



# Aberforth UK Small Companies Fund

## Monthly Factsheet

31 May 2021

### 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
Sonya Kim	Euan Macdonald
Keith Muir	Peter Shaw
Christopher Watt	

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	325
Total market value	£166bn
Largest constituent	£3.8bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£1.6bn

### Key Fund information

Total investments	£211m
Number of investments	81
Active share	74.1%
Total net assets	£213m
Issue price (Acc)	£322.50
Cancellation price (Acc)	£315.90
Issue price (Inc)	£229.87
Cancellation price (Inc)	£225.17
Launch date	20 Mar 91
Next year-end	31 Dec 21

### Fees & charges

Ongoing charges (at 31 Dec 20 & includes Management fee)	0.83%
Management fee	0.75%
Performance fee	None
Initial/exit charges	0%
Dealing spread	2.07%

### Yield & distributions (Inc units)

Yield	0.7%
Interim distribution (paid 28 Aug 20)	58.0017p
Final distribution (paid 26 Feb 21)	111.9923p

### 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.

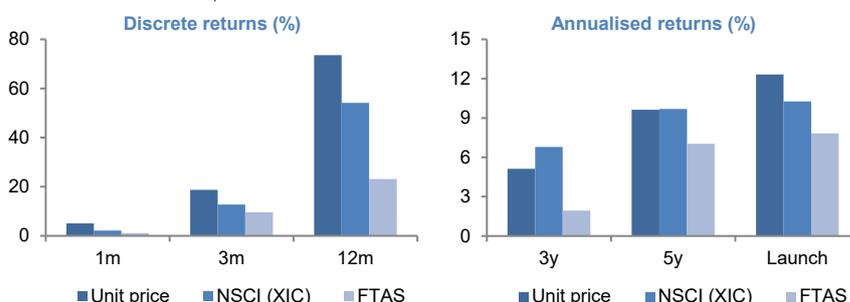
### Investment style: Value

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	5.1	18.7	73.6	5.1	9.6	12.3
NSCI (XIC)	2.1	12.7	54.1	6.8	9.7	10.3
FTAS	1.1	9.6	23.1	1.9	7.0	7.8

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.



### Monthly investment commentary: May

Global equities rose for a fourth straight month in May. Economies continue their recovery as variant virus strains have yet to evade the efficacy of vaccines. The FTSE All-Share gain of 1.1% was eclipsed by the performance of small UK quoted companies as the NSCI (XIC) rose by 2.1%. In addition to the size premium, it was a further month in which the value style led the way. These tailwinds were beneficial for the performance of the Fund, whose return was 5.1%.

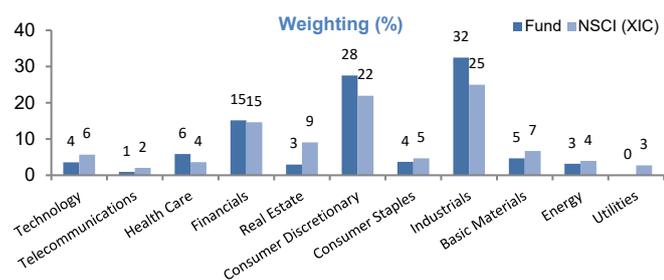
Overseas interest in the UK has continued to build, in response to reduced Brexit uncertainty and to the vaccine roll-out's impetus on economic recovery. Among the best performing holdings in the month were **Spire Healthcare** and **Vectura**. They were subject to respective agreed bids from Australia-based Ramsay Health Care and US private equity firm, Carlyle. Separately, the value of the holding in aerospace engineer **Senior** rose sharply on the revelation of a third approach for the business from Lone Star, another US private equity firm. These examples highlight the risks and opportunities facing small UK quoted companies, as stockmarket investors, corporates and private equity re-engage with British assets that remain lowly valued in the international context. Given these low valuations, it may be the case that standard takeover premiums are insufficient to persuade shareholders to cede control.

In a month of increased corporate activity, however, not all updates were helpful for performance. The share price of **Card Factory**, a holding in the retail sector, fell after the announcement of a 'best efforts' £70 million equity raise as part of a broader refinancing with its lenders. Additional equity promises to put the company in a good position to benefit from re-opening and to invest in its online offering. Elsewhere, the influence of creditors was also evident at **C&C**, a holding in the beverages sector. Its share price weakened in response to the launch of a rights issue to refinance credit facilities and reduce leverage. Notwithstanding these developments, the portfolio has experienced less equity issuance throughout the pandemic than was initially envisaged – small UK quoted companies have, once again, proved their resilience in a challenging environment.

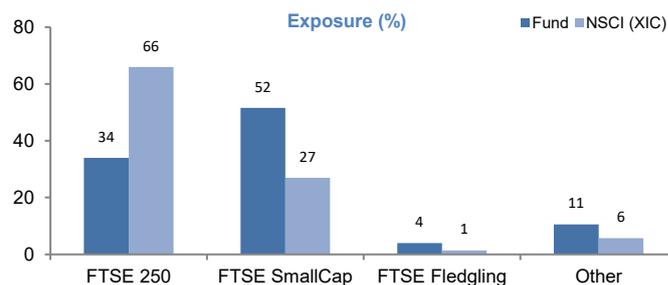
### Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
<b>Reach</b>	UK newspaper publisher	4.0
<b>Wincanton</b>	Logistics	2.7
<b>SIG</b>	Specialist building products distributor	2.7
<b>Redde Northgate</b>	Van rental	2.5
<b>Vitec Group</b>	Photographic & broadcast accessories	2.4
<b>TI Fluid Systems</b>	Automotive parts manufacturer	2.4
<b>Morgan Advanced Materials</b>	Manufacture of carbon & ceramic materials	2.4
<b>Just Group</b>	Individually underwritten annuities	2.4
<b>Vectura Group</b>	Inhaled pharmaceuticals - respiratory specialism	2.3
<b>Brewin Dolphin Holdings</b>	Private client fund manager	2.2

## 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 (%)	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Unit price	76.7	-32.4	-4.5	6.0	22.4
NSCI (XIC)	65.6	-25.9	-1.2	5.2	18.8

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 21
MEXID: HIUKSC	MEXID: HIUKSI	LEI: 2138000NHC5DGL7RPF30

## Subscribe & contact

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(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 stockmarket valuations. 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 recommendation 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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