



investment architecture

TM Fulcrum Diversified Absolute Return
Fund

Assessment of Value Report

For the year ended
31 March 2023

Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Fund Information

Fund objective:	<p>The investment objective of the Fund is to aim to achieve long-term absolute returns of inflation + 3% to 5% in all market conditions over rolling five year annualised periods, with lower volatility than equity markets. In doing so the Fund aims to achieve a positive return on a rolling three year basis. However, a positive return is not guaranteed and a capital loss may occur.</p> <p>Investors should be aware that the investors' capital is, in fact at risk, and there is no guarantee that these returns will be achieved, whether over rolling five year periods, or any time period.</p>
Fund size:	£637,147,886.58
Performance comparator:	UK RPI +3% (Cumulative)

Assessment of Value

The Board of the Authorised Fund Manager (AFM) is required to perform an annual Assessment of Value for each share class within the fund and to report its findings to investors.

The Assessment of Value places a responsibility on the AFM to determine whether the fees and charges of the fund are justified in the context of the overall service and value provided to investors.

Following the introduction of the Assessment of Value requirement in 2019, we appointed two independent non-executive directors with a particular remit to oversee and challenge the Assessment of Value process conducted in relation to the fund.

In this Assessment of Value report, we have used a traffic light system whereby:



The fund has delivered value to investors



The fund has delivered some value to investors but action is needed to improve value delivery



The fund has not delivered value to investors and action is needed before value will be delivered

Independent AFM model – terminology

The AFM has the regulatory responsibility for all aspects of the fund operations including the actions of its delegates. Its role requires a focus on good investor outcomes, investor protection, oversight, compliance and general regulatory matters.

The Investment Manager is appointed by the AFM and has the full discretion to manage the assets of the portfolio in accordance with the fund's objective and investment policy. The Investment Manager is the entity which delivers out- or under-performance on behalf of investors. It is the entity which in turn receives the greatest share of the Annual Management Charge.

The Investment Manager and the AFM can be part of the same organisation or separate. When they are separate the fund can be described as having an Independent AFM which is the case with the TM Fulcrum Diversified Absolute Return Fund.

Background to our firm – Independent AFM

Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited is a specialist provider of independent AFM services. Our approach to delivering good outcomes for investors in our funds, from the initial design phase and throughout the fund life cycle, is based upon having the right blend of experience, culture and governance.

We choose to work with a variety of service providers (fund accountants, depositaries, transfer agents and auditors) and provide independent, bespoke and flexible solutions. By outsourcing day-to-day activity to specialist providers our teams can focus on investor outcomes, risk management, oversight, product governance and regulatory change.

We delegate fund servicing to a panel of reputable institutions. Consequently, we have an informed view of this part of the supply chain. We benchmark those fund servicers against a range of criteria including service and cost. We build close relationships with our delegates at all levels within our respective organisations allowing for effective escalation when appropriate and always with the best interests of investors in mind. We are also able to change a service provider with relative ease as and when required to improve quality of service, reduce cost or for other strategic or operational reasons.

We delegate investment management to a wide range of firms who utilise different strategies and investment techniques. As such we have a broad and informed view of the investment management marketplace and independently benchmark across a range of criteria including service, performance and costs. Coming from a fund management background we have qualified investment managers and research analysts within our AFM business who have the experience to monitor fund performance and challenge third party investment managers on behalf of investors in the funds.

Overall Assessment of Value

Following our assessment, the board of Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited has concluded its assessment of value for each share class as follows:

Share class	Independent AFM service & costs	Service provider service & costs	Investment manager service & costs	Quality of service	Performance	Costs	Economies of scale	Comparable market rates	Comparable services	Classes of shares	Overall
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	



Independent AFM – service and costs

In assessing the quality and cost of our independent AFM service we have concluded that we have delivered a service that meets the requirements of investors in the funds, and the fund sponsor, and which has delivered value.

Examples of the criteria that we considered included the operation and compliance of the fund (including the number of errors and investor complaints), the results from the depositary's inspection and audit of our AFM arrangements, and other factors such as the implementation of regulatory change at no cost to investors.

We judge whether our AFM fee is competitive and can be justified based on feedback from independent consultants, our clients who select us and when existing funds move to us from our competitors. Our fees are tiered thereby providing economies of scale for investors as the fund value increases.



Service provider service and costs

Having separately assessed the quality and cost of the outsourced fund service providers we have concluded that services have met the requirements expected and delivered value to investors.

Examples of the criteria that we considered included Key Performance Indicators in the key areas including pricing, delivery of statements, delivery of report and accounts, and investor complaints.

We have assessed that the service providers' fees are competitive and provide value to investors by benchmarking against the other service providers on our panel. The majority of fees are tiered thereby providing a mechanism for economies of scale as the fund value increases.

Investment manager service and costs

It is our judgement that the experience of investors in the fund and an assessment of whether the fund has delivered value is most directly impacted by the services, performance and costs that are attributable to the Investment Manager. Further details of our value assessment, with a particular focus on the Investment Manager, are shown below:



Quality of service

The range and quality of service delivered by the Investment Manager including the experience of the team, track record, quality of relationship with our AFM team, and the results from our governance and oversight arrangements

We monitor the Investment Manager on a daily basis, and maintain frequent contact with them on a range of aspects of their work including adherence with the investment mandate and policy, liquidity management, and fair value pricing as well as regulatory compliance. We have more formal contact quarterly and further periodic reviews on a thematic basis.

We are satisfied that the Investment Manager continues to meet our requirements and provides a good quality of service.

Performance

Whether the fund has provided good performance, net of fees, in relation to its investment objective. We have considered performance against the fund's benchmark and/or appropriate peer group, compliance with investment policy, volatility and liquidity, and any evidence of closet tracking.

Volatility is a measure of the variability of return from the investment over a past period of time. A higher number indicates a wider variety of outcomes, positive or negative, versus expectation and can therefore be indicative of risk.

The fund has three investment objectives and below we have measured each share class against those and included an overall performance rating for each share class:


Long-term absolute returns of inflation + 3% - 5%

Class/Comparator	1 year performance (%)	3 year performance (%)	5 year performance (%)	Value
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc	-3.34	12.10	12.25	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc	-3.54	12.01	14.56	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc	-4.80	9.49	7.85	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc	-3.10	12.94	13.67	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc	-2.37	15.84	18.32	
UK RPI +3% (Cumulative)	16.91	37.12	52.96	

Lower volatility than equity markets






Class/Comparator	1 year volatility (%)	3 year volatility (%)	5 year volatility (%)	Value
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc	4.18	4.65	4.91	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc	4.23	4.66	4.89	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc	4.18	4.68	4.93	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc	4.19	4.65	4.91	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc	4.19	4.65	4.92	
Equity markets	21.22	17.21	17.07	

Positive return on a rolling three year basis

Class/Comparator	3 year performance (%)	Value
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc	12.10	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc	12.01	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc	9.49	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc	12.94	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc	15.84	

Overall performance rating

While the investment performance against the investment objective would suggest a red rating for this criteria, we have taken into account the exceptional inflation rates seen since 2021 and additionally evaluated the performance of the fund against its Investment Association peer group where it has performed above the median over both 3 and 5 years. We have also taken into account the fact that it has, at all points during the five years, met its objective of delivering a positive return over 3 years. As a result we rate the overall investment performance amber.

Class/Comparator	1 year performance (%)	3 year performance (%)	5 year performance (%)	Value
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc	-3.34	12.10	12.25	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc	-3.54	12.01	14.56	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc	-4.80	9.49	7.85	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc	-3.10	12.94	13.67	
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc	-2.37	15.84	18.32	
IA Targeted Absolute Return peer group median	0.40	12.10	10.70	



Costs

Whether the charges are reasonable compared with the costs of providing the service (considering factors such as the size of the Investment Manager, its balance sheet strength and profit margins).

At a fund size of £637,147,886.58, we are concerned that manager costs are relatively high compared to the benefits being generated for investors.



Economies of Scale

Is the fund or the Investment Manager of a size or scale where economies of scale should be passed on to investors.

In the Investment Manager's view, the fund does not currently meet a size criteria which generates economies of scale. We are in active discussion with them about how they consider this including the extent to which account should be taken of other funds following the same or very similar strategies in their analysis.

Comparable market rates

Whether the charges are comparable with similar funds in this sector of the market.

As an independent AFM we operate multiple funds. We appoint different service providers and a wide range of Investment Managers and can readily benchmark fees. Similar funds are defined as those in the same sector and of a similar size to this fund.

The AFM uses a peer group to compare the overall cost of this fund. The peer group has been selected for cost comparison purposes because the asset parameters for its constituent funds are broadly similar to those of this fund and they are of a similar size. The peer group may include funds managed under a range of strategies. Where the peer group includes funds managed wholly or materially through investment in passive assets, these will generally have lower costs than actively managed funds, which are typically more expensive. Similarly, where the peer group includes active funds managed wholly or materially through investment in other funds, these are typically more expensive than directly invested funds.



TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is higher than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.



TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is higher than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.



TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is higher than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.



TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is higher than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.



TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is lower than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.

Class/Peer group	OCF (%)
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc	1.45
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc	1.20
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc	1.20
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc	1.20
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc	0.45
IA Targeted Absolute Return average OCF	0.89
IA Targeted Absolute Return highest OCF	2.17



Comparable services

How the charges compare to other comparable funds that the Investment Manager manages.

The investment manager's charges for comparable services to other investors are in line with the charges borne by each class in the fund.



Classes of shares

Whether investors are invested in a share class with higher charges than another class which is available. We have also considered different fees which apply to retail and institutional investors where institutional investors are subject to a significantly higher minimum investment.

The OCF of class C is 0.25% lower than the A class. This represents the discount provided for larger holders. The differential has been considered reasonable and justifiable on the basis that large holders increase the fund size and the potential economies of scale, with reduced operational workload and risk. Class D shares are only available to the investment manager.

Overall Assessment of Value

Following our assessment, the board of Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited has concluded its assessment of value for each share class as follows:



TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret A GBP Acc
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C AUD Acc
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C EUR Acc
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret C GBP Acc
TM Fulcrum Diversified Abs Ret D GBP Acc

Have delivered some value to investors but action is needed to improve value delivery.

With effect from 1st July 2023, the Investment Manager's annual charge for class A shares has been reduced from 1% to 0.75%.

The ACD has also taken steps to change the comparator of inflation plus 3 to 5% to a more appropriate benchmark. Investors will be notified once approval is received from the FCA.