

# **BlackRock**



## **Interim report and unaudited financial statements**

BlackRock US Opportunities Fund

For the six months ended 31 August 2023

NM1023U-3203319-1/21

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# General Information

## Manager & Registrar

BlackRock Fund Managers Limited  
12 Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2N 2DL

Member of The Investment Association and authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority ("FCA").

## Directors of the Manager

G D Bamping\*  
S Corrigan (Resigned 2 May 2023)  
W I Cullen\*  
D Edgar  
K Henry (Appointed 3 March 2023)  
A M Lawrence  
H N Mepham  
S Sabin (Appointed 18 August 2023)  
M T Zemek\*

## Trustee & Custodian

The Bank of New York Mellon (International) Limited  
160 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4LA

Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the FCA and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

## Investment Manager

BlackRock Investment Management (UK) Limited  
12 Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2N 2DL

Authorised and regulated by the FCA.

## Investment Adviser

BlackRock Investment Management, LLC  
1 University Square Drive, Princeton NJ 08540, United States

Regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

## Stock Lending Agent

BlackRock Advisors (UK) Limited  
12 Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2N 2DL

Authorised and regulated by the FCA

## Auditor

Ernst & Young LLP  
Atria One, 144 Morrison Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EX

BlackRock's proxy voting agent is ISS (Institutional Shareholder Services).

## This Report relates to the packaged products of and is issued by:

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**For your protection, telephone calls are usually recorded.**

\* Non-executive Director.

## About the Fund

BlackRock US Opportunities Fund (the "Fund") is a UCITS scheme under the COLL Sourcebook. The Fund was established on 29 September 1972. The Fund was first known as Rowan American Fund. It was renamed Mercury American Smaller Companies Fund and the investment objective changed on 5 May 1987. On 26 March 1992 the Fund's name was changed to Mercury American Opportunities Fund and the investment objective changed. With effect from 30 September 2000, the Fund was renamed Merrill Lynch American Opportunities Fund. It was renamed Merrill Lynch US Opportunities Fund and the investment objective changed on 1 October 2006. The Fund adopted its present name with effect from 28 April 2008. The Fund's FCA product reference number is 108383.

### Assessment of value

The FCA requires UK fund managers to complete an annual assessment of whether their UK authorised funds provide value for investors. Our assessment considers fund and unit class level performance, costs and charges, and service quality, concluding with an evaluation of whether investors receive value. BlackRock has fulfilled its obligations for the reporting requirement, including assessing relevant charges, and published the annual assessment of value statements on the BlackRock website on 31 October 2022 in a composite report for all funds managed by BlackRock Fund Managers Limited subject to these requirements. The next annual assessment is due for publication by the end of October 2023.

## Fund Managers

As at 31 August 2023, the fund managers were Tony DeSpirito and David Zhao.

## Significant Events

### Changes in the Directors of the Manager

K Henry was appointed as a Director effective 3 March 2023.

S Corrigan resigned as a Director effective 2 May 2023.

S Sabin was appointed as a Director effective 18 August 2023.



# Investment Manager's Report

for the six months ended 31 August 2023

## Investment Objective

The aim of the Fund is to provide a return on your investment (generated through an increase in the value of the assets held by the Fund) (gross of fees) over the long term (5 or more consecutive years beginning at the point of investment) by investing in shares of medium and smaller companies incorporated or listed in the United States.

Comparator benchmark	Investment management approach
Russell Midcap® Value Index	Active

## Performance Summary

The following table compares the Fund's realised performance against the performance of the comparator benchmark during the financial period ended 31 August 2023.

	Fund return %	Comparator benchmark %
Class D Accumulation Units	(3.24)	(3.57)

Further information on the performance measures and calculation methodologies used is detailed below:

- Fund returns shown, calculated net of fees, are the performance returns for the primary unit class of the Fund which has been selected as a representative unit class. The primary unit class represents the class of unit which is the highest charging unit class, free of any commissions or rebates, and is freely available. Performance returns for any other unit class can be made available on request.
- Fund returns are based on the NAV per unit as at close of business for reporting purposes only, for the purpose of fair comparison and presentation with the comparator benchmark close of business valuation point.
- Due to the Financial Reporting Standard 102 ("FRS 102") and the Statement of Recommended Practice for Authorised Funds ("SORP") requirements, including the accounting policy for the valuation point at 12 noon, there may be differences between the NAV per unit as recorded in the financial statements and the NAV per unit calculated in accordance with the Prospectus.

All financial investments involve an element of risk. Therefore, the value of your investment and the income from it will vary and the return of your initial investment amount cannot be guaranteed. Past performance is not a guide to future performance and should not be the sole factor of consideration when selecting a product.

## Global Economic Overview

Global equities, as represented by the MSCI All Country World Index ("ACWI"), returned 5.37% (in GBP terms) during the six months ended 31 August 2023. Equities recovered from pessimism induced by high inflation (the rate of increase in the prices of goods and services) and rising interest rates, although inflation has begun to slow down in many parts of the world. Indicators of continued resilience, such as robust consumer spending and tight labour markets, tempered investors' concerns about slowing global economic growth.

# Investment Manager's Report continued

The US economy grew strongly in the first six months of 2023 as both consumer and government spending rose, and consumers showed signs of growth in continued spending in July and August 2023. While several prominent regional banks failed during the period, prompt government action limited the impact on the wider economy. The US jobs market continued to show strength, and unemployment remained at historically low levels. In Japan, the economy accelerated during the first six months of 2023, and the government lifted strict border controls although exports declined near the end of the period under review. The UK economy was nearly flat in the first six months of 2023 before contracting in July 2023 amid weakness in exports as global trade cooled. Modest growth resumed in the Eurozone in the first six months of 2023, but high interest rates continued to weigh on the region's economy and retail sales fell in July 2023. UBS's takeover of the failed Credit Suisse at the behest of regulators stabilised markets.

Most emerging market economies continued to expand, although fluctuating commodity prices and the higher interest rate environment presented significant economic challenges. The Chinese economy grew at a slow pace relative to the country's historical rate while falling consumer prices raised concerns about deflation (general decline of the price level of goods and services).

The world's largest central banks continued to implement measures aimed at monetary policy tightening, although the pace of tightening slowed in some regions. The US Federal Reserve ("the Fed") raised interest rates three times, pausing once before resuming with another increase at its July 2023 meeting. However, this represented a significantly slower pace of interest rate increases compared to the sharp tightening seen during the second half of 2022 from the Fed. The Fed also continued to reduce some of the accumulated bond holdings on its balance sheet.

The Bank of England ("BoE") raised interest rates four times, as inflation remained high despite showing some signs of easing. The European Central Bank ("ECB") also increased interest rates at each of its four meetings in an effort to control rising prices in the Eurozone. Furthermore, the ECB began to reduce the size of its balance sheet in March 2023 by allowing some of its outstanding bonds to mature without reinvestment.

Global equity performance was positive overall, as inflationary pressure eased and the global economy continued to grow despite slowdown in some regions. US stocks surged as the Fed tightening slowed and innovations in the technology sector drove significant gains. European stocks performed well as tourism rebounded strongly, supporting consumer spending. Meanwhile, Asian stocks gained as Japan's economy picked up and investor interest in semiconductor companies surged. Equities in emerging markets also gained, helped by the slowing pace of interest rate increases.

Global bond prices (which move inversely to yields) rose slightly overall, as moderating inflation led investors to anticipate an end to the current monetary policy tightening cycle. US treasury prices rose fractionally, sustained by the changing economic environment, as well as the failure of several US banks and subsequent government intervention. UK gilt prices declined slightly, as large borrowing requirements and persistent inflation raised concerns among investors. European government bonds gained slightly, while Japanese government bond prices were volatile, driven by periodic substantial purchases from The Bank of Japan to keep yields within its yield cap. Global corporate bond prices advanced as continued resilience in the global economy drove investor optimism and both high-yield and investment-grade bonds gained.

In the commodities markets, Brent crude oil prices rose moderately as several large oil producing and exporting countries cut production levels. European natural gas prices remained steady, having retreated significantly from the highs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Gold prices rose amid the slowing pace of Fed interest rate increases and elevated inflation.

# Investment Manager's Report continued

In the foreign exchange markets, the US dollar performance was mixed against other global currencies. The euro and sterling appreciated relative to the US dollar, while the Japanese yen and Chinese yuan declined. Continued interest rate increases from the ECB and BoE, even as the Fed slowed its pace of interest rate hikes, drove the increase in the relative value of the euro and sterling.

## Fund Performance Review and Activity

Over the six month period to 31 August 2023, the Fund's performance return was (3.24%) and the active return was 0.33%, outperforming its comparator benchmark which returned (3.57%) (active return is the difference between the Fund's return and the comparator benchmark return).

US stocks, as represented by the S&P 500 Index, returned 14.5%, posting strong performance led by the 7 largest mega-cap technology companies<sup>1</sup>. Inflation continued to fall, showing signs of a resilient US economy, and excitement around artificial intelligence ('AI') intensified. On AI, the market has taken notice of the transformative power of the newest iteration: generative AI. The perception is that this technology has the potential to change the way humans and computers interact with each other, creating a new technology super-cycle such as the advent of the internet. The biggest beneficiaries thus far have been the chip manufacturers and full stack developers given the early stages of the technology, but the excitement has led to speculation on where the next wave of growth will come from. Moving to the economic side, the US Federal Reserve ('Fed') last raised rates by 25bps in May only to leave rates unchanged for the remainder of the period under review, indicating a pause with potential for future increases. Part of their reasoning was tied to the headline US inflation, which had fallen from 6% in February 2023 to 3.2% in July 2023. While this reduction marked a significant improvement, it still left the measure well above the Fed's target of 2%<sup>2</sup>. The US unemployment rate, another key economic indicator, stayed generationally low, only increasing modestly from 3.5% in March to 3.8% in August confirming the labour market remains historically tight<sup>3</sup>. While the US debt ceiling sparked many investors' concerns during the period, by early June Congress approved legislation that suspended the debt ceiling in a deal that is expected to have minor effects on economic growth. In terms of style, growth stocks vastly outperformed value stocks as the Russell 1000 Growth Index returned 23.5% and the Russell 1000 Value Index returned 4.3% during the quarter.

During the six month period the following were the largest contributors to and detractors from the Fund's return relative to the comparator benchmark:

Largest Contributors		Largest Detractors	
Sector	Effect on Fund return	Sector	Effect on Fund return
Health Care <sup>#</sup>	1.16%	Consumer Staples <sup>#</sup>	(0.91%)
Financials <sup>#</sup>	0.97%	Industrials <sup>^</sup>	(0.89%)
Real Estate <sup>^</sup>	0.21%	Energy <sup>#</sup>	(0.25%)
Information Technology <sup>^</sup>	0.20%	Consumer Discretionary <sup>#</sup>	(0.14%)
Communication Services <sup>#</sup>	0.14%		

<sup>#</sup> Overweight position - holds more exposure than the comparator benchmark.

<sup>^</sup> Underweight position - holds less exposure than the comparator benchmark.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Refinitiv Datastream and BlackRock Investment Institute as of 31 August 2023. Top 7 mega-cap technology: Apple, Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, Nvidia, Meta, & Tesla.

<sup>2</sup> Source: New York Fed as of 31 August 2023.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as of 31 August 2023.

# Investment Manager's Report continued

The largest contributor for the period was the Fund's stock selection in health care, particularly in health care equipment and providers and services. Stock selection in financials also added to relative results primarily driven by security selection in banks. Other notable contributors included an underweight to real estate and stock selection in information technology.

The largest detractor for the period was stock selection within consumer staples. An underweight to and stock selection within industrials also hindered relative performance driven by an underweight to building products and security selection within professional services. Other notable detractors included stocks selection within the energy and consumer discretionary sectors.

The following table details the significant active positions, where the Fund was overweight (held more exposure than the comparator benchmark) and underweight (held less exposure than the comparator benchmark), at 31 August 2023 and 28 February 2023:

Top overweight positions			
31 August 2023		28 February 2023	
Sector	Active Weighting	Sector	Active Weighting
Health Care	13.49%	Health Care	13.74%
Consumer Staples	7.60%	Consumer Staples	8.07%
Consumer Discretionary	10.67%	Communication Services	5.37%

Top underweight positions			
31 August 2023		28 February 2023	
Sector	Active Weighting	Sector	Active Weighting
Real Estate	2.09%	Real Estate	2.69%
Industrials	13.03%	Industrials	11.45%
Materials	5.77%	Utilities	4.45%

Where the Fund is underweight to a sector, the return from such sector will have an opposite effect on the Fund's active return. This may result in a sector being listed as a contributor/detractor but not listed on the Fund's Portfolio Statement.

## Net Asset Value

At 31 August 2023	Units in Issue	Net Asset Value £000's	Net Asset Value per Unit p
A Income	55,906	860	1,537
A Accumulation	746,415	11,839	1,586
X Accumulation	14,953,718	27,008	180.6
D Income	608,825	9,799	1,610
D Accumulation	4,404,900	76,766	1,743

## Distributions Payable for the period to 31 August 2023

Any income available will be distributed annually on 30 April.

## Operating Charges

Unit Class	1.3.2023 to 31.8.2023	1.3.2022 to 28.2.2023
A Income	1.64%	1.64%
A Accumulation	1.64%	1.64%
X Accumulation	0.04%	0.04%
D Income	0.89%	0.89%
D Accumulation	0.89%	0.89%

Operating charges are annualised and exclude portfolio trade-related costs, except costs paid to the custodian/depositary and entry/exit charges paid to an underlying collective investment scheme (if any).

# Portfolio Statement (unaudited)

at 31 August 2023

Holding or Nominal Value	Investment	Market Value £000's	% of Total Net Assets
<b>EQUITIES – 95.89%; 28.2.2023 94.53%</b>			
<b>AUSTRALIA – 0.56%; 28.2.2023 0.54%</b>			
<b>Oil &amp; Gas Producers – 0.56%; 28.2.2023 0.54%</b>			
36,077 Woodside Energy		708	0.56
<b>BERMUDA – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 1.08%</b>			
<b>Insurance – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 1.08%</b>			
<b>CANADA – 3.22%; 28.2.2023 3.99%</b>			
<b>Apparel – 1.49%; 28.2.2023 1.45%</b>			
79,276 Gildan Activewear <sup>o</sup>		1,883	1.49
<b>Automobile Parts &amp; Equipment – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 1.02%</b>			
<b>Mining – 0.48%; 28.2.2023 0.79%</b>			
46,828 Barrick Gold		603	0.48
<b>Oil &amp; Gas Producers – 1.05%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
49,250 Suncor Energy		1,329	1.05
<b>Private Equity – 0.20%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
5,264 Onex		254	0.20
<b>Telecommunications – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.73%</b>			
<b>FINLAND – 0.83%; 28.2.2023 0.97%</b>			
<b>Telecommunications – 0.83%; 28.2.2023 0.97%</b>			
335,313 Nokia <sup>o</sup>		1,050	0.83
<b>FRANCE – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 1.73%</b>			
<b>Aerospace &amp; Defence – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.70%</b>			
<b>Food Producers – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 1.03%</b>			
<b>GERMANY – 2.22%; 28.2.2023 1.46%</b>			
<b>Aerospace &amp; Defence – 0.50%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
3,422 MTU Aero Engines		634	0.50
<b>Household Products – 0.46%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
9,399 Henkel		572	0.46
<b>Pharmaceuticals – 1.26%; 28.2.2023 1.46%</b>			
36,600 Bayer <sup>o</sup>		1,587	1.26
<b>HONG KONG – 0.95%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
<b>Insurance – 0.95%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
122,214 Prudential <sup>o</sup>		1,198	0.95
<b>IRELAND – 1.30%; 28.2.2023 0.51%</b>			
<b>Building Materials – 0.28%; 28.2.2023 0.51%</b>			
7,956 CRH		360	0.28
<b>Electronics – 1.02%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
14,364 Allegion		1,287	1.02

Holding or Nominal Value	Investment	Market Value £000's	% of Total Net Assets
<b>JAPAN – 2.25%; 28.2.2023 2.81%</b>			
<b>Home Furnishings – 0.71%; 28.2.2023 1.05%</b>			
99,600 Panasonic		902	0.71
<b>Machinery Construction &amp; Mining – 1.54%; 28.2.2023 1.76%</b>			
86,500 Komatsu		1,939	1.54
<b>NETHERLANDS – 1.31%; 28.2.2023 0.98%</b>			
<b>Healthcare Products – 1.31%; 28.2.2023 0.98%</b>			
69,148 Koninklijke Philips		1,232	0.98
22,993 Koninklijke Philips		411	0.33
		<b>1,643</b>	<b>1.31</b>
<b>SWITZERLAND – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.50%</b>			
<b>Banks – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.50%</b>			
<b>UNITED KINGDOM – 4.04%; 28.2.2023 5.38%</b>			
<b>Aerospace &amp; Defence – 0.26%; 28.2.2023 1.41%</b>			
32,518 BAE Systems <sup>o</sup>		328	0.26
<b>Agriculture – 1.50%; 28.2.2023 0.06%</b>			
71,619 British American Tobacco <sup>o</sup>		1,892	1.50
<b>Insurance – 0.99%; 28.2.2023 2.04%</b>			
7,604 Willis Towers Watson		1,251	0.99
<b>Oil &amp; Gas Producers – 0.76%; 28.2.2023 0.86%</b>			
32,435 BP		954	0.76
<b>Telecommunications – 0.53%; 28.2.2023 1.01%</b>			
898,629 Vodafone		664	0.53
<b>UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – 79.21%; 28.2.2023 74.58%</b>			
<b>Aerospace &amp; Defence – 1.99%; 28.2.2023 1.01%</b>			
17,921 L3Harris Technologies		2,513	1.99
<b>Agriculture – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 1.05%</b>			
<b>Airlines – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.24%</b>			
<b>Apparel – 1.57%; 28.2.2023 1.24%</b>			
13,498 Ralph Lauren <sup>o</sup>		1,237	0.98
124,066 Under Armour <sup>o</sup>		751	0.59
		<b>1,988</b>	<b>1.57</b>
<b>Automobile Manufacturers – 1.58%; 28.2.2023 1.62%</b>			
75,726 General Motors		1,995	1.58
<b>Automobile Parts &amp; Equipment – 1.36%; 28.2.2023 1.66%</b>			
54,983 Goodyear Tire & Rubber <sup>o</sup>		560	0.44
10,177 Lear		1,166	0.92
		<b>1,726</b>	<b>1.36</b>

# Portfolio Statement (unaudited) continued

Holding or Nominal Value	Investment	Market Value £000's	% of Total Net Assets
<b>Banks – 3.54%; 28.2.2023 4.28%</b>			
29,274	Citigroup	955	0.76
2,522	First Citizens BancShares	2,711	2.15
13,221	Wells Fargo	433	0.34
11,130	Wells Fargo	365	0.29
		<b>4,464</b>	<b>3.54</b>
<b>Beverages – 0.53%; 28.2.2023 0.86%</b>			
3,277	Constellation Brands	<b>674</b>	<b>0.53</b>
<b>Chemicals – 1.62%; 28.2.2023 1.38%</b>			
41,757	Axalta Coating Systems	937	0.74
20,122	International Flavors & Fragrances	1,108	0.88
		<b>2,045</b>	<b>1.62</b>
<b>Commercial Services – 1.39%; 28.2.2023 0.13%</b>			
131,995	Dun & Bradstreet <sup>o</sup>	1,135	0.90
10,440	Robert Half	622	0.49
		<b>1,757</b>	<b>1.39</b>
<b>Computers – 8.82%; 28.2.2023 5.82%</b>			
59,102	Cognizant Technology Solutions	3,332	2.64
55,223	DXC Technology	893	0.71
27,338	HP	631	0.50
43,383	Leidos	3,352	2.65
14,269	NCR <sup>o</sup>	340	0.27
77,225	Western Digital	2,590	2.05
		<b>11,138</b>	<b>8.82</b>
<b>Diversified Financial Services – 1.90%; 28.2.2023 2.43%</b>			
6,039	Apollo Global Management	405	0.32
1,910	LPL Financial	351	0.28
19,832	Raymond James Financial	1,642	1.30
		<b>2,398</b>	<b>1.90</b>
<b>Diversified Operations – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.34%</b>			
<b>Electricity – 5.61%; 28.2.2023 4.55%</b>			
20,307	American Electric Power <sup>o</sup>	1,272	1.01
13,314	Edison International <sup>o</sup>	734	0.58
13,878	Entergy	1,059	0.84
29,746	Exelon	948	0.75
77,296	PG&E	1,007	0.80
20,126	Public Service Enterprise <sup>o</sup>	979	0.78
19,292	Sempra Energy	1,078	0.85
		<b>7,077</b>	<b>5.61</b>
<b>Electronics – 2.40%; 28.2.2023 1.49%</b>			
33,801	Avnet	1,348	1.07
55,940	Flex	1,205	0.95
7,595	Fortive	474	0.38
		<b>3,027</b>	<b>2.40</b>

Holding or Nominal Value	Investment	Market Value £000's	% of Total Net Assets
<b>Food Producers – 2.50%; 28.2.2023 1.99%</b>			
118,767	Kraft Heinz	<b>3,154</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Forest Products &amp; Paper – 0.28%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
13,123	International Paper	<b>360</b>	<b>0.28</b>
<b>Healthcare Products – 4.18%; 28.2.2023 5.32%</b>			
54,285	Avantor <sup>o</sup>	945	0.75
64,333	Baxter International	2,129	1.69
2,193	Repligen <sup>o</sup>	298	0.24
926	West Pharmaceutical Services	299	0.24
16,832	Zimmer Biomet	1,596	1.26
		<b>5,267</b>	<b>4.18</b>
<b>Healthcare Services – 3.48%; 28.2.2023 2.76%</b>			
16,485	Catalent	637	0.50
1,832	Charles River Laboratories International	303	0.24
45,107	Fortrea	969	0.77
13,260	Fulgent Genetics <sup>o</sup>	351	0.28
12,717	Laboratory of America	2,130	1.69
		<b>4,390</b>	<b>3.48</b>
<b>Home Builders – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.27%</b>			
<b>Housewares – 0.50%; 28.2.2023 0.96%</b>			
75,839	Newell Brands	<b>633</b>	<b>0.50</b>
<b>Insurance – 5.44%; 28.2.2023 5.26%</b>			
13,261	Allstate	1,143	0.91
29,797	American International	1,371	1.09
9,260	Assurant	1,015	0.80
64,393	Equitable	1,478	1.17
2,662	F&G Annuities & Life	62	0.05
55,313	Fidelity National Financial	1,798	1.42
		<b>6,867</b>	<b>5.44</b>
<b>Investment Companies – 1.35%; 28.2.2023 1.22%</b>			
110,808	Cannae	<b>1,700</b>	<b>1.35</b>
<b>Lodging – 0.68%; 28.2.2023 0.83%</b>			
19,744	Las Vegas Sands	<b>855</b>	<b>0.68</b>
<b>Media – 2.12%; 28.2.2023 2.50%</b>			
71,543	Fox	1,886	1.49
77,290	Warner Bros Discovery <sup>o</sup>	799	0.63
		<b>2,685</b>	<b>2.12</b>
<b>Office &amp; Business Equipment – 0.54%; 28.2.2023 0.45%</b>			
3,080	Zebra Technologies	<b>678</b>	<b>0.54</b>
<b>Oil &amp; Gas Producers – 1.96%; 28.2.2023 2.44%</b>			
13,817	Denbury	998	0.79
2,846	Hess	347	0.27

# Portfolio Statement (unaudited) continued

Holding or Nominal Value	Investment	Market Value £000's	% of Total Net Assets
196,013	Kosmos Energy	1,133	0.90
		<b>2,478</b>	<b>1.96</b>
<b>Packaging &amp; Containers – 3.12%; 28.2.2023 2.10%</b>			
17,844	Crown	1,299	1.03
90,903	Sealed Air	2,645	2.09
		<b>3,944</b>	<b>3.12</b>
<b>Pharmaceuticals – 3.28%; 28.2.2023 2.99%</b>			
33,224	Cardinal Health	2,307	1.83
6,924	Cencora	977	0.77
3,833	Cigna	855	0.68
		<b>4,139</b>	<b>3.28</b>
<b>Pipelines – 1.35%; 28.2.2023 2.10%</b>			
6,581	Cheniere Energy	856	0.68
61,801	Kinder Morgan	850	0.67
		<b>1,706</b>	<b>1.35</b>
<b>Private Equity – 1.08%; 28.2.2023 1.00%</b>			
54,051	Carlyle	1,368	1.08
<b>Real Estate Investment &amp; Services – 0.31%; 28.2.2023 1.76%</b>			
6,390	Howard Hughes	396	0.31
<b>Real Estate Investment Trusts – 1.80%; 28.2.2023 0.95%</b>			
5,886	AvalonBay Communities	859	0.68
7,549	Crown Castle	600	0.48
6,997	Mid-America Apartment Communities	808	0.64
		<b>2,267</b>	<b>1.80</b>
<b>Retail – 5.14%; 28.2.2023 4.36%</b>			
11,579	Advance Auto Parts	622	0.49
13,633	Dollar General	1,696	1.34
20,177	Dollar Tree	1,981	1.57
12,581	MSC Industrial Direct	1,014	0.80

Holding or Nominal Value	Investment	Market Value £000's	% of Total Net Assets
12,417	Ross Stores	1,191	0.94
		<b>6,504</b>	<b>5.14</b>
<b>Shipbuilding – 0.27%; 28.2.2023 0.47%</b>			
1,943	Huntington Ingalls Industries	338	0.27
<b>Software – 5.02%; 28.2.2023 6.30%</b>			
8,845	Activision Blizzard	642	0.51
55,197	Fidelity National Information Services	2,450	1.94
65,003	SS&C Technologies	2,957	2.34
1,950	Veeva Systems	296	0.23
		<b>6,345</b>	<b>5.02</b>
<b>Telecommunications – 1.12%; 28.2.2023 0.45%</b>			
19,546	Ciena <sup>0</sup>	665	0.53
44,939	Telephone and Data Systems	747	0.59
		<b>1,412</b>	<b>1.12</b>
<b>Textiles – 0.00%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
33,800	Coated Sales <sup>1</sup>	–	0.00
<b>Toys, Games &amp; Hobbies – 1.38%; 28.2.2023 0.00%</b>			
11,503	Hasbro	648	0.51
63,164	Mattel	1,103	0.87
		<b>1,751</b>	<b>1.38</b>
<b>Portfolio of investments</b>		<b>121,077</b>	<b>95.89</b>
Net other assets		5,195	4.11
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>126,272</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Unless otherwise stated, all securities are either listed on a recognised exchange or traded on an eligible securities market.

<sup>1</sup> These securities were valued in consultation with the Manager. These securities were fair valued or suspended at financial period end.

<sup>0</sup> All or a portion of this investment represents a security on loan.

## Statement of Total Return (unaudited)

for the six months ended 31 August 2023

	31.8.2023	31.8.2022
£000's	£000's	£000's
Income		
Net capital (losses)/gains	(6,767)	7,766
Revenue	1,845	1,244
Expenses	(533)	(458)
Net revenue before taxation	1,312	786
Taxation	(210)	(131)
Net revenue after taxation	1,102	655
Total return before distributions	(5,665)	8,421
<b>Change in net assets attributable to unitholders from investment activities</b>	<b>(5,665)</b>	<b>8,421</b>

## Statement of Change in Net Assets Attributable to Unitholders

(unaudited) for the six months ended 31 August 2023

	31.8.2023	31.8.2022
£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Opening net assets attributable to unitholders</b>	<b>149,261</b>	<b>101,341</b>
Amounts receivable on issue of units	17,001	31,068
Amounts payable on cancellation of units	(34,325)	(22,182)
	(17,324)	8,886
Change in net assets attributable to unitholders from investment activities	(5,665)	8,421
<b>Closing net assets attributable to unitholders</b>	<b>126,272</b>	<b>118,648</b>

The above statement shows the comparative closing net assets at 31 August 2022 whereas the current accounting period commenced 1 March 2023.

# Balance Sheet (unaudited)

at 31 August 2023

	31.8.2023	28.2.2023
	£000's	£000's
<b>Assets:</b>		
Fixed assets		
– Investment assets	121,077	141,097
Current assets		
– Debtors	348	5,830
– Cash and bank balances	5,630	8,077
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>127,055</b>	<b>155,004</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Creditors		
– Distributions payable	–	(102)
– Other creditors	(783)	(5,641)
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>(783)</b>	<b>(5,743)</b>
<b>Net assets attributable to unitholders</b>	<b>126,272</b>	<b>149,261</b>

G D Bamping (Director)

M T Zemek (Director)

BlackRock Fund Managers Limited

26 October 2023

# Notes to Financial Statements (unaudited)

for the six months ended 31 August 2023

## Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice ("UK GAAP") and the Statement of Recommended Practice for Authorised Funds (the "SORP") issued by the Investment Management Association (now known as the Investment Association) in May 2014 and amended in June 2017.

The accounting policies applied are consistent with those of the financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2023 and are described in those annual financial statements.

# Supplementary Information

## Efficient Portfolio Management Techniques

The Manager may, on behalf of the Fund and subject to the conditions and within the limits laid down by the FCA, the Prospectus, as amended from time to time, and the ESMA Guidelines (as adopted by the FCA), employ techniques and instruments relating to transferable securities. These include repurchases/reverse repurchase transactions ("repo transactions") and securities lending, provided that such techniques and instruments are used for efficient portfolio management purposes.

## Securities Lending

Securities lending transactions entered into by the Fund are subject to a written legal agreement between the Fund and the Stock Lending Agent, BlackRock Advisors (UK) Limited, a related party to the Fund, and separately between the Stock Lending Agent and the approved borrowing counterparty. Collateral received in exchange for securities lent is transferred under a title transfer arrangement and is delivered to and held in an account with a tri-party collateral manager in the name of The Bank of New York Mellon (International) Limited ("the Trustee") on behalf of the Fund. Collateral received is segregated from the assets belonging to the Fund's Trustee or the Stock Lending Agent.

The following table details the value of securities on loan as a proportion of the Fund's total lendable assets and Net Asset Value (NAV) as at 31 August 2023 and the income earned for the period ended 31 August 2023. Total lendable assets represents the aggregate value of assets forming part of the Fund's securities lending programme. This excludes any assets held by the Fund that are not considered lendable due to any market, regulatory, investment or other restriction.

Securities on loan		
% of lendable assets	% of NAV	Income earned £000's
9.11	8.62	7

The total income earned from securities lending transactions is split between the relevant Fund and the Stock Lending Agent. The Fund receives 62.5% while the Stock Lending Agent receives 37.5% of such income, with all operational costs borne out of the Stock Lending Agent's share.

The following table details the value of securities on loan (individually identified in the Fund's portfolio statement) and associated collateral received, analysed by counterparty as at 31 August 2023.

Counterparty	Counterparty's country of establishment	Securities Lending	
		Amount on loan	Collateral received
		£000's	£000's
BNP Paribas	France	4,904	5,371
Citigroup Global Markets Limited	UK	1,576	1,779
Goldman Sachs International	UK	325	348
HSBC Bank	UK	2	2
J.P. Morgan Securities Plc	UK	1,239	1,352
Société Générale	France	1,221	1,351
UBS	Switzerland	1,620	1,787
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,887</b>	<b>11,990</b>

## Supplementary Information continued

All securities on loan have an open maturity tenor as they are callable or terminable on a daily basis.

### Collateral

The Fund engages in activities which may require collateral to be provided to a counterparty (“collateral posted”) or may hold collateral received (“collateral received”) from a counterparty.

The following table provides an analysis by currency of the underlying cash and non-cash collateral received/posted by way of title transfer collateral arrangement by the Fund, in respect of securities lending transactions, as at 31 August 2023.

Currency	Cash collateral received	Cash collateral posted	Non-cash collateral received	Non-cash collateral posted
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Securities lending transactions</b>				
AUD	–	–	2	–
CAD	–	–	120	–
CHF	–	–	44	–
CNY	–	–	295	–
DKK	–	–	1	–
EUR	–	–	727	–
GBP	–	–	258	–
HKD	–	–	31	–
JPY	–	–	1,461	–
SGD	–	–	8	–
USD	–	–	9,043	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>11,990</b>	<b>–</b>

Non-cash collateral received by way of title transfer collateral arrangement in relation to securities lending transactions cannot be sold, re-invested or pledged.

## Supplementary Information continued

The following table provides an analysis of the type, quality and maturity tenor of non-cash collateral received/posted by the Fund by way of title transfer collateral arrangement in respect of securities lending transactions, as at 31 August 2023.

Collateral type and quality	Maturity Tenor					Open transactions	Total
	1 - 7 days	8 - 30 days	31 - 90 days	91 - 365 days	More than 365 days		
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Collateral received - securities lending</b>							
<b>Fixed income</b>							
Investment grade	–	–	–	–	612	–	<b>612</b>
<b>Equities</b>							
Recognised equity index	–	–	–	–	–	11,187	<b>11,187</b>
<b>ETFs</b>							
UCITS	–	–	–	–	–	23	<b>23</b>
Non-UCITS	–	–	–	–	–	168	<b>168</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>11,378</b>	<b>11,990</b>

Investment grade securities are those issued by an entity with a minimum investment grade credit rating from at least one globally recognised credit rating agency; Standard & Poor's, Moody's or Fitch.

A recognised equity index contains at least 20 equities where no single equity represents more than 20% of the total index and no five equities combined represent more than 60% of the total index.

The maturity tenor analysis for fixed income securities received as collateral is based on the respective contractual maturity date, while for equity securities and ETFs received as collateral are presented as open transactions as they are not subject to a contractual maturity date.

## Supplementary Information continued

As at 31 August 2023, all non-cash collateral received by the Fund in respect of securities lending transactions is held by the Fund's Trustee (or through its delegates).

The following table lists the top ten issuers (or all the issuers if less than ten) by value of non-cash collateral received by the Fund by way of the title transfer collateral arrangement across securities lending transactions as at 31 August 2023.

<b>Issuer</b>	<b>Value £000's</b>	<b>% of the Fund's NAV</b>
Altria Group Inc	537	0.43
Abbvie Inc	537	0.43
Alphabet Inc	526	0.42
Wells Fargo & Co	516	0.41
Amazon.com Inc	484	0.38
Walt Disney Co	458	0.36
Lockheed Martin Corp	449	0.36
United States of America (Government)	426	0.34
Gilead Sciences Inc	412	0.33
Chevron Corp	395	0.31
Other issuers	7,250	5.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,990</b>	<b>9.50</b>

# About us

BlackRock is a premier provider of asset management, risk management, and advisory services to institutional, intermediary, and individual clients worldwide. As of 30 September 2023, the firm manages £7.18 trillion across asset classes in separate accounts, mutual funds, other pooled investment vehicles, and the industry-leading iShares® exchange-traded funds.

Through BlackRock Solutions®, the firm offers risk management and advisory services that combine capital markets expertise with proprietary-developed analytics, systems, and technology.

BlackRock serves clients in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, and the Middle East. Headquartered in New York, the firm maintains offices in over 38 countries around the world.

## Want to know more?

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