



# Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc

## Monthly Factsheet

31 December 2024

### Fund structure

The Fund is an investment trust – a type of investment company/collective investment fund – with a Premium share listing on the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange.

### Manager: Aberforth Partners

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

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

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

### Benchmark: DNSCI (XIC)

The Fund's benchmark and primary investment universe is the Deutsche 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	350
Total market value	£153bn
Largest constituent	£1.9bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£1.9bn

### Key Fund information

Total investments	£1,497m
Number of investments	79
Active share	78.3%
Gearing - bank debt in use	£104m
Net gearing/(liquidity)	7.2%
Total net assets	£1,397m
Ordinary shares in issue	83,824,605
NAV	1,666.95p
Share price	1,470.00p
Discount/(premium)	11.8%
Market value	£1,232m
Launch date	10 Dec 90
Next year-end	31 Dec 25

### Fees & charges

Management fee* (12m to 31 Dec 23)	0.73%
Performance fee	None
Ongoing charges (at 31 Dec 23 & includes Management fee)	0.79%

\* Further details of the Management fee are available at [www.aberforth.co.uk](http://www.aberforth.co.uk).

### Yield & dividends

Yield	2.9%
Interim dividend (paid 29 Aug 24)	13.60p
Final dividend (paid 8 Mar 24)	28.55p
Special dividend (paid 8 Mar 24)	9.00p

### Objective

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

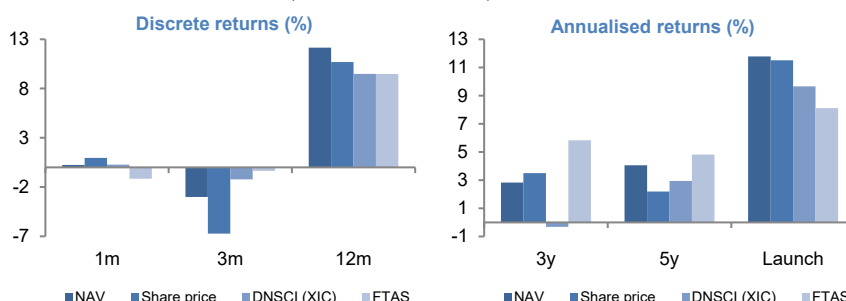
### Investment style: Value

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
NAV	0.2	-3.0	12.1	2.8	4.0	11.8
Share price	1.0	-6.7	10.7	3.5	2.2	11.5
DNSCI (XIC)	0.3	-1.2	9.5	-0.3	2.9	9.7
FTAS	-1.2	-0.4	9.5	5.8	4.8	8.1

Notes: 1m & 3m returns not annualised; Launch date = 10 Dec 90; FTAS = FTSE All-Share Index.



### Monthly investment commentary: December

The US equity market paused for breath in December following a strong year that was turbocharged by Donald Trump's victory in the Presidential Election. UK equities also had a lacklustre month as the market continued to digest October's business-unfriendly Budget.

The FTSE All Share fell by 1.2% in the month, while smaller companies were more robust with the DNSCI (XIC) up by 0.3%. For the year as a whole, both the large cap and small cap indices were up by a respectable 9.5%. Such a return seemed unlikely to many at the end of 2023 given the collective gloominess about the outlook for the UK. The Fund returned 0.2% in December and 12.1% for the year.

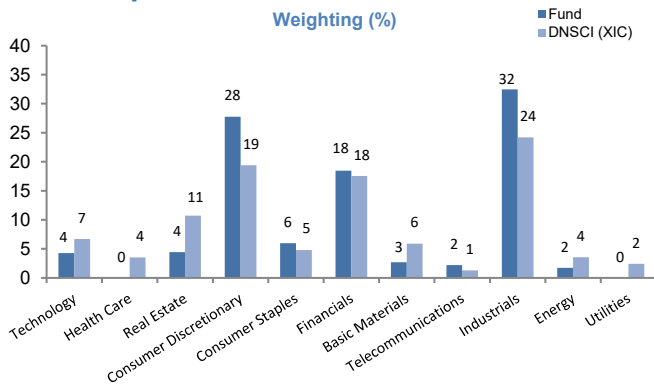
Among positive contributors to performance in a quiet month for news was annuity company **Just Group**. It is benefiting from a busy bulk annuities market, as defined benefit pension funds look to take advantage of funding surpluses. Pub group **Marston's** posted strong results thanks to healthy like-for-like sales and pointed to Christmas bookings being ahead of the previous year. London-based estate agent **Foxtons'** share price recovered from the post-budget fall as housing activity data remained buoyant.

**Videndum**, a provider of products to the content creation market, detracted from performance. Its market is experiencing a slower recovery following the 2023 Hollywood writers' strike. During the first half of 2025, the company will seek to amend banking covenants and to refinance its borrowing facilities. **ZIGUP** posted weaker than expected results as the normalisation of residual values reduced disposal profits in its vehicle rental business. Profit-taking affected the shares of **CMC Markets** during the month.

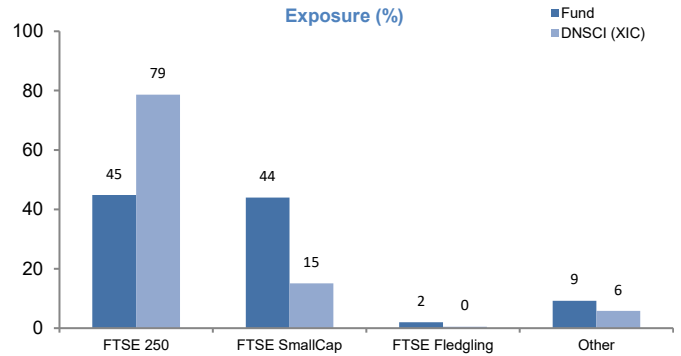
### Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
<b>Wilmington</b>	Business information & training	3.2
<b>Just Group</b>	Annuity provider	3.0
<b>Morgan Advanced Materials</b>	Manufacture of carbon & ceramic materials	2.7
<b>Vesuvius</b>	Metal flow engineering	2.6
<b>TI Fluid Systems</b>	Automotive parts manufacturer	2.5
<b>Galliford Try Holdings</b>	Building & infrastructure contractor	2.5
<b>Bakkavor Group</b>	Food manufacturer	2.3
<b>Quilter</b>	Wealth management	2.3
<b>Zegona Communications</b>	Telecommunications	2.2
<b>ZIGUP</b>	Van rental	2.1

## Sector exposure



## Size exposure



## Gearing

The Fund has a bank debt facility of £130m available for use as gearing by the Manager at any time. The net gearing/(liquidity) figure shown in the Key Fund information section indicates the percentage by which the total value of investments exceeds the total net assets.

## Continuation vote & share buy-backs

The continuation of the Fund is voted on by shareholders at every 3<sup>rd</sup> AGM. The next vote will occur at the AGM in March 2026.

The Fund operates a share buy-back policy. A list of the buy-back transactions during the last 5 years is available at [www.aberforth.co.uk](http://www.aberforth.co.uk).

## 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 (excluding Specials). Active share is a measure of how the Fund's portfolio differs from the DNSCI (XIC). Small companies are represented by the DNSCI (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 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.

Further information on the Fund, including the Key Information Document, is available on request or via the Aberforth website [www.aberforth.co.uk](http://www.aberforth.co.uk).

**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

Ordinary shares of 1p	Other information
SEDOL: 0006655	Launched: 10 Dec 90
ISIN: GB0000066554	Next year-end: 31 Dec 25
TIDM: ASL	LEI: 213800GZ9WC73A92Q326

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(T) 0131 220 0733

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