

# DEFENSIVE CORE PORTFOLIO



**Objective:** To preserve and grow the real (inflation adjusted) value of capital, in most market conditions, from a defensive mix of assets.

## Investor Profile

The Defensive Core Portfolio aims to cater for retail or professional investors, over the long-term, looking for:



### Capital Stability/Preservation

A diversified portfolio, with a bias towards defensive assets.



### Inflation beating returns

Total returns keeping pace with/ahead of inflation.



### Actively managed portfolio

An actively managed portfolio under responsible stewardship.



### Volatility less than equity investing

Returns that are less volatile than investing solely in equities.

## Key Information

Inception Date: **31st December 2021**

Base Currency: **GBP**

Minimum Investment: **Platform dependent**

Available Share Class: **Accumulation**

Historic Yield: **2.91%**

Accessibility: **GIA, ISA, PP, SIPP**

Number of Holdings: **22**

Growth Assets: **20% Range\***: 10% - 30%

\*Expected range. Actual allocation may be more or less than this.

## Portfolio Charges

Initial Charge: **0%**

Portfolio Management Fee: **0.30%**

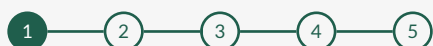
Ongoing Cost of Funds (OCF): **0.21%**

**Total Portfolio Cost: 0.51%\***

\*A professional adviser's initial and ongoing charge may be applied, subject to agreement between client and adviser. Fund transaction costs will apply, and will likely average between 0.05%-0.15% across the portfolio, depending on funds held. Other charges may also apply. OCF figure will vary.

## Portfolio Risk

Potentially lower rewards Potentially higher rewards



Lower risk Higher risk

The portfolio is in this category due to historic risk and return characteristics demonstrated in the performance simulation, alongside the expected growth asset range between 20% - 40%. A risk indicator of "1" does not mean the investment is risk free.

## Market and Portfolio Update

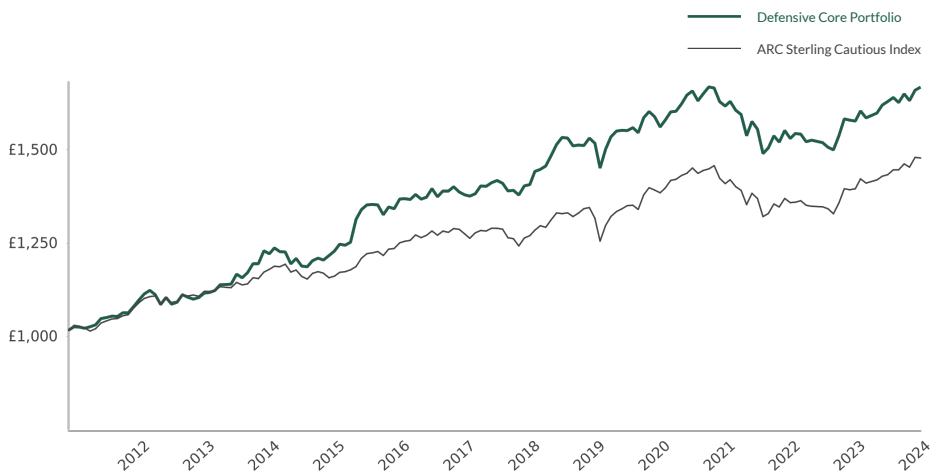
President Trump continues to redefine US relations with the world, putting pressure on Europe to increase defence spending and pressing forward with tariffs on key trading partners. However, stock market leadership so far this year has come from Europe and Asia and not the US, where the post-election 'Trump bump' has been fading. Inflation refuses to be cowed and hovering at 3% year-on-year is causing angst for central bankers who'd prefer to be cutting interest rates to support growth. The path to peace in Ukraine is not going to be a straight one, as Zelensky's public dressing down in the White House at the end of the month proves. Europe is feeling a little isolated, although it's been good news for the region's defence companies, whose share prices have reacted warmly on the need to rearm the bloc. Nevertheless, peace could be a boost to Europe's economy and stock markets, not least because it could lead to lower energy prices, which would be good news for all.

### Portfolio Positioning/Changes

Whilst a global recession over the next 12 months remains possible, we believe that a severe economic slowdown does not look imminent. Within equities, we have reduced exposure to the US after such a strong run of returns and increased exposure to better valued emerging markets, as well as listed infrastructure, a defensive sector which has tended to perform well when interest rates have peaked. Given the rise in bond yields, we believe the case for bonds is more attractive now than it has for years. Our preference remains for high quality bonds, a reduced sensitivity to interest rates and increased exposure to inflation linked bonds, given the uncertain path ahead for inflation.

## Performance

Aspen (the investment manager) have been running portfolios since 31/12/2020. Live portfolio start dates differ across the Aspen range, so we have provided additional **simulated returns\***, where applicable, to help investors understand the risk and reward characteristics of the portfolio over a longer period of time. All returns are net of fees\*\*. **Past performance is not a guide to future returns.**



Cumulative Performance	1m	3m	6m	1y	3y	5y	YTD
Defensive Core Portfolio	0.50%	1.09%	2.35%	6.47%	5.01%	9.77%	2.21%
ARC Sterling Cautious Index	-0.10%	1.37%	2.78%	6.05%	5.37%	12.81%	1.70%

Performance is calculated through FE Analytics and provided for illustrative purposes only and should not be viewed as the performance of a specific client account.

\*Based on historical data for the portfolio strategic asset allocation (SAA). Not a guarantee of return. Future returns may be below or above those stated. Source: FE Analytics; Aspen. For further information on the SAA or performance, please contact Aspen.

\*\*Fees assumed to be 0.65% for simulated returns. For live data fees are net of underlying fund costs and Aspen management fee.

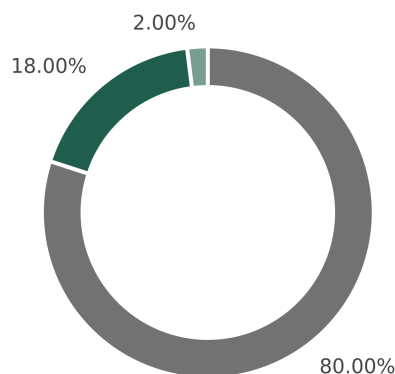
February 2025

All data as of 28 February 2025



## Asset Allocation

Indicative\* asset allocation, for the strategy:



### Defensive Assets

#### ● Fixed income

Consists of a core component of sovereign and corporate bonds, complemented by tactical funds.

### Growth Assets

#### ● Equities

Consist of a core component of domestic and overseas equities, complemented by tactical funds.

#### ● Real Assets

Real Assets are those most sensitive to changes in inflation and include commodities, property and infrastructure.

## Fund Selection

Indicative\* fund selection, for the strategy:

Fund Name	Allocation / Change**
<b>Fixed Income</b>	
Vanguard UK Short-Term Investment Grade Fund	11.75%
iShares Global Inflation-Linked Bond Fund	9.75%
abrdrn Short Dated Global Inflation-Linked Bond Tracker	9.75%
Vanguard Global Short-Term Bond Index Fund	8.50%
iShares UK Gilts All Stocks Index Fund	8.50%
Vanguard Global Bond Fund	8.25%
Artemis Short Duration Strategic Bond Fund	7.50%
Pictet Strategic Credit Fund	7.50%
Royal London Short-Duration Gilts Fund	3.75%
Vanguard US Government Bond Index Fund	3.25%
Cash	1.50%
<b>Equities</b>	
Dimensional Global Value Fund	3.50%
GMO Quality Fund	3.00%
Vanguard Global Small-Cap Index Fund	2.25%
Vanguard FTSE All Share Fund	2.25%
HSBC FTSE All-World Index Fund	1.75%
Fidelity Emerging Markets Index Fund	1.25%
HSBC European Index Fund	1.25%
Pacific North of South EM All Cap Equity Fund	1.00%
UBS MSCI World Minimum Volatility Index Equity Fund	1.00%
iShares Japan Equity Index Fund	0.75%
<b>Real Assets</b>	
L&G Global Infrastructure Index Fund	1.00%
Neuberger Berman Commodities Fund	1.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Actual portfolio asset allocation and fund selection may vary.

\*\*Increase or decrease in fund during the month, as illustrated.

## Your Investment Professionals

### Financial Adviser

Your financial adviser is your main point of contact, guiding you in overall wealth planning.

**For more information, please contact your adviser.**

### Investment Manager

Professional relationship with your adviser, focused on managing your investments.

#### Aspen Advisers

4 Albyn Place  
Edinburgh  
EH2 4NG

## Risk Warnings & Disclaimer

The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up and investors may not recover the amount of their original investment. The sterling value of overseas investments, and the income from them, will fluctuate as a result of currency movements. Past performance is not a guide to future performance. Investors should be aware of the additional risks associated with funds investing in certain areas of the market or assets, such as smaller companies or emerging markets. The tax treatment of investments depends on each investor's individual circumstances and is subject to changes in tax legislation.

Aspen, as the investment manager, is responsible for managing the portfolio on a discretionary basis in accordance with the stated investment objectives and risk profile for the portfolio. The professional adviser is responsible for advising their client as to the selection of a portfolio and for assessing the suitability of the chosen portfolio for their client on an ongoing basis.

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