent Support for the foster carers**

Embrace foster carers are provided with full membership to Foster Talk which provides them with a wealth of independent advice support about practice, legal and financial matters, and any benefits on offer for example-legal expenses, insurance, advocacy. Embrace fostering team will also support carers to access this service.

**Health Promotion**

Embrace foster carers are supported to promote the individual health needs of a foster child or young person. This includes ensuring the child is registered with universal health services i.e., GP optician and dentist. Embrace foster carers are supported to access other appropriate health services i.e., Camhs, physio, sexual health clinic, smoking cessation. Foster carers are required to complete mandatory health promotions training this is to enable them provide children and young people with a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet and regular exercise. This is also backed up with administration of medication training and any relevant bespoke training to meet the health needs of a foster child in their care. Embrace therapist will link with foster carers wherever required to provide emotional wellbeing support to the foster carers, any members of their household and foster children.

**Short-Break**

Embrace foster carers receive 14 days paid short break per annum/pro rata. Foster carers can consult with their supervising social work on the most appropriate usage of this short-break allowance. This maybe they use this as respite with a named buddy carer, use their support network (fully checked/trained) to care for the foster child in the foster carers home or they can accrue this if they do not want regular breaks.

Embrace fostering ethos is to place children in short break care only when it is in their best interests. Short-Break is intended to be planned wherever possible, introduction to occur prior to the respite occurring,

**Post 18- Staying Put**

Embrace foster carers may want to support children post 18 on a staying put arrangement. Staying put is an arrangement with the local authority and the foster child transitioning will then be classed as an adult member of the fostering household. Embrace fostering acknowledge that the move to post 18 can be anxiety provoking for many young people. Therefore, the foster carers and Embrace staff will remain hands-on where practical and appropriate to provide ongoing support during and after the transition.

Embrace staff team will support a foster carer in this process and with informed decision making.

**Foster carers Recruitment, Assessment, Training, Support and Review**

**Recruitment, assessment, and approval**

Embrace fostering main aim is to recruit a diverse range of foster carers, from a range of backgrounds i.e., working class and multi-ethnic Communities. Foster carers who have experienced childhood trauma and neglect and achieved positive adult life/attachments are welcomed as they will have empathy with foster children’s experiences. These persons will provide positive icons and role models. We endeavour that recruitment will be in the guise of word of mouth, besides community and social media recruitment strategies. Embrace fostering ethos of valuing and supporting foster carers individual strengths and uniqueness and the needs led support we offer will attract these valuable and special people.

Embrace fostering recruitment practice aims and objectives are to be fair, ethical, and transparent. Embrace fostering will link with local authority needs and referral trends. Embrace is fully appreciative of a national shortage of foster carers. Embrace fostering aims to ensure that all foster carers have a high-quality induction and training programme. Embrace fostering aims to ensure foster carer retention in balance with positive outcomes being achieved for foster children.

Application to foster is open for any person to access regardless of their gender, marital status, employment status, sexuality, disability, or culture. The specific criteria are having a spare room and aged over 21 years, there is no upper age limit to fostering but foster carers are required to attend a medical with their GP at the point of assessment and then every 3 years. Foster carers are subject to annual reviews of approval. Fostering applicants who have been convicted of an offence against a child or serious offence against an adult will not be considered.

**The Approval Process**

**Initial enquiry**

Embrace fostering consider initial enquiries according to current geographical and business needs and the aim is to recruit a diverse range of foster carers with diverse skills and backgrounds to meet the referral trends.

Embrace fostering team will consider all initial enquiries using an information and screening phone call to ensure that enquiries meet the basic requirements, such as having a spare bedroom and a basic understanding of the application process and fostering task, as part of screening we would investigate personal and work circumstances, family/household composition and priorities, able to drive or do they live on a good public transport route.

**Initial Visi**t

After the phone call, a couple of members of the Embrace fostering team will undertake a home visit. This will explore and assess in deeper context-motivation to foster, home life, attitude to training, applicant’s empathy, skills, strengths and qualities, initial health, and safety check of the home.

The visit enables an open communication forum and answer any questions the applicant may have.

The application process will be completed if all is felt to be sufficient at this point.

**Assessment stage 1**

Once the application pack is submitted including the DBS for each member of the adult household, medical forms, checks consent, this information enables Embrace fostering to obtain this required information under Schedule 3 of The Fostering Regulations. The applicant will then be reviewed by the management team. Sometimes additional checks and references need to be made at the discretion of the agency to safeguard children and young people. The checks are processed by experienced and qualified staff with overview from the registered person. The assessment is carried out in accordance with Statutory Guidance on the assessment and approval for foster carers (stage 1 and Stage 2 have distinct decision-making processes although both stages can run in conjunction)

**Training Pre-Approval**

Embrace fostering have robust pre-approval training courses which allows for further screening of fostering applicants. All fostering applicants are required to attend introductory training which is developed by the Fostering Network. This is carried out in Group sessions wherever possible to ensure that applicants have opportunity to engage in discussions and encourages networking from the get-go.

**The Skills to Foster (3rd edition 2014)**

The skills to Foster Training comprise of six sessions- what do foster carers do, identity and life chances, working with others, understanding, and caring for children, safer caring, transitions.

The development standards provide a structured approach to training and assessment of foster carers. This is linked into the Form F analysis and evidence and foster carers annual review evidence. This is designed to support carers from approval to the first year of fostering. The focus being on skills, experience, development, or competencies which are required to foster. This compromises of 37-key competencies or abilities grouped under 7 broad heading.

standard 1 understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people.

standard 2 understand your role as a foster carer.

standard 3 understand health safety and healthy care.

standard 4 how to communicate effectively.

standard 5 understand the development of children and young people.

standard 6 keep children safe from harm.

standard 7 develop yourself.

During the assessment process prospective foster carers complete safeguarding and child protection training prior to approval to ensure they have the knowledge of safeguarding. Prospective foster carers will also attend training on first aid, Team Teach/Behaviour management, covid and attachment theory.

All other members of the household complete safe care and My Family Fosters training.

Expectations of foster carers is within the foster care agreement which is given to foster carers at the start of the assessment process as part of preparation and decision making to foster.

**Assessment Stage 2**

Embrace fostering uses the CHARMS BAAF FORM F 2014/2019. A qualified assessor/ social worker will collate evidence from a wide range of sources to complete the written report (Form F assessment) and complete home sessions with applicants. The evidence will be presented to Embrace fostering independent panel.

All legal aspects, safeguarding guidance, and equality regarding looking after children are discussed (adapted to meet individuals learning needs) to insure the prospective foster carers have a thorough understanding of the requirements to becoming an approved foster carer. The assessment will explore previous experience that is relevant to caring for children who most certainly will have experienced trauma.

**Panel**

The Form F assessment will be presented to an independent panel and applicants are invited to attend to ask or answer any questions. Prior to approval the panel Advisor quality checks assessments and cross-checks information provided, to recommend suitability of fitness to foster. Panel will recommend appropriate terms of approval with regards to the experiences, strengths, and qualities of the applicants, as well as the emotional, physical, practical needs of the children they may foster.

The Agency Decision Maker studies the panel minutes, considering the panel’s recommendation and will proceed to make a decision on suitability based on these.

Once foster carers are approved by Embrace fostering, they will be allocated a named social worker and support worker, who is appropriately qualified and will be responsible for the carers support and supervision needs. A foster carer first year is classed as a probationary year. Embrace fostering offer a 24-hour support, weekly or needs led phone contact, needs led supervision and support visits in line with the foster care agreement. It is of paramount importance that the needs of the child in placement are met and the carer is supported to do this especially in their probationary year of fostering as they may require additional support, guidance, training, and advice.

A flowchart taken from the Department for Education website outlines the accepted process for stage 1 and stage 2 Foster Carer Assessment and Approval Process. This can be provided upon request.

**Training and Development**

The assessment process may identify a personal development plan (training) for foster carers to complete in their probationary year.

However within the probationary year/ Level 1 carers have the following mandatory training- first aid although completed prior to approval it is renewable every three years or maybe every year if you have a child with health needs, health promotions reviewable every three years, child protection safeguarding pre-approval and then this is replaced with safeguarding which is annual, leaving care preparing for independence and transitions training is every three years, safer caring as pre-approval with an annual update, training support development standards for foster carers induction is to be done within the first 12 months of approval, behaviour management pre-approval and then is updated every year, health and safety, disability training for carers who have a child with a disability. There is also various online training provided with the social care training hub on offer.

Embrace Fostering therapeutic parenting ethos supports foster carers to access training on, NATP therapeutic parenting, PACE, Signs of Safety, Boundary Seesaw and Empathy scale, NATP survival strategies for TP.

Other training is available through structured sessions, online or through support groups including- National Minimum Standards Agency policies and procedure, roles and responsibilities, equality and diversity, fire safety recording and reporting.

Probationary carers may also attend further training running in the area with other foster carers and access online training on the social care training hub.

**Training available for all foster carers:**

Monthly area group training is available for foster carers and an agenda will be reviewed annually to offer different sessions, based on the needs of young people and placements, media, or enquiry influences, this is facilitated by the therapist to support therapeutic parenting approaches. All carers can access training on the SCTH.

Training sessions can be held in the evenings and weekends if required. There is an expectation that carers will attend training on a regular basis to develop skills and knowledge, and further their own professional development.

In addition to mandatory training the following training can be offered- the list is not exhaustive:

sexual health, gun crime, contextual safeguarding, internet safety and the blue light affect, autism, ADHD, trauma and informed practice, loss and bereavement, allegations, complaints, social pedagogy, solution focused approach, children and young person’s development, the meaning behind behaviour, anger management, my family Fosters refreshers, building resilience, risk resilience and strategies, learning difficulties, education SATs and EHCP, nutrition and behaviour around food, reflective practice, developing through play and creativity, CBT ,cyberbullying e-safety internet safety and social networking, conflict resolution, notification training, building identity, health and safety, parenting a child who has been sexually abused , independence, education training, tax, social media and internet, sexual exploitation, autistic spectrum disorder, equality and diversity, attachment, life story work, carers role in education, learning difficulties, exclusion. EHCP process, self-harm training, caring for teenagers. stress awareness, legal high and psychoactive substance, emotional language, alcohol substance misuse, disability mental health awareness, anti-oppressive practice, confidentiality, communication, safeguarding sexualized behaviour, therapeutic approaches, self-protective behaviours, risk-taking social pedagogy, child development, pace ,parenting roles and responsibilities, contact, mental health awareness, managing disclosures, HIV and AIDS awareness, missing risk taking and offending, managing difficult behaviour resilience and transitions, global development delay, epilepsy, domestic abuse, safeguarding children with disabilities. legal prospective, long-term permanence, managing allegations, raising self-esteem, paediatric specialist training, adoption SGO permanent, offending behaviour, stress management fire safety, counselling skills, de-escalation techniques, attachment, and survival strategies.

Embrace fostering will offer enhanced training to level 2-4 carers. For example, Diploma in health and social care or therapeutic training.

Team Teach aims: through positive behaviour support and plans, with a focus on de-escalation, to actively reduce risk and the need for restraint; to support teaching, learning, and caring, by increasing staff and foster carer confidence and competence in responding to behaviours that challenge, whilst promoting and protecting positive relationships. Team-Teach is affiliated to the General Services Association and accredited by ICM (2015) and B.I.L.D (2006, 2009 and 2012). The physical techniques are constantly being evaluated and monitored, with safety for staff, foster carers and service users being paramount.

**Career structure**

(NB subject to change and consultation at the discretion of Embrace fostering)

Embrace Fostering are highly committed to offering high-quality care and positive therapeutic family settings to both foster carers and the children they care for. Foster carers are a fundamental part of the Embrace fostering team with valuable skills and Embrace fully acknowledge the dedication of foster carers. To recognise this Embrace fostering have a career structure to allow foster carers opportunities for development and will recognise their strengths and accomplishments in meeting the needs of children. Furthermore, there is opportunities for foster carers to support the agency in training, completing initial visits and enquiries, using a Mockingbird bird model, buddy carer with newly approved foster carers and engaging in higher levels of training at the discretion of the Embrace Fostering if foster carers wish to pursue this.

**Career level and Additional payments**

Some foster carers may receive additional allowances i.e., where a young person's behaviour or needs are challenging or complex (disabilities, complex medical needs, step down, a high level of aggression, exploitation, perpetrator of abuse, a child having had multiple placement breakdowns)

Embrace fostering will put this in writing to the foster carer detailing the reasons for the additional allowance for the extra responsibilities. If this child was discharged, then the carer would receive their current career level allowance for future placements.

Short-break allowance is paid in line with individual carers standard career level allowance and pro-rata.

**Requirements for career progression/staying at current career level.**

Career progression onto another Level will be discussed with the supervising social worker and the independent reviewing officer as part of the carers annual review process. The review feedback will be sought from all third parties and foster carers also prepare written evidence to panel to support career progression. The Independent panel will make the final recommendation or suggest a timescale to look at this again if they feel that further skills are needed to be demonstrate progression. The supervising social worker will support foster carers to complete the evidence report as part of the annual review. Panel may at times also decide to downgrade a foster carer as well as upgrade.

* Foster carers need to meet the career structure criteria and all mandatory training is up to date.
* Foster carers have achieved positive outcomes for children or are solution focused and resilient and apply nurturing and therapeutic parenting to foster children.
* Foster carers have supported planned transitions for the foster children they care for
* Foster carers are committed and worked in accordance with the statement of purpose and requirements of the foster care agreement and carers responsibilities and followed all policies and procedures.
* Any outstanding actions and recommendations from the previous annual reviews are met/completed.

If the above requirements are not satisfied the carer may not be recommended for progression. Foster carers are approved as individuals or partners. When approved as partners both must complete the requirements successfully and participate in joint annual reviews.

**The Career Structure**

The first year of fostering is classed as probation/level one unless you have qualifications/experience prior and the first year would be probationary/level 2/3/4.

Foster carers with no previous experience of fostering must gain some experience of fostering and or demonstrate their skills and competencies before they can be considered for progression.

The probationary period could be extended beyond the first Year.

**Level 1 – tasks and skills – allowance £400**

Foster carers need to demonstrate:

* Work in line with the Foster Care Agreement
* Meet the responsibilities listed in the “carers responsibilities”.
* Engage in full mandatory training programme on offer using different mediums.
* Access additional training as required on therapeutic topics/NATP.
* Contribute to report for reviews and meetings.
* Complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care
* Developing and emerging experience of fostering

**Level 2 – tasks and skills – allowance £425**

The first annual review will assess the review period and consider progression to Level 2

Foster carers need to demonstrate:

* Work in line with the Foster Care Agreement- ongoing
* Meet the responsibilities listed in the “carers responsibilities”. - ongoing
* Engage in full mandatory training programme on offer using different mediums. - up to date
* Access additional training and are developing a practicing understanding of the therapeutic parenting ethos.
* Contribute to report for reviews and meetings- draft reports.
* Complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care- completed.
* Experience of fostering
* Success in managing complex placements.

Met a high level and quality of meeting children's needs for example travel appointments positive and foster care.

**Level 3 – tasks and skills – allowance £450**

Foster carers need to demonstrate:

* Work in line with the Foster Care Agreement- ongoing
* Meet the responsibilities listed in the “carers responsibilities”. -ongoing
* Engage in full mandatory training programme on offer using different mediums. - up to date
* Access additional training -ongoing
* Have a broad knowledge and application of the therapeutic parenting ethos.
* Compose to report for reviews and meetings.
* Considerable experience of fostering and meeting positive outcomes for children with complex needs.
* Most foster carers would have at least 2 years’ experience
* Demonstrating a high level of skill in working with complex cases i.e., step-down, abused children, children with disabilities and special needs, sibling groups, complex behavioural issues, and therapeutic parenting.
* working actively with both children and liaise with the team around the child.
* carrying out specific and specialised pieces of work in terms of preparing children for independence preparing children for adoption, specific specialist placements, step down.
* Willing to complete the Diploma Level 3 in health and social care children and young people and maybe accessing additional higher-level training.
* Buddying newer foster carers or less experienced foster carers
* you may wish to get involved in delivering training or supporting Embrace social workers to deliver training you may also want to help running support groups for foster carers or foster children.

**Level 4 – tasks and skills – allowance £475**

Foster carers need to demonstrate:

* Work in line with the Foster Care Agreement- ongoing
* Meet the responsibilities listed in the “carers responsibilities”. -ongoing
* Engage in full mandatory training programme on offer using different mediums. - up to date
* Access additional training -ongoing
* Highly skilled and knowledgeable in applying therapeutic parenting.
* Compose competent reports for reviews and meetings.
* Exceptionally highly experienced of fostering and meeting positive outcomes for children with complex needs.
* providing specialist placements that maybe step-down, therapeutic, complex, medical, challenging behaviours
* Completed the Diploma Level 3 in health and social care children and young people or an equivalent qualification.
* Buddying other carers, supporting, training, and running support groups for foster carers and children.
* Linking with Embrace therapist and with the senior management team in terms of driving Embrace fostering forward

NB Embrace fostering aim to have a career structure that Local Authorities endorse and support.

Foster carers are promoted have adequate experience as well as appropriate skills and knowledge. There are time scales alongside foster carers relevant experience. Also, evidence of achieving outstanding positive outcomes for children.

The training support and development standards fostering induction must be completed within 12 months of approval (NMS 20.2). However, some foster carers may be able to demonstrate that they have completed this within another service.

Whilst we would encourage progression through the level’s carers must recognise the limitations and work at their own pace.

If carers disagree with the panel recommendation, they have the right to appeal to the agency decision maker.

Requirements for any level must be consistently met especially mandatory training must be kept fully completed.

**Seasonal Allowance**

Seasonal allowance will be awarded to foster carers to recognise their hard work and support at times of financial pressure for example the summer holidays, when annual holiday would be expected and over the festive period to support on gifts and positive family life for the children that you Foster. This is at the discretion of Embrace fostering and £150 per child to be paid in July and December.

**Management and Support of Foster Carers**

The support and supervision of foster carers is geared according to foster carers experience and knowledge and the circumstances and needs of the foster placements Embrace fostering affords foster carers having access to any support that is required to meet the needs of the children they care for. Embraces view is that the increasing specialist role of foster care requires needs led training and support.

There's a 24-hour support package including 24/7 telephone support. Each foster carer will have a supervising social worker who is responsible for coordinating needs led support and supervision, alongside support and guidance from a therapist. Supervision visits are of paramount importance and consider the child's views and will cover the progress/ issues and offer needs leads actions. Supervision focuses on the foster carers practice performance, training, and stability of the household for every person, and recognition of the foster carers’ accomplishments.

* Supervision is usually 4 to 6 weekly and support packages will be needs led and reviewable in supervision via consultation with all parties.
* Weekly telephone support will monitor the placement in between supervision.
* Foster carers have a foster carer handbook, which is available on CHARMS.
* Local support groups are operated by Embrace Social workers and therapists and/or an experienced foster carer.
* Therapeutic support groups with the therapist, after each monthly training session.
* Seasonal fun days, party and consultation days will be organised as will support groups.
* If a foster carer is experiencing a high amount of difficulty and complexity in caring for a child and needs led high-level support package will be afforded, and the therapists overview and guidance.
* Outreach or short break can be arranged for more challenging and complex placements.
* Unannounced visits are undertaken several times a year in addition to an unannounced inspection visit that will cover 10.5 health and safety.
* A foster carer will have an annual review to ensure that they are meeting the regulatory requirements. The review will also so allow foster carers to feedback to Embrace Fostering about how they have experienced fostering.
* Consultation will occur with foster carers in the form of written consultations and face-to-face consultations newsletters will be sent out and Embrace fostering will endeavour to ensure foster carers are invited to feedback and give their comments and suggestions on a regular basis. Carers can phone the registered person anytime.
* Embrace fostering will also ensure appropriate support network and babysitters are in place. They will be checked in line with current legislation.
* Foster carers have access to the Foster Talk, Coram BAAF and NATP
* The foster carers allowance is to maintain the full care of a young person. An enhanced allowance or double funding can be in place for some children with additional needs.
* Foster carers can access the mileage scheme in line with the contractual agreements for the child that they are caring for.
* Emotional support can be awarded through the Embrace Team /Buddy carer/therapist.
* Supervising social workers and the therapist will support foster carers in the care planning process and the corporate parenting approach.
* Embrace fostering aims to provide foster carers with all available information about any children they are caring for and that foster carers are supported to understand and how they use this information i.e., confidentiality.
* If a foster carer receives an allegation Embrace fostering will consider independent support
* Embrace fostering will extend support to the whole of the fostering household.
* Embrace fostering offers an in-depth training programme, TSDS, social care training hub and foster carers can make any training request, as necessary. The Therapist facilitates training.
* Foster carer will become a member of the fostering network and NATP.
* Embrace foster carers are required to sign a foster care agreement and foster carers charter and will hold a copy of this signed agreements within in the CHARMS file. These documents outline a foster carers roles and responsibilities.
* Embrace fostering strive to have an open and honest 2-way communication system with foster carers.

Local authorities have a greater focus on foster placements and step down however this means many children placed in children's homes previously are now placed in a foster home. This is a positive step although these children may have more demanding and complex behaviours. Besides encountering breakdowns, this will put additional pressure on the foster carers. There is an increasing demand for children on step down. We identify the need for carers to access support and respite in order to maintain such placements. We aim to offer a need led individual respite and support package and will gear recruitment to ensure this is available.

We may also look at whether a respite bed is available through the fostering resources with the sister company Absolute children's services to create complete creativity and flexibility in meeting the needs of foster children and supporting foster carers.

**Representations and Complaints**

Embrace fostering have an accessible complaints procedure which is available upon request and can be found on the website. Representations can be made in writing or made verbally to be organisation. This can be provided in different formats.

The supervising social work for Embrace fostering is available to the young person or child for private discussions and access to the placing authority social worker is unrestricted, as are telephone calls to foster child’s family if agreed as appropriate in the care plan.

If a formal complaint needs to be made, please contact the below address:

Derrell Crump

Responsible individual

Embrace fostering.

Mayflower Cottage

Clumber Park

Worksop

Nottinghamshire

S80 3BQ

Tel. 01909 384429

Tel. 07931 531527

Email: Derrell@embracefostering.com

Jeanette Robertson

Registered person

Tel: 07534 696331

Email: [jeanette@embracefostering.com](mailto:jeanette@embracefostering.com)

**Representations and complaints /** **Suggestions, Comments and Compliments**

If you have a suggestion, comment or compliment please address this to the registered person or responsible individual using the contact details above.

**Contact Information**

**Referrals** Tel: 07534696331

Email: referrals@embracefostering.com

**Recruitment Line** Tel: 07534 696331

Email: jeanette@embracefostering.com

**Administ****ration Office**

Mayflower Cottage

Clumber Park

Worksop

Nottinghamshire

S80 3BQ

**Tel: 01909 384429**  
**Email: admin@embracefostering.com**

**Embrace Fostering Inspection Office**

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk