



# Aberforth UK Small Companies Fund

## Monthly Factsheet

31 March 2020

### 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	Keith Muir
Peter Shaw	Christopher Watt
Alistair Whyte	

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

### Benchmark: NSCI (XIC)

The Fund's benchmark and primary investment universe is the Numis Smaller Companies Index (excluding Investment Companies). More information on the use of this benchmark can be found in the Investment Strategy section of the Fund's Prospectus. This index is rebalanced every January and its profile at the date of this Factsheet was:

Number of companies	338
Total market value	£96bn
Largest constituent	£1.4bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£1.3bn

### Key Fund information

Total investments	£116m
Number of investments	80
Active share	80.1%
Total net assets	£123m
Issue price (Acc)	£166.81
Cancellation price (Acc)	£162.59
Issue price (Inc)	£120.17
Cancellation price (Inc)	£117.13
Launch date	20 Mar 91
Next year-end	31 Dec 20

### Fees & charges

Ongoing charges (at 31 Dec 19 & includes Management fee)	0.78%
Management fee	0.75%
Performance fee	None
Initial/exit charges	0%
Dealing spread	2.56%

### Yield & distributions (Inc units)

Yield	4.6%
Interim distribution (paid 30 Aug 19)	279.1645p
Final distribution (paid 28 Feb 20)	272.3161p

### Objective

The Fund's objective is to achieve a total return greater than that of the NSCI (XIC) over the long term by investing in a diversified portfolio of small UK quoted companies.

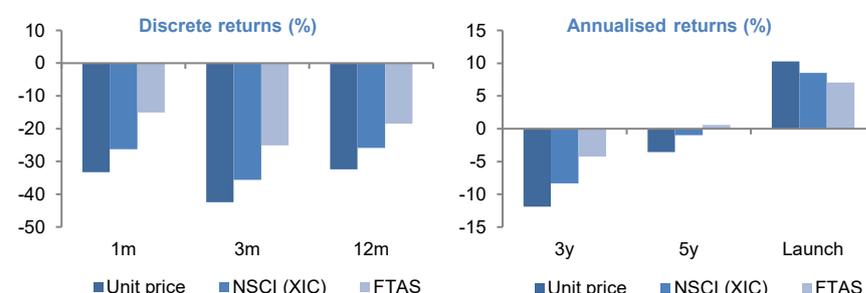
### Investment style: Value

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	-33.3	-42.4	-32.4	-11.9	-3.6	10.3
NSCI (XIC)	-26.3	-35.6	-25.9	-8.3	-1.0	8.5
FTAS	-15.1	-25.1	-18.5	-4.2	0.6	7.1

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



### Investment commentary

Global equities sold off sharply, reacting to the severity and rapid spread of Covid-19, together with the likely economic implications of the measures to contain the virus. The government responded with massive aid packages and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme has addressed the "squeezed middle" of mid-sized companies previously excluded from the Treasury's rescue packages.

The decade-long bull run ended, with the FTSE All-Share down by 15% and small companies underperforming large. The NSCI (XIC) declined by 26% and the Fund by 33%. The Fund's performance was hindered by the value style: as previously noted, most value stocks are sensitive to the general economic cycle and therefore suffered disproportionately as the threat of a Covid-19 recession intensified. March turned out to be the second worst month for the value style since records for the NSCI (XIC) began in 1955.

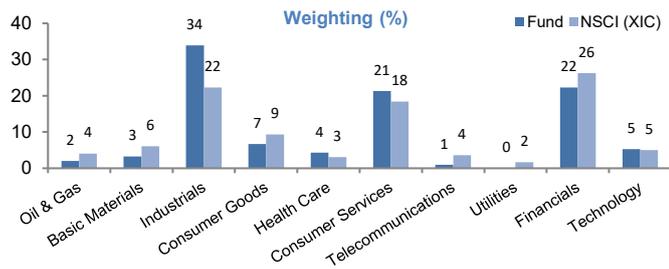
Turning to stocks, Premier Oil and EnQuest were among the largest fallers as the disagreement between Saudi Arabia and Russia took the oil price towards \$20. Consumer facing businesses have also been very weak, as regulation and preventative measures have affected behaviours. More generally, any business with high leverage has suffered. There has been no strong theme common to the relative winners, though, helpfully, PR company Huntsworth received a bid from private equity – the price was not compelling but was acceptable, particularly in the current circumstances.

Falling profits and liquidity mean that some companies will no doubt require additional capital. In addition to the huge fiscal and monetary responses, it is likely that the equity market will be asked to participate, as it did – profitably – in 2009. While it is too early to determine when the effects of Covid-19 diminish and the economy starts its recovery, the pandemic will end! Share prices have quickly adjusted to global recession and valuations are at historically low levels.

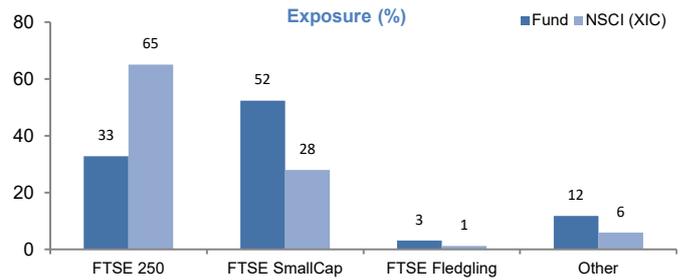
### Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
Urban&Civic	Property - investment & development	3.9
Wincanton	Logistics	3.6
Reach	UK newspaper publisher	3.4
CMC Markets	Financial derivatives dealer	3.2
Future	Special interest consumer publisher	3.2
Keller Group	Ground engineering services	3.2
Brewin Dolphin Holdings	Private client fund manager	3.0
Eurocell	Manufacture of UPVC building products	2.8
Vectura Group	Inhaled pharmaceuticals - respiratory specialism	2.8
SDL	Software - translation & content management	2.7

## 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 NSCI (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 NSCI (XIC). Small companies are represented by the NSCI (XIC). Large companies are represented by the FTAS.

## Standardised past performance

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

Growth (%)	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Unit price	-32.4	-4.5	6.0	22.4	-0.4
NSCI (XIC)	-25.9	-1.2	5.2	18.8	4.2

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 20
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

**COVID-19 virus** – in the context of market price risk, please note the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the responses to it. These have profoundly affected macro-economic activity, the operations of companies around the world and their stock market valuations. The universe of UK small quoted companies market invested in by the Fund, has seen a significant fall in its aggregate valuation due to the uncertainties arising from the spread of this virus. Aberforth Partners LLP and the Directors of Aberforth Unit Trust Managers Limited are closely monitoring market developments as the impact of the pandemic progresses.

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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