



# Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc

## Monthly Factsheet

28 February 2025

### Fund structure

The Fund is a closed ended investment company and its Ordinary shares are listed 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	348
Total market value	£150bn
Largest constituent	£2.4bn
Largest constituent if index rebalanced at Factsheet date	£2.1bn

### Key Fund information

Total investments	£1,368m
Number of investments	80
Active share	78.9%
Gearing - bank debt in use	£84m
Net gearing/(liquidity)	8.6%
Total net assets	£1,260m
Ordinary shares in issue	82,754,105
NAV	1,522.40p
Share price	1,352.00p
Discount/(premium)	11.2%
Market value	£1,119m
Launch date	10 Dec 90
Next year-end	31 Dec 25

### Fees & charges

Management fee* (12m to 31 Dec 24)	0.72%
Performance fee	None
Ongoing charges (at 31 Dec 24 & includes Management fee)	0.78%

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

### Yield & dividends

Yield	3.2%
Interim dividend (paid 29 Aug 24)	13.60p
Final dividend (payable 10 Mar 25)	30.00p
Special dividend (payable 10 Mar 25)	6.00p

### 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.

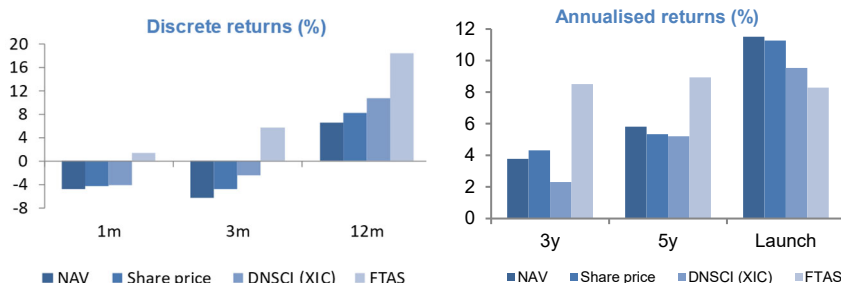
### Investment style: Value

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	-4.9	-6.4	6.5	3.8	5.8	11.5
Share price	-4.2	-4.8	8.2	4.3	5.3	11.3
DNSCI (XIC)	-4.1	-2.4	10.7	2.3	5.2	9.5
FTAS	1.3	5.7	18.4	8.5	8.9	8.3

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



### Monthly investment commentary: February

As markets digested the Trump administration's plans, equities were mixed in February. The US and Japanese markets fell sharply into the month end, while European equities were stronger. Within the UK, size was a significant influence on performance. The large cap FTSE 100 index rose by 2%, while the mid cap FTSE 250 fell by 2.9% and the small cap DNSCI (XIC) fell 4.1%. Smaller companies tend to be more reliant on the domestic economy, where conditions and forecasts remain insipid in the wake of the Budget. The Fund fell by 4.9%. As was the case in January, it suffered from its relatively high exposure to the "smaller small" within the DNSCI (XIC).

The main detractor from the Fund's performance was **Morgan Advanced Materials**. The company warned about weaker trading for 2025 as industrial markets deteriorate. It also signalled a slowdown in capital expenditure on new capacity to serve the power semiconductor market, which has previously been signalled as an exciting growth area for the business. **Wilmington** was also weak following the release of its interim results. These were good overall but showed slowing growth in the US healthcare sector.

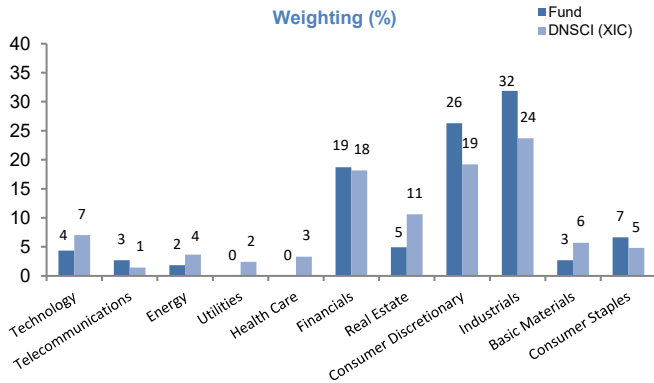
The Fund's top contributors were **Zegona Communications** and **Bakkavor**. **Zegona** rallied early in the month on no specific news, but disclosures to debt holders later in the month revealed good progress with the turnaround of Vodafone Spain. **Bakkavor** rallied through the month as the market digested a positive January trading update that had reiterated progress toward the company's operating margin target.

Among non-holdings, strong share price moves from TBC Bank, Wizz Air and Ithaca Energy detracted from relative performance. Conversely, weakness in Raspberry Pi, Indivior and Oxford Nanopore contributed to the Fund's relative standing.

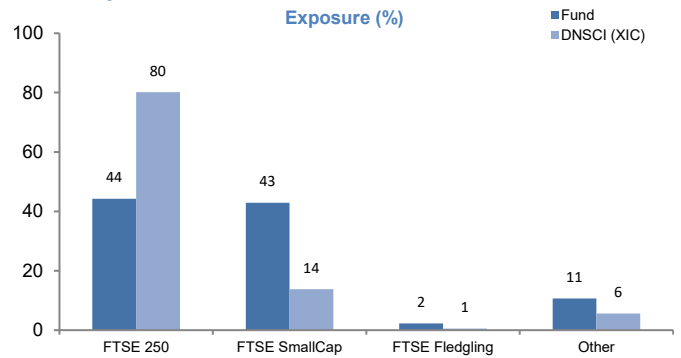
### Top 10 equity investments

Name	Activity	%
<b>Wilmington</b>	Business information & training	3.1
<b>Just Group</b>	Annuity provider	2.7
<b>Vesuvius</b>	Metal flow engineering	2.7
<b>Zegona Communications</b>	Telecommunications	2.7
<b>Bakkavor Group</b>	Food manufacturer	2.6
<b>Galliford Try Holdings</b>	Building & infrastructure contractor	2.4
<b>Morgan Advanced Materials</b>	Manufacture of carbon & ceramic materials	2.3
<b>ZIGUP</b>	Van rental	2.2
<b>Senior</b>	Aerospace & automotive engineering	2.2
<b>Dowlais Group</b>	Automotive parts manufacturer	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 Deutsche 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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