



Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc

Monthly Factsheet

31 July 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.

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	337
Total market value	£155bn
Largest constituent	£2.5bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£1.8bn

Key Fund information

Total investments	£1,599m
Number of investments	79
Active share	73.0%
Gearing - bank debt in use	£98m
Net gearing/(liquidity)	5.8%
Total net assets	£1,511m
Ordinary shares in issue	84,139,605
NAV	1,796.15p
Share price	1,672.00p
Discount/(premium)	6.9%
Market value	£1,407m
Launch date	10 Dec 90
Next year-end	31 Dec 24

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.

Yield & dividends

Yield	2.5%
Interim dividend (payable 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.

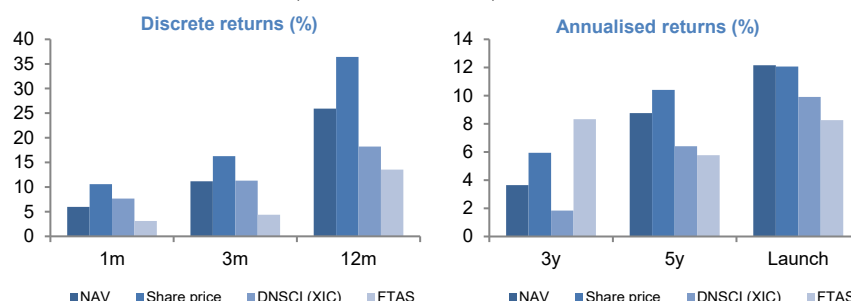
Investment style: Value

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	6.0	11.2	25.9	3.6	8.8	12.2
Share price	10.6	16.3	36.4	5.9	10.4	12.1
DNSCI (XIC)	7.7	11.3	18.2	1.8	6.4	9.9
FTAS	3.1	4.4	13.5	8.3	5.8	8.3

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



Monthly investment commentary: July

In a month that began with the election of a new government, July was positive for the UK equity market. It outperformed its global peers, with the large-cap dominated FTSE All-Share rising by 3.1%. Within the Fund's opportunity set, "larger small" companies tend to lead the way against "smaller smalls" during sharp market rallies. This was in evidence in the DNSCI (XIC)'s 7.7% jump in July. The Fund, which has a relatively low exposure to the "larger smalls", generated a total return of 6.0%.

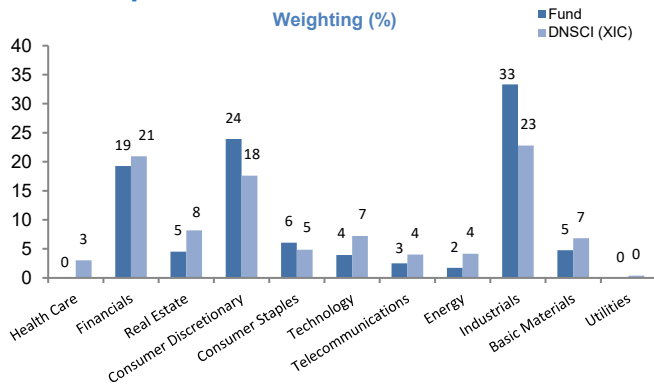
The Fund's laggards included **Robert Walters**, the recruiter. A trading update detailed the difficult conditions the sector continues to face and pushed out the expectations for any material improvement in trading. **XP Power**, the power controls manufacturer, was weak in the wake of a takeover approach from Advanced Energy falling away in June. Sticking to the theme of heightened M&A interest in the UK market, not owning Ascential in the Fund hindered relative performance after the company received a takeover bid from Informa.

Leading positive contributors were **Galliford Try**, the contractor, and **Marston's**, the pub company. Galliford released an update that pointed to its performance for the full year reaching the top end of expectations and presented a positive trading outlook. Marston's had a busy month, starting with the appointment of Ken Lever as chairman. The sale of its stake in the brewing JV to Carlsberg was announced, which helped to reduce the company's debt. Finally, a trading update confirmed the business was on track to meet year end expectations.

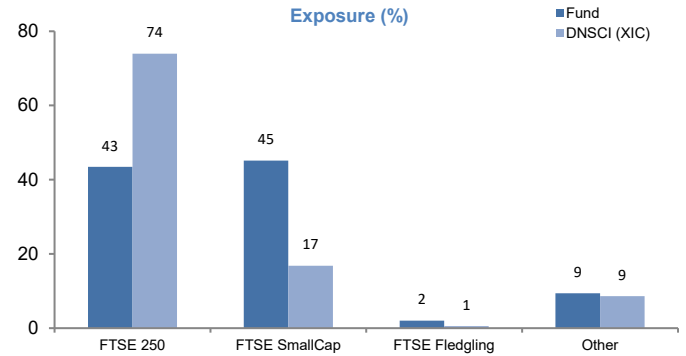
Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
Wilmington	Business publishing & training	3.1
CMC Markets	Financial derivatives trading platform	2.9
Morgan Advanced Materials	Manufacture of carbon & ceramic materials	2.9
Just Group	Annuity provider	2.6
ZIGUP	Van rental	2.5
International Personal Finance	Home credit provider	2.5
Bakkavor Group	Food manufacturer	2.4
Vesuvius	Metal flow engineering	2.2
Centamin	Gold miner	2.1
Mitchells & Butlers	Operator of restaurants, pubs & bars	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 3rd 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.

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.

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 24
TIDM: ASL	LEI: 213800GZ9WC73A92Q326

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