



Aberforth Split Level Income Trust plc

Monthly Factsheet

31 December 2019

Fund structure

The Fund is a split capital investment trust – a type of investment company, or collective investment fund – with Premium (Ord) & Standard (ZDP) share listings on the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange.

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.

Investment universe: NSCI (XIC)

The Fund's primary investment universe is the Numis Smaller Companies Index (excluding Investment Companies). This index is rebalanced every January and its profile at the date of this Factsheet was:

Number of companies	346
Total market value	£153bn
Largest constituent	£1.6bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£1.6bn

Key Fund information

Total investments	£244m
Number of investments	65
Active share	79.7%
Gearing - ZDP shares	£52m
Net gearing	25.5%
Total net assets	£195m
Ord share NAV	102.34p
Ord share price	93.50p
Ord discount/(premium)	8.6%
ZDP share NAV (Accounts basis)	108.55p
ZDP share price	108.50p
ZDP discount/(premium)	0.0%

Fees & charges

Management fee* (12m to 30 Jun 19)	0.98%
Performance fee	None
Ongoing charges (at 30 Jun 19 & includes Management fee)	1.18%

* Further details of the Management fee are available at www.aberforth.co.uk.

Yield & dividends (Ord)

Yield	4.4%
1 st interim dividend (paid 7 Mar 19)	1.45p
2 nd interim dividend (paid 30 Aug 19)	2.71p
Special dividend (paid 30 Aug 19)	0.19p

Objective

The Fund's objective is to provide Ordinary (Ord) shareholders with a high level of income, with the potential for income and capital growth, and to provide Zero Dividend Preference (ZDP) shareholders with a pre-determined final capital entitlement of 127.25p per ZDP share on the planned winding up date of 1 July 2024.

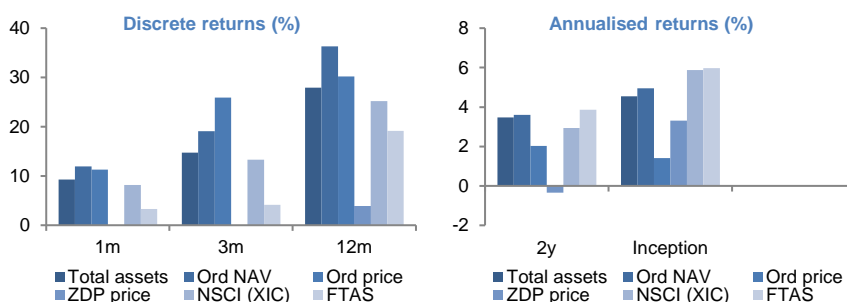
Investment style: Value

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	6m	1y	2y	Inception
Total assets	9.3	14.7	17.3	27.9	3.5	4.5
Ord NAV	11.9	19.1	22.3	36.3	3.6	5.0
Ord price	11.3	25.9	26.1	30.2	2.0	1.4
ZDP price	0.0	0.0	-2.7	3.8	-0.3	3.3
NSCI (XIC)	8.1	13.3	13.3	25.2	2.9	5.9
FTAS	3.3	4.2	5.5	19.2	3.9	6.0

Notes: 1m, 3m & 6m returns not annualised; Inception = 30 Jun 17; FTAS = FTSE All-Share Index.



Investment commentary

The year ended in an encouraging fashion, with apparent progress towards a trade deal between China and the US. In the UK, one of the extreme political outcomes was avoided, but, with a hard Brexit still on the table, sterling and UK equities have been given pause for thought. Nevertheless, the decisive general election result allowed markets to rally strongly. The NSCI (XIC) returned 8.1%, which out-performed the FTSE All-Share's 3.3%: domestic exposure was sought-after and is greater among smaller companies. Encouragingly, the "smaller smalls" participated in the 'Boris bounce' but style mattered little over the month. The Fund's return was 9.3%.

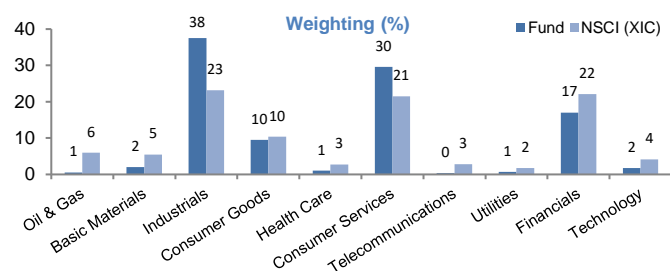
Turning to stocks, UK news publisher Reach stood out: a trading update reported good progress with a number of digital initiatives. Elsewhere, specialist contractor Keller responded well to its update and logistics company Wincanton to a contract renewal. More broadly, post-election optimism buoyed companies sensitive to the economic cycle. Among the holdings, brick manufacturer Forterra, Speedy Hire, DFS Furniture and clothing retailer N Brown all performed strongly.

The only detractor of note was PR company Huntsworth. It was affected by a lacklustre trading update, though consistent with the extreme portfolio valuations noted in previous commentaries, the share price fell by less than the reduced profit expectations.

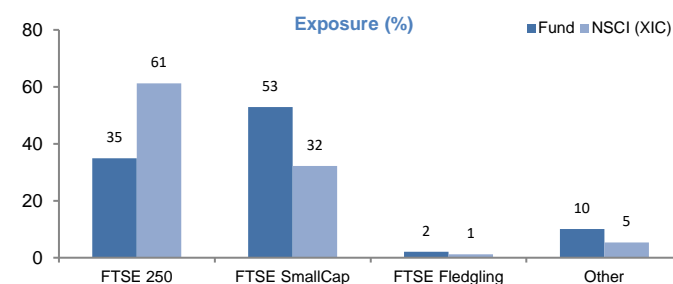
Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
Reach	UK newspaper publisher	3.0
Brewin Dolphin Holdings	Private client fund manager	3.0
Morgan Advanced Materials	Manufacture of carbon & ceramic materials	2.8
Wincanton	Logistics	2.8
Bovis Homes Group	Housebuilding	2.8
Rank Group	Multi-channel gaming operator	2.7
Keller Group	Ground engineering services	2.6
Go-Ahead Group	Bus & rail operator	2.6
TI Fluid Systems	Automotive parts manufacturer	2.5
Vesuvius	Metal flow engineering	2.4

Sector exposure



Size exposure



Gearing

The Fund's Ord shares are geared by the capital entitlement of the ZDP shares which will rise continuously until the planned winding up date of 1 July 2024. The net gearing figure shown in the Key Fund information section is the percentage by which the total value of investments exceeds the total net assets.

Hurdle rates & redemption yields

The Fund's latest hurdle rates and redemption yields are available from the AIC website at www.theaic.co.uk; select Statistics, then ZDP Analytics.

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 (excluding Specials). 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.

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 dividends and 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.

An investment trust is a public limited company, the shares of which are traded on the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange. Accordingly, the ability of shareholders to sell their shares will be dependent on the market price of the shares. The shares may trade at a discount or premium to their net asset value.

Investment trusts may borrow money in order to make further investments. This is known as gearing. The effect of gearing can enhance returns to shareholders in rising markets but will have the opposite effect on returns in falling markets.

The Fund's Ordinary shares (Ords) are geared by the Zero Dividend Preference shares (ZDPs) and rank for repayment of capital after the ZDPs and any creditors of the Fund. A positive net asset value for the Ords will be dependent upon the Fund's assets being sufficient to meet the prior capital entitlements of the holders of the ZDPs. The Ords should therefore be regarded as carrying above average risk. The ZDPs are not a protected or guaranteed investment. In particular, should the Fund be wound up prior to its planned winding up date, holders of ZDPs would only receive their accrued capital entitlement to the date of winding up - which would be less than the final anticipated capital entitlement of the ZDPs.

Aberforth Partners LLP does not 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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Security codes & other information

Ord shares	ZDP shares	Other information
SEDOL: BYPBD39	SEDOL: BYPBD51	Launched: 3 Jul 17
ISIN: GB00BYPBD394	ISIN: GB00BYPBD519	Next year-end: 30 Jun 20
TIDM: ASIT	TIDM: ASIZ	LEI: 21380013QYW082NZV529
Shares in issue: 190,250,000	Shares in issue: 47,562,500	Planned winding-up: 1 Jul 24
Market value: £178m	Market value: £52m	

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