



# PLATFORM USER GUIDE

For Financial Advisers

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**embark**  
platform



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## WHO ARE WE?

Your home for digital retirement planning on platform.

Embark platform, a retirement focused platform for financial advisers, designed to help you to unlock new, profitable client segments via easy to use and reliable technology. Part of the Embark Group, an independent and adviser focused provider with c£33bn assets under administration, c300,000 clients and over 600 employees, across nine business locations\*.

Creating compelling retirement propositions for your clients' differing needs is not easy although it is essential for building a successful and profitable advisory business.

In today's market, where client expectations are soaring, costs need to be controlled and returns maximised. It is important to work with a company that can help you to achieve all of these things - and more.

### Introducing the Embark platform

Embark offers a wide choice of investments and tax wrappers, managed on proven technology with transparent and competitive pricing. Our platform could help you to deliver the services your clients are looking for.



### VITAL STATISTICS

**100%**  
INDEPENDENT







**600+**  
GROUP EMPLOYEES

**300,000**  
INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS

**c£33<sup>BN</sup>**  
ASSETS UNDER ADMINISTRATION



\* Figures correct as at December 2019.

 <p><b>CHOICE</b></p> <p>A range of tax wrappers and investments, available online, through financial advisers.</p>	 <p><b>EFFICIENCY</b></p> <p>Key transactions and processes are fully automated. No wet client signature needed for our forms.</p>	 <p><b>VALUE</b></p> <p>Our straightforward pricing is amongst the most competitive in the market.</p>
 <p><b>RELIABLE</b></p> <p>Delivered in partnership with FNZ, suppliers of quality, award-winning technology to some of the largest and best-known platforms in the market.</p>	 <p><b>FINANCIALLY STRONG</b></p> <p>We are committed to maintaining 125% of our capital adequacy requirements and have a financial strength rating of B from AKG.</p>	 <p><b>EASY TO IMPLEMENT</b></p> <p>No IT integration is required to use the platform. You can sign-up and start using the service almost immediately.</p>

# WHAT WE DO

## CREATING VALUE FOR YOU AND YOUR CLIENTS

Client segmentation is now commonplace in financial advisory businesses. Unfortunately 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to selecting the right platform. Numerous platforms available today offer a full suite of services and additional features such as financial planning tools, customised client reports and added functionality.

These services can be valuable for your High Net Worth clients, although they also add a layer of cost which is reflected in higher pricing for the client.

The High Net Worth client segment is an important source of business for advisers. Only, 0.6% of the population owns 32% of total savings and assets\*. As you would expect, competition for these clients is fierce.

By contrast, 25% of the UK population have sufficient income to make retail investments\*\*, which means there are over 40 times the number of clients in this mid-

market segment than are High Net Worth. 'Mid-market' clients are often overlooked by advisers. Why? Because high platform charges make it difficult to create value for these client on terms that are commercially viable. In our view these clients can add scale to your business and create a future pipeline of High Net Worth clients.

Since the introduction of Pensions Freedoms only 30% of clients with pension funds of £100,000 typically select annuities\*\*\*. That means a client currently in their 40's could easily have an investment relationship that spans 40 years or more.

These clients are likely to have additional funds from defined contribution employers' schemes that can be brought together to create a single retirement portfolio to be managed in draw down. In addition, this fund can be passed to future generations creating further clients for your business.

**To build a strong and profitable business, advisers need to find a solution for these large volumes of mid-market clients.**

\*Wealth in the UK: Sizing the Market Opportunity' GlobalData (September 2015).  
 \*\*GfK Financial Research Survey, six months ending June 2016 data. Retail investments definition: and investment product, any alternative investment (excluding property bought-to-let), unit-linked endowment or Premium Bonds.  
 \*\*\*FCA Retirement Income Data Request (September 2016)

We've taken time to listen to adviser feedback on how the market is developing. As a result, we have chosen not to build numerous tools into the Embark platform. Many advisers have their own preferred tools and do not want their clients to have to pay for them to be integrated into the platform.

Advisers voiced their concerns about the costs of administration in their business, particularly due to the need to get wet client signatures when onboarding and servicing clients.

A lack of end-to-end digital processing on some platforms, especially to move investments or take income can also lead to servicing delays and errors. The impact of these inefficiencies is a diversion of time toward managing client expectations, rather than focusing on financial planning.

The Embark platform fully automates over 50 processes which can now be completed online including client onboarding, investment selection and drawdown payments. Embark has removed the need for most manual intervention.

You are able to view each transaction in real time, which means you will know that your request has been actioned instantly. We have also removed the need for wet client signatures, even during the onboarding and identity verification stage.

The Embark platform can reduce administration time in your back office. This is reflected in lower back-end costs for Embark too, which are passed directly onto your clients.



The Embark platform pricing is very competitive and reflects the level of automation in the platform. Our aim is to transform your ability to produce a profitable proposition for the mid-market sector, opening up a large section of the population that can now benefit from your services.

## INVESTMENT OFFERING

**A strong investment offering should be at the core of any platform provider's proposition - and at Embark, this is no different.**

The Embark platform delivers a varied range of funds to support both capital and income requirements, with coverage across the risk spectrum. You will have all of the essential components to build a compelling centralised investment proposition or a bespoke client strategy.

### We offer:

- ✓ Around 5,000 mutual funds
- ✓ Listed securities and investment trusts
- ✓ Around 3,000 exchange-traded funds (ETFs)
- ✓ We will offer a wide range of model portfolios from recognised discretionary investment managers

### WIDE CHOICE

Within our fund universe we provide access to:

#### MUTUAL FUNDS

- Unit trusts (UTs)
- Open-ended investment companies (OEICs)
- Sociétés d'investissement à capital variable (SICAVs)
- Any other permissible collective investment scheme we make available to your clients

#### EXCHANGE TRADED INSTRUMENTS (ETIs)

- UK equities (company shares) listed on UK exchanges
- UK exchange-traded funds (ETFs)
- UK gilts (government bonds) and UK corporate bonds
- UK investment trusts

# DISCRETIONARY PORTFOLIOS

We understand that not all advisers can or want to be burdened with the ongoing management of a centralised investment proposition. This can be time-consuming when working with clients on an advisory basis where every portfolio update or rebalance must secure client consent.

Increasingly, advisers are outsourcing their investment proposition, particularly for mid-level clients where the 'cost to service' and resultant profitability can be a challenge.

We therefore offer a range of discretionary portfolios which enable a client to be invested in a proposition aligned to their risk profile and then managed to ensure that alignment is maintained.

Our line-up of discretionary investment managers have a solid reputation in the market for delivering results and therefore can be relied upon to help support your investment proposition.

You can elect to invest a client's investments in multiple discretionary managed portfolios. You can also move client funds between portfolios without the need to open and close investment accounts or secure a wet client signature.

## INVESTMENT TECHNOLOGY

With Embark, you really are in control of your clients investments. Our technology is designed to deliver:

- **Online dealing.** With 'on platform' asset custody you control the trades and when they are executed.
- **Fractional share dealing on ETFs and ETCs\*.** Allowing more of the client's money to be invested and reducing cash balances.
- **Proportional asset allocation in drawdown.** The ability to crystallise funds in drawdown without locking specific assets into an arrangement. You are free to decide on the assets to use to provide income.

\*Subject to prior approval.

## FREE INVESTMENT RESEARCH

The Embark Group boasts an investment business that offers in-depth research to assist advisers in developing and maintaining their investment propositions. These services are available at no cost to you.

**The Adviser Centre.** Research on actively managed funds from the whole of market; supporting advisers with fund selection with the aim of residing at the heart of their investment process.

# PRODUCT LINE-UP

The Embark platform provides your clients with a range of products to achieve their retirement goals. Whether they are looking for simple savings through an ISA or a personal pension with full drawdown capability, our products and features will help them to and through retirement. All of our accounts are designed to be managed by you with nearly all transactions completed digitally - with no need for a wet client signature.

## EMBARK PERSONAL PENSION

Planning your client's retirement financial needs should always start with a pension at the core. Our Embark Personal Pension offers flexibility to provide for the most simple or sophisticated requirements. You can also manage flexi-access drawdown entirely on platform with integrated payroll, letting you specify dates for regular income payments and process ad-hoc payments in real time. Embark supports both the Pension Commencement Lump Sum (PCLS) and Uncrystallised Funds Pension Lump Sum (UFPLS).

## EMBARK JUNIOR PERSONAL PENSION\*

It's never too early for your clients to start thinking about their children's retirement needs. The Embark Junior PP offers a tax efficient way of starting the retirement journey with the same wide investment choice as the other Embark accounts - including discretionary portfolios. It is available for children up to age 18.


## EMBARK GENERAL INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (GIA)

Clients (including corporates and trusts\*) can hold multiple GIAs to segment their savings for different purposes such as a new car or children's school fees. With the ability to plan around different tax aspects, including capital gains, your client can invest as much as they want across our investment spectrum.

## EMBARK INDIVIDUAL SAVINGS ACCOUNT (ISA)


The Embark ISA is a stocks and shares ISA that offers the same wide investment choice as the other Embark accounts, including discretionary portfolios. It allows consolidation of current and previous year's ISAs into the one tax efficient environment with full flexibility on withdrawals.

## EMBARK JUNIOR INDIVIDUAL SAVINGS ACCOUNT (JISA)

 The Embark JISA is a stocks and shares JISA with the same wide investment choice as the other Embark accounts - including discretionary portfolios. It is available for children up to the age of 18. An adult with parental responsibility is the Registered Contact and controls the account until the child reaches 18, when the account is automatically converted to an ISA and the child takes control.

## THIRD PARTY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (TPIA)

In some instances a client may not want to move their pension from an existing provider, although they would like the value and flexibility that investing on the Embark platform brings. Our Third Party Investment Account allows clients to retain the product features of their existing pension product and expand it with the investment opportunities of ours. It really is the best of both worlds.

 Items marked with a blue flag are coming soon.

## MANAGING ACCOUNTS ON THE EMBARK PLATFORM

### Account creation

All accounts can be set-up quickly and easily without the need for a wet client signature. We also have a low initial contribution level of £50 for our Personal Pension, ISA, JISA and GIA (or £5,000 for TPIA) with a range of flexible contribution frequencies.

### Account management


The Embark platform is a fully advised proposition, so you have complete control over the management of your clients' accounts. You can:

- Open additional accounts with no wet signature.
- Benefit from fully digital trading.
- Add, change and stop adviser charging.
- Access our fully online withdrawal capability including flexi-access income drawdown with daily payroll.

### Client account view


While you control what happens in the client's account, we recognise that your relationships with your various clients may differ and you may wish to give varying levels of account access to different clients.

We provide all clients with secure online account view capability, so they can see where they are invested and how their account is performing.

 Additionally, you are able to provide a high level of access to your clients to allow them to manage their own details, contributions and have the ability to make trades. For more information on this access you can look at our Get Connected Guide which is available on [embarkplatform.co.uk](http://embarkplatform.co.uk).

Whatever the level of access your clients have, all client documentation and communication from us is sent solely electronically, stored in a Document Library and fully accessible online for your clients and you.

The Embark platform is for clients of financial advisers only. Should a relationship between an adviser and their client end, the client's account access and options may be restricted. There could also be additional charges levied. You can find details of these charges in the relevant Embark Client Charges Guide.

 Items marked with a blue flag are coming soon.

## SERVICE & SUPPORT

Our platform was built to allow advisers to self-serve as much as possible. But we realise there will be times when you need additional help and support. We are available to provide this to you in a number of different ways.



### WEBSITE

The website is your hub of information from How To support for all those important processes, to access to all the documents you need to help your client make the right choices. All this can be found at [embarkplatform.co.uk](http://embarkplatform.co.uk). You will also hear about any business offers we currently have, as well as important news or information on changes to the platform.



### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS

Our business experts will work with you to determine exactly how the Embark proposition can support your business - both now and in the future. They will also be on hand to help get you up and running on the platform.



### PLATFORM WEB CHAT

We provide real time support through webchat technology embedded on each page of the platform. You can 'chat' with the Embark Customer Service Team online without needing to phone. They will have read only access to your screen, enabling them to see what you are seeing and resolve your query promptly. This facility is available during the working week, from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.



### SERVICE TEAM

Our Service Team can be contacted in the following ways:

#### Mail

Embark platform  
PO Box 24065  
1 Tanfield, Edinburgh EH3 1EY

**Email:** [service@embarkplatform.co.uk](mailto:service@embarkplatform.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 0330 024 2345

Available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.  
Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

To find out more about the Embark platform or to enquire about registering, visit [embarkplatform.co.uk](http://embarkplatform.co.uk) or contact your Business Development Manager.



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