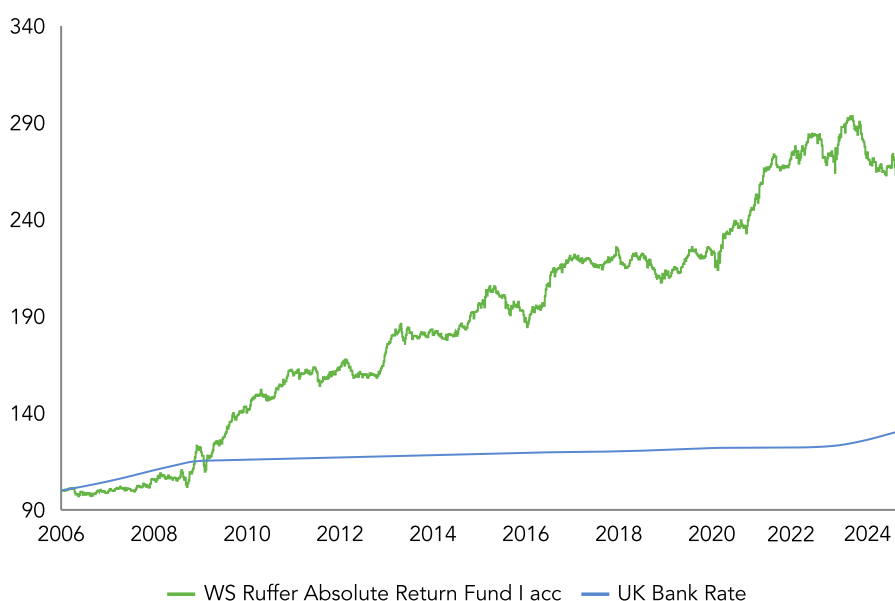


# WS Ruffer Absolute Return Fund

SHARE PRICE PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH ON 31 JANUARY 2006



Global asset markets started the year almost unanimously priced for a perfect soft landing, following the strong rally in both equities and bonds into the year end. This left scope for disappointment in January if either assumption of early interest rate cuts or steady growth were dialled back. In the end it was bonds that gave way as doubts emerged over the speed of likely US rate cuts, whilst equities in aggregate continued to make gains. Tensions in the Middle East remained high, leading to the oil price rising 6% and freight costs rising sharply to more than double the post-covid low seen in October. As yet this has had no impact on inflation expectations, with markets now convinced that this dragon has been slain.

The backup in bond yields, especially in the UK, meant that our remaining holding in long-duration UK inflation-linked bonds was a drag on performance. Having chosen to add risk into portfolios through a significant increase in bond duration in the final quarter of 2023, we took the profits on this position by the year end, adding instead to our net equity exposure this month, in light of continued US economic resilience. We believed yields had fallen too far, too fast, given our concerns over the likely stickiness and volatility of inflation, and so started this year with just a core holding in UK inflation-linked bonds. This was the largest detractor to performance in the month, but we see this as temporary volatility in a core element of our long-term inflation protections. Gold and gold equities also fell back in January.

Global equities were positive overall in January, with the S&P 500 hitting an all-time high during the month. However, it is worth remembering this merely constitutes a recovery from the 2022 bear market, with equities still broadly flat over the last two years and in our view does little to support the current, almost euphoric, levels of stock market positioning. Once again, as we saw last year, equity gains in January remained narrowly based. The S&P 500 rose 1.7% in the month, but the equal weighted version was in negative territory. There has also been what might be considered a worrying concentration of performance within the dominant mega-cap tech stocks. NVIDIA and Meta recorded double digit gains, but Tesla fell 20%, and Apple and Alphabet were flat to down. Elsewhere, investors continued to shun value, with the cheapest markets (China, emerging markets and the UK) all down on the month. For us, the UK appears anomalously undervalued while China now seems to be pricing in despair.

Overall, the big questions for investors remain unresolved. Most equity markets have now recovered their 2022 losses and are increasingly priced on the assumption that inflation will fall to target and stay there, without a decline in profit margins or economic growth. Bond markets appear to be more realistically pricing in a regime of higher interest rates, even if they show periods of over optimism. Has the Fed 'put' now been restored, with the central bank free to cut rates if growth falters, or will sticky and volatile inflation leave them facing more difficult choices? In other words, are equities and bonds still positively correlated or have we returned to the 'Goldilocks' conditions of the pre-covid era? We remain unconvinced that inflation has vanished for good and that there will be no lasting impact from higher interest rates. Therefore protection remains key to the Ruffer portfolio.

## I CLASS JANUARY 2024

Performance I acc %	GBP
January	-2.2
Year to date	-2.2
1 year	-8.7
3 years pa	2.3
5 years pa	4.5
10 years pa	3.9
Since inception pa	5.6

Share price, p	
I GBP acc	266.56
I GBP inc	191.55
Dividend yield	2.55

	Net	Gross
Duration (years)	2.7	3.0
Equity exposure %	21.0	16.8

I acc GBP	Volatility %	Sharpe	Sortino
3 years	6.1	0.0	0.0
5 years	6.4	0.5	0.7
10 years	5.9	0.5	0.8
Since inception	6.7	0.6	1.0

### 12 month performance to 31 December 2023

%	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
RARF I acc	8.7	9.7	10.0	6.8	-6.3
UK Bank Rate	0.7	0.2	0.1	1.5	4.7

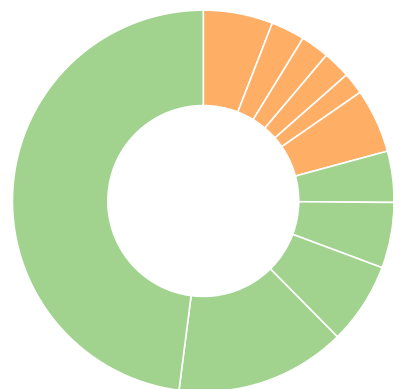
One to twelve month performance figures are cumulative, all others are annualised. Source: Ruffer LLP, Bloomberg. The comparator benchmark shown in this document is as stated in the fund's prospectus. I class performance data calculated prior to the inception date, 8 Aug 2012, is based upon a simulated/extended track record, using the track record of WS Ruffer Absolute Return Fund C acc. Ruffer performance is shown after deduction of all fees and management charges, and on the basis of income being reinvested. Past performance is not a guide to future performance. The value of the shares and the income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount originally invested. The value of overseas investments will be influenced by the rate of exchange.

## INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE

To seek to achieve positive returns in all market conditions over any 12 month period, after all costs and charges have been taken. Underlying this objective is a fundamental philosophy of capital preservation. Capital invested is at risk and there is no guarantee that a positive return will be delivered over any 12 month period.

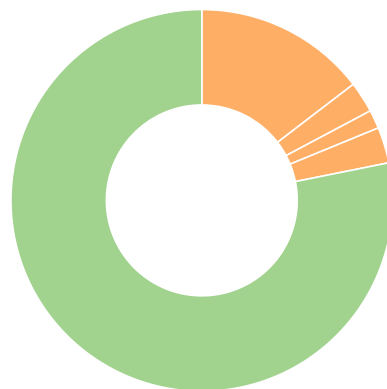
# WS Ruffer Absolute Return Fund 31 Jan 24

## ASSET ALLOCATION



Asset allocation	%
Short-dated bonds	48.0
Cash	14.4
Long-dated index-linked gilts	6.9
Index-linked gilts	5.6
Gold exposure and gold equities	4.3
Credit and derivative strategies	-1.9
Commodity exposure	5.9
Consumer discretionary equities	2.9
Energy equities	2.4
Financials equities	2.3
Consumer staples equities	1.8
Other equities	7.3

## CURRENCY ALLOCATION



Currency allocation	%
Sterling	78.2
Yen	14.6
US dollar	2.6
Euro	1.6
Other	3.0

Geographical equity allocation	%
UK equities	6.4
Asia ex-Japan equities	4.2
North America equities	3.4
Europe equities	2.3
Other equities	0.4

## 5 LARGEST EQUITY HOLDINGS

Stock	% of fund
BP	2.0
iShares MSCI China A UCITS ETF	1.9
Alibaba Group ADR	1.0
TSMC ADR	0.7
Coty	0.4

Largest equity holdings exclude Ruffer funds | Source: Ruffer LLP | Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

## RUFFER LLP

Ruffer LLP manages investments on a discretionary basis for private clients, trusts, charities and pension funds. As at 31 December 2023, assets managed by the Ruffer Group exceeded £23.7bn.

**FUND SIZE £2,738.3M**

## FUND INFORMATION

Annual management charge %	1.0	
Maximum initial charge %	7.5	
Minimum investment (or equivalent in other currency)	£25m	
Ongoing Charges Figure %	1.01	
Cut offs	10am on Wednesday (where it is a business day) and the last business day of the month	
Dealing frequency	Weekly forward, every Wednesday where this is a business day, plus the last business day of the month	
Ex dividend dates	15 Mar, 15 Sep	
Pay dates	15 May, 15 Nov	
Investment adviser	Ruffer LLP	
Depository	The Bank of New York Mellon (International) Limited	
Authorised Corporate Director	Waystone Management (UK) Limited	
Auditors	Ernst & Young LLP	
Structure	Sub-fund of Asperior Investment Funds (OEIC) UK domiciled UCITS Eligible for ISAs	
Share class	ISIN	SEDOL
I GBP acc	GB00B81SXL02	B81SXL0
I GBP inc	GB00B83HRZ70	B83HRZ7

## ENQUIRIES

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## DEALING LINE

0345 601 9610

## FUND TEAM



**Steve Russell**  
FUND MANAGER

Graduated from the University of Oxford in PPE and started work as an equity analyst at Confederation Life in 1987, progressing to Head of Equities. In 1999 he moved to HSBC Investment Bank as Head of UK and European Equity Strategy, before joining Ruffer in 2003. He is co-manager of two of Ruffer's flagship funds.



**Jos North**  
FUND MANAGER

Joined Ruffer in 2012 and now leads Ruffer's UK institutional business, including UK defined benefit, defined contribution and local government pension schemes, and UK charities. He is a member of the CISI and co-manages two of Ruffer's flagship funds.

## GLOSSARY

**Volatility** measures the extent to which returns vary over a given period. High volatility means returns have been more variable over time

**Duration** measures the sensitivity of a bond or fixed income portfolio's price to changes in interest rates. The higher the duration, the more sensitive the price or portfolio is to changes in interest rates

**UK Bank Rate** the rate the Bank of England charges banks and financial institutions for loans with a maturity of one day

**Sharpe ratio** measures the performance of an investment, adjusting for the amount of risk taken (compared to risk-free). The higher the ratio, the better the returns compared to the risk taken

**Sortino ratio** measures the extra return an investment makes for each unit of bad risk (the chance of losing money below a certain target)

## DISCLAIMER

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The information contained in this document does not constitute investment advice and should not be used as the basis of any investment decision. References to specific securities are included for the purposes of illustration only and should not be construed as a recommendation to buy or sell these securities. Ruffer LLP has not considered the suitability of this fund against any specific investor's needs and/or risk tolerance. If you are in any doubt, please speak to your financial adviser.

The fund data displayed is designed only to provide summary information and the report does not explain the risks involved in investing in the fund. Any decision to invest must be based solely on the information contained in the Prospectus, Key Investor Information Document and the latest report and accounts.

The fund's prospectus and key investor information documents are provided in English and available on request or from [ruffer.co.uk/rarf](http://ruffer.co.uk/rarf) WS Ruffer Absolute Return Fund is a UK UCITS and is not registered for distribution in any country other than the UK. In line with the Prospectus, it is possible at any one time the WS Ruffer Absolute Return Fund may invest more than 35% of its assets in transferable securities issued or guaranteed by an EEA state, one or more local authorities, a third country or a public international body to which one or more EEA States belong. The only aforementioned securities where Ruffer would currently consider holding more than 35% would be UK or US government issued transferable securities.

