



# Aberforth UK Small Companies Fund

## Monthly Factsheet

29 February 2024

### Fund structure

The Fund is an authorised unit trust scheme under the Financial Services & Markets Act 2000 and also a UCITS scheme as defined by the Collective Investment Schemes Sourcebook. The Fund is open-ended and issues Accumulation (Acc) and Income (Inc) units.

### Manager: Aberforth Partners

The Fund is managed by Aberforth's investment team of seven fund managers:

Sam Ford	Jeremy Hall
Euan Macdonald	Rowan Marron
Rob Scott Moncrieff	Peter Shaw
Christopher Watt	

Further information on the investment team is available at [www.aberforth.co.uk](http://www.aberforth.co.uk).

### Benchmark: DNSCI (XIC)

The Fund's primary investment universe is the Deutsche Numis Smaller Companies Index (excluding Investment Companies). It is used as a target and comparator benchmark. The DNSCI (XIC) index is rebalanced every January and its profile at the date of this Factsheet was:

Number of companies	348
Total market value	£136bn
Largest constituent	£2.3bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£1.7bn

### Key Fund information

Total investments	£134m
Number of investments	78
Active share	75.2%
Total net assets	£133m
Issue price (Acc)	£305.06
Cancellation price (Acc)	£299.13
Issue price (Inc)	£197.60
Cancellation price (Inc)	£193.76
Launch date	20 Mar 91
Next year-end	31 Dec 24

### Fees & charges

Ongoing charges (at 31 Dec 23 & includes Management fee)	0.82%
Management fee	0.75%
Performance fee	None
Initial/exit charges	0%
Dealing spread	1.96%

### Yield & distributions (Inc units)

Yield	3.9%
Interim distribution (paid 31 Aug 23)	365.7168p
Final distribution (paid 28 Feb 24)	392.8468p

### Objective

The investment objective of the Fund is to seek to achieve a total return, calculated on an income reinvested basis, greater than the Deutsche Numis Smaller Companies Index (excluding Investment Companies) over the long term, with the focus on rolling five year periods.

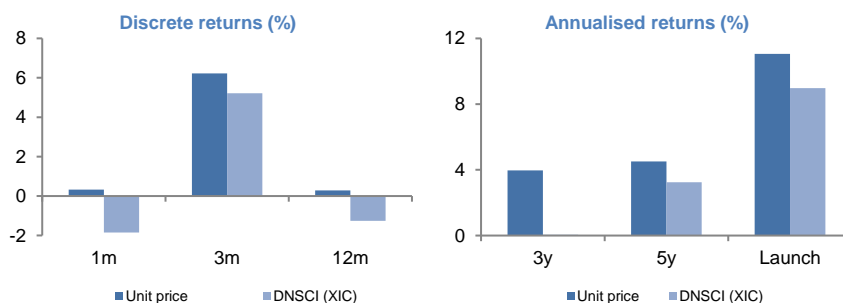
### Investment style: Value

Aberforth are value investors who buy shares in companies that they calculate to be selling below their intrinsic value. This is determined through detailed financial and industrial analysis, combined with a valuation approach that focuses on both stockmarket and corporate worth.

### Investment performance (annualised total returns)

Growth (%)	1m	3m	12m	3y	5y	Launch
Unit price	0.3	6.2	0.3	4.0	4.5	11.1
DNSCI (XIC)	-1.9	5.2	-1.3	0.0	3.2	9.0

Notes: 1m & 3m returns not annualised; Launch date = 20 Mar 91; Unit price = Cancellation price of the Fund's Accumulation units.



### Monthly investment commentary: February

February was a positive month for global equities. The FTSE All-World Index delivered a return of 5.1% in sterling terms, but UK equities performance lagged, with the FTSE All-Share rising by 0.2%. The DNSCI (XIC) fell by 1.9%. The Fund out-performed this benchmark, rising by 0.3%. Style factors were not influential and it was the contribution from M&A that drove a significant proportion of the performance differential.

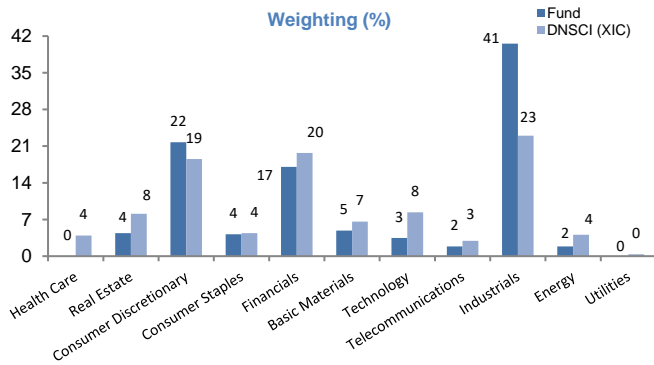
**Wincanton**, the UK-focused logistics provider, was the most significant positive contributor to performance. In January, the company announced a recommended offer from a French bidder. Aberforth did not believe that the bid reflected the true worth of the business and engaged to improve the terms. Near the end of February, the bidder announced a higher price, which was followed by an approach from another party, the US-listed GXO, on much improved price terms of 605p per share. While the process is yet to reach a conclusion, it serves as a useful reminder that (a) the best M&A experiences are often those in which boards of directors consult shareholders well in advance and (b) when approached, boards must focus their attention on the fair value of the business, not the premium paid to the prevailing share price. Further M&A activity seems likely as UK equity valuations remain extremely attractive. Other winners in the month were **CMC Markets**, which announced a cost reduction and efficiency plan, and **Wilmington**, which reported half year results and the intention to divest its Healthcare Intelligence business.

The weakest holding in the month was **Close Brothers**, which faces a potential regulatory liability in its Motor and Premium finance businesses and elected to pause dividend payments.

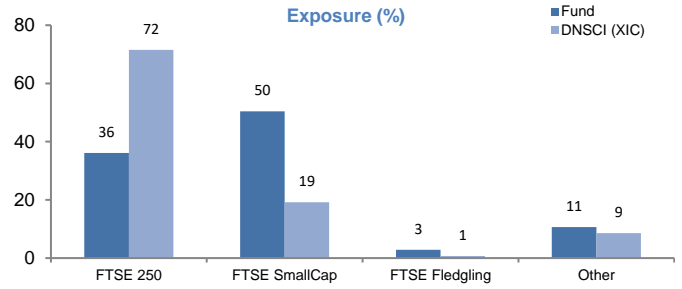
### Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
<b>Wincanton</b>	Logistics	5.6
<b>Wilmington</b>	Business publishing & training	3.0
<b>Vesuvius</b>	Metal flow engineering	2.6
<b>Morgan Advanced Materials</b>	Manufacture of carbon & ceramic materials	2.5
<b>Redde Northgate</b>	Van rental	2.3
<b>Just Group</b>	Individually underwritten annuities	2.2
<b>TI Fluid Systems</b>	Automotive parts manufacturer	2.2
<b>International Personal Finance</b>	Home credit provider	2.1
<b>FirstGroup</b>	Bus & rail operator	2.1
<b>Avon Protection</b>	Military protection products	2.0

## Sector exposure



## Size exposure



## Dealing & pricing information

Dealings in the Fund normally take place every business day between 9.00am and the Valuation Point that day - usually 4.30pm. Orders may be placed by calling the Fund's Dealing Line on 0345 608 0940 or contacting Aberforth using the details in the Subscribe & contact section.

The dealing spread shown in the Fees & charges section is the difference between the Issue and Cancellation prices and reflects the underlying spread on the Fund's portfolio.

## Data sources & calculations

All data supplied by Aberforth, except DNSCI (XIC) data (from Numis/Paul Marsh and Elroy Dimson – London Business School) and FTSE data (from FTSE International Limited).

Performance returns are total returns after all expenses and assume reinvestment of dividends. Yield is based on the Fund's trailing 12 months' dividends. Active share is a measure of how the Fund's portfolio differs from the DNSCI (XIC). Small companies are represented by the DNSCI (XIC).

## Standardised past performance

Discrete total return performance over 12 month periods to 31 December:

Growth (%)	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Unit price	8.3	-10.0	30.0	-15.1	27.0
DNSCI (XIC)	10.1	-17.9	21.9	-4.3	25.2

Notes: the table above is updated on a calendar quarter basis in accordance with the Financial Conduct Authority's regulations; Unit price = Cancellation price of the Fund's Accumulation units.

## Security codes & other information

Acc units	Inc units	Other information
SEDOL: 0007272	SEDOL: B2N9GS7	Launched: 20 Mar 91
ISIN: GB0000072727	ISIN: GB00B2N9GS70	Next year-end: 31 Dec 24
MEXID: HIUKSC	MEXID: HIUKSI	LEI: 213800ONHC5DGL7RPF30

## Subscribe & contact

If you wish to subscribe to this Factsheet, or have any queries regarding its content, please contact Aberforth's Investor Support team:

(T) 0131 220 0733

(E) [investors@aberforth.co.uk](mailto:investors@aberforth.co.uk)

## Risk warnings

Capital may be at risk as the value of investments may go down as well as up and is not guaranteed; therefore investors may not get back the amount originally invested. Past performance is not a guide to future performance, nor a reliable indicator of future results or performance.

Investments in shares of smaller companies are generally considered to carry a higher degree of risk as the market for their shares may be less liquid than that for shares of larger companies, making shares of smaller companies more difficult to buy and sell.

The performance of shares of smaller companies may be more volatile than the shares of larger companies over short time periods; therefore investors should regard such investments as long term.

There can be no guarantee that the investment objective of the Fund will be achieved or provide the returns sought by the Fund.

An investment in the Fund is only suitable for investors who are capable of evaluating the merits and risks of such an investment and who have sufficient resources to be able to bear any losses which may arise from such an investment (which may be equal to the whole amount invested). Such an investment should be regarded as long term in nature and complementary to existing investments in a range of other financial assets and should not form a major part of an investment portfolio.

The dealing spread of the Fund, which represents the difference between the buying and selling prices, will have an impact on the realisable value of any investment made in the Fund, particularly in the short term. To mitigate the impact of capital erosion, investors should regard investments in the Fund as long term.

**Neither Aberforth Partners LLP or Aberforth Unit Trust Managers Limited provide retail investors with investment advice.**

**This document has been issued for information purposes only. It does not contain any investment recommendations or an invitation to invest in the Fund. Investors should seek advice from an authorised financial adviser prior to making investment decisions.**

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