Our Guide to Investment Solutions

ArmstrongWatson®
Financial Planning & Wealth Management

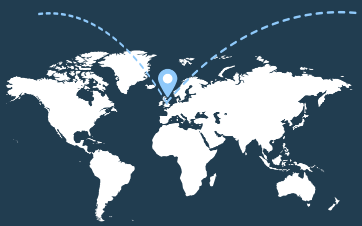
www.armstrongwatson.co.uk

Our four stages of Assurance

Stage 1: Armstrong Watson Financial Planning & Wealth Management

We act as independent whole of market advisers to select the appropriate multi-asset solutions that are available in the marketplace.

ArmstrongWatson®
Financial Planning & Wealth Management



Stage 2: Our Investment Philosophy

Our philosophy is to utilise active management solutions as we believe in the skill and judgment of professional fund managers to choose where to invest and have the ability to manage the underlying assets according to economic and market conditions.

Although we adopt this approach, depending on a clients investment preferences and experience, we also provide advice on other strategies such as passive solutions, socially responsible investing and discretionary fund management

Stage 3: Investment Committee

Our Investment Committee, supported by extensive external research and expertise, monitors the whole of the market to choose the best options available across different risk profiles and asset allocations.

Stage 4: Armstrong Watson Financial Planning & Wealth Management

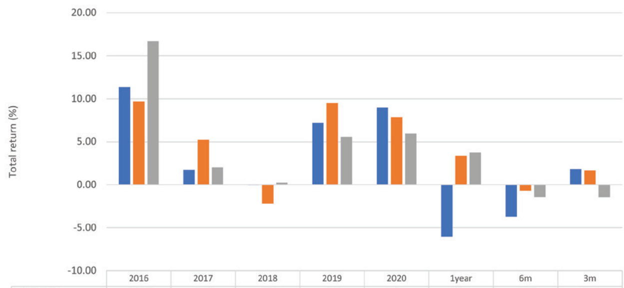
Our main objective is to support you throughout your lifetime. Once you have engaged with ourselves as a client we then start your journey to ensure that your funds, through regular ongoing reviews, continue to meet your needs, objectives and risk outlook.

Which assets do you choose?

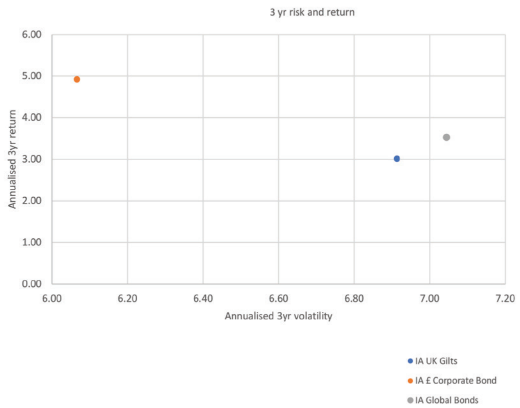
The tables below illustrate how a higher risk asset class may drive strong returns in one year, yet may do entirely the opposite in following year. The charts alongside shows it's volatility.

Volatility often refers to the amount of uncertainty or risk related to the size of changes in an asset's value. Higher volatility means that an asset's value can potentially be spread out over a larger range of values. This means that the price of the asset can change dramatically over a short time period in either direction. Lower volatility means that an asset's value does not fluctuate dramatically, and tends to be more steady.

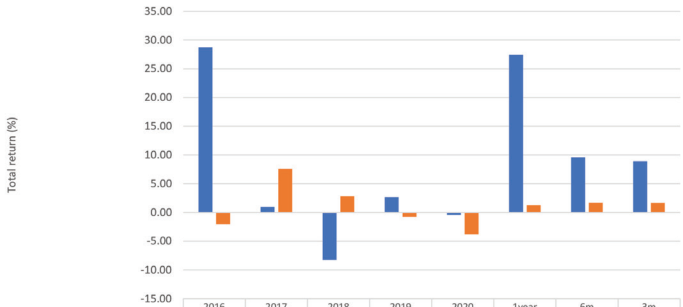
Fixed Interest



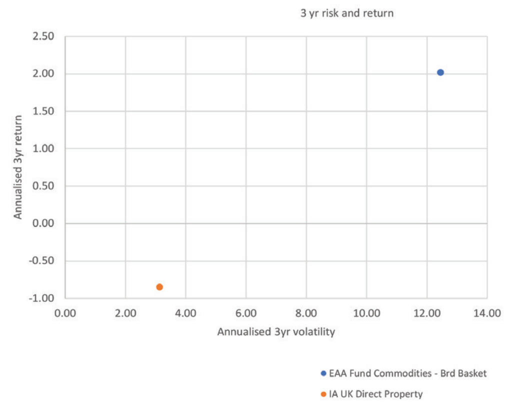
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	1year	6m	3m
IA UK Gilts	11.37	1.73	-0.05	7.19	8.98	-6.01	-3.73	1.85
IA £ Corporate Bond	9.69	5.24	-2.20	9.52	7.87	3.36	-0.69	1.69
IA Global Bonds	16.69	2.02	0.25	5.56	5.94	3.74	-1.41	-1.45



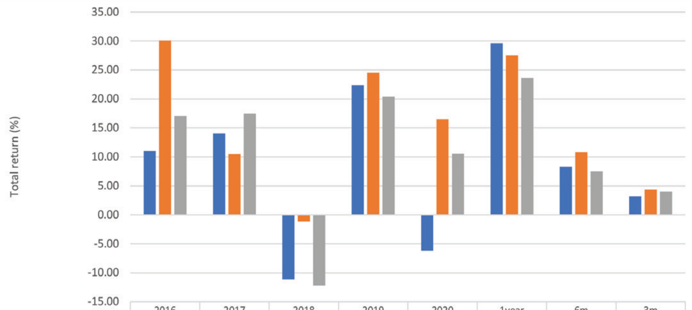
Commodities and Property



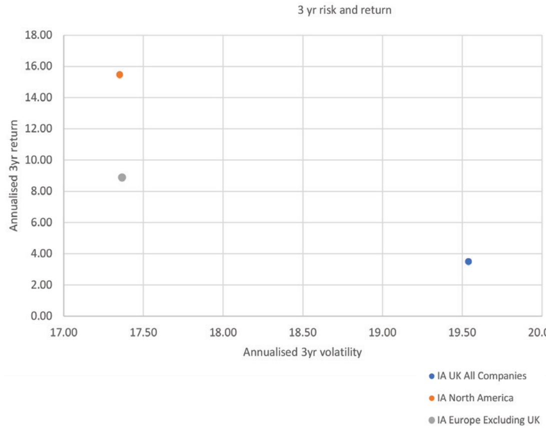
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	1year	6m	3m
EAA Fund Commodities - Brd Basket	28.74	0.99	-8.23	2.66	-0.37	27.42	9.64	8.95
IA UK Direct Property	-2.00	7.60	2.86	-0.78	-3.77	1.28	1.69	1.68



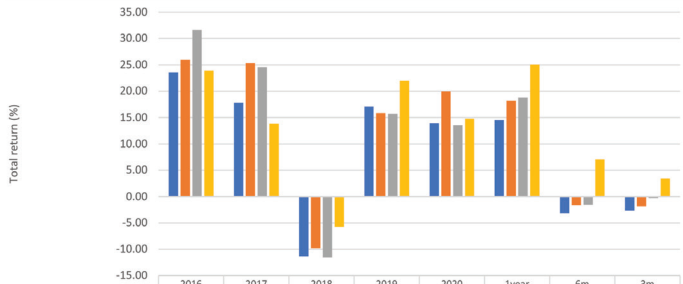
UK, North American and European equities



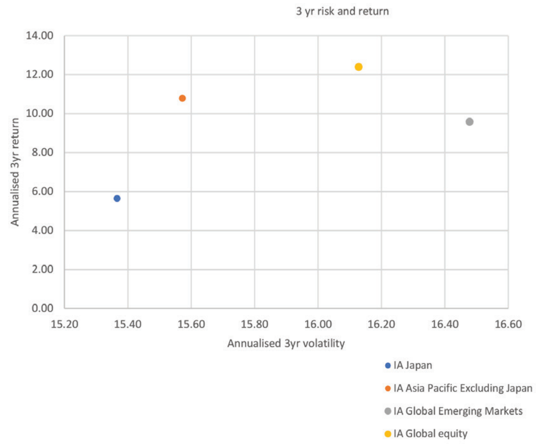
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	1year	6m	3m
IA UK All Companies	11.04	14.05	-11.15	22.37	-6.17	29.58	8.28	3.21
IA North America	30.09	10.48	-1.15	24.56	16.46	27.53	10.83	4.36
IA Europe Excluding UK	17.06	17.45	-12.16	20.38	10.53	23.62	7.50	4.03



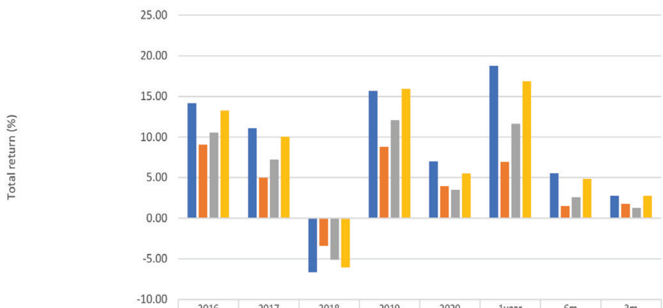
Japanese, Asia Pacific, Emerging Markets and Global equities



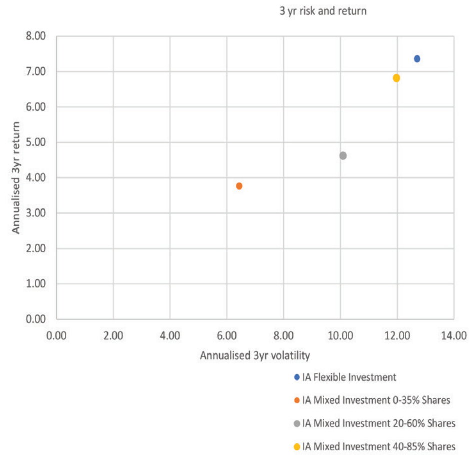
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	1year	6m	3m
IA Japan	23.55	17.79	-11.32	17.08	13.94	14.53	-3.18	-2.70
IA Asia Pacific Excluding Japan	26.00	25.29	-9.81	15.84	19.95	18.19	-1.62	-1.86
IA Global Emerging Markets	31.62	24.52	-11.53	15.72	13.56	18.74	-1.58	-0.30
IA Global equity	23.94	13.87	-5.71	22.01	14.81	25.09	7.06	3.45



Mixed Investment



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	1year	6m	3m
IA Flexible Investment	14.16	11.09	-6.64	15.64	7.01	18.74	5.52	2.76
IA Mixed Investment 0-35% Shares	9.06	5.01	-3.41	8.80	3.98	6.93	1.48	1.75
IA Mixed Investment 20-60% Shares	10.57	7.20	-5.11	12.08	3.49	11.64	2.58	1.30
IA Mixed Investment 40-85% Shares	13.28	10.05	-6.07	15.94	5.50	16.88	4.85	2.74



The importance of making investment decisions based on detailed analysis and by building a diversified portfolio cannot be over emphasised, as exposure to multiple asset classes helps to smooth out the volatility of current winners and losers.

There are a number of ways you can choose to build a diversified portfolio:

Active management

As the name suggests, active management involves direct input and influence by a fund manager (or managers) over the mix of asset classes within funds, whether to buy, sell or hold them and by taking full account of geographical and economic conditions they drive the overall fund strategy.

Based upon extensive experience and data to support their decisions, active fund managers will try to predict how markets and sectors are likely to react and will take positions within portfolios to reflect their views.

This doesn't necessarily mean that active fund management will deliver better returns over other solutions, or indeed, provide a cushion when market conditions are adverse, but it does mean that the investor isn't exposed to the full market or economic risk conditions that prevail at the time and fund managers can make changes to the underlying portfolio to take account of these factors.

Because of the additional management involved, actively managed funds are likely to be more costly than passively managed alternatives, but many investors believe that this is a cost worth bearing.

Passive management

Passive management is the opposite to active management and passive funds aim to closely follow or track particular investment indices, such as the FTSE 100, FTSE 250, Dow Jones, etc., which is why passive investments are often called index or tracker funds.

Passive investing keeps management costs low, because there is no need to employ the expertise of a fund manager to undertake research and transaction costs are reduced as the underlying investments are bought and sold less frequently.

There are inherent risks with index funds though, as investors absorb the full market risk of the index they are tracking (less costs), so whilst they can enjoy positive returns when the index rises, they will also suffer the corresponding falls when market conditions are less favourable.

Passive management can also include Exchange Traded Funds (ETF's) however providing access to these solutions is not part of our advice proposition or investment or philosophy.

Socially Responsible Investing/Ethical Investment

Some investors are not only interested in the financial outcomes of investments, they are also interested in the impact of their investments and the role their assets can have. Socially responsible portfolios allow you to align your investments with your personal values and moral convictions.

ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investing refers to a class of investing that is also known as "sustainable investing." This is an umbrella term for investments that seek positive returns and long-term impact on society, environment and the performance of the company. There are several different categories of this type of investing and it is important that you consider your own interests first and foremost. Unlike conventional investment funds, ESG funds are limited to the choices that can be made and may exclude certain sectors or be limited to a particular sector alone which could lead to diversification issues. There is no guarantee they will perform better or worse than other investment solutions.

Single asset funds

Single-assets funds focus on one asset type, such as gilts, property, UK equities, European equities, etc. You're essentially employing the specialist expertise of a fund manager who has an in-depth knowledge of the specific market sector they cover and are well placed to select investments that they believe will outperform in that sector.

Employing this strategy usually requires an understanding of the relevant investment markets and the economic conditions that affect them. It's also prudent to perform research on the fund managers and monitor their performance - according to the Investment Association (IA) there are around 3,000 funds available to individual investors across 37 sectors.

These type of funds will typically need to make sure they remain suitable, as each fund will perform differently according to market conditions and possibly, due to currency fluctuations, which, if left alone could 'drift'.

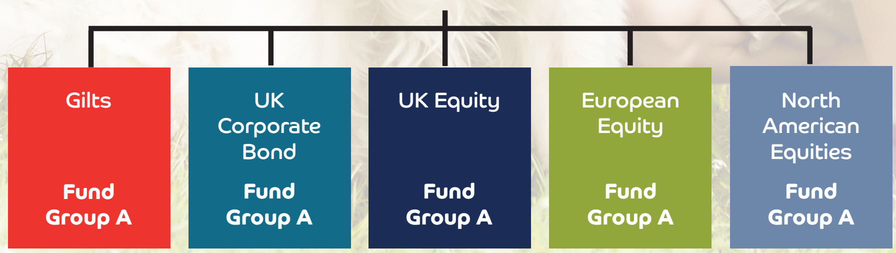
It is our view, in line with our investment philosophy, that single asset funds in most circumstances may not provide the full benefit of diversification in a portfolio.

Multi asset and fund of funds

Multi-asset and fund of funds enable a single fund manager to invest across several different asset classes, or even multiple investment funds from their own company (fettered), to create a diversified portfolio which spreads risk and helps limit the impact of market falls.

The fund manager builds the portfolio from a combination of different asset classes/funds with the aim of achieving the fund's overall investment goals. This cuts down the investor's decision making as they put their trust in the accuracy of the chosen fund manager's view on the market and their ability to reflect that view in their investment strategy.

Fund of Funds from a single fund group



Multi manager funds

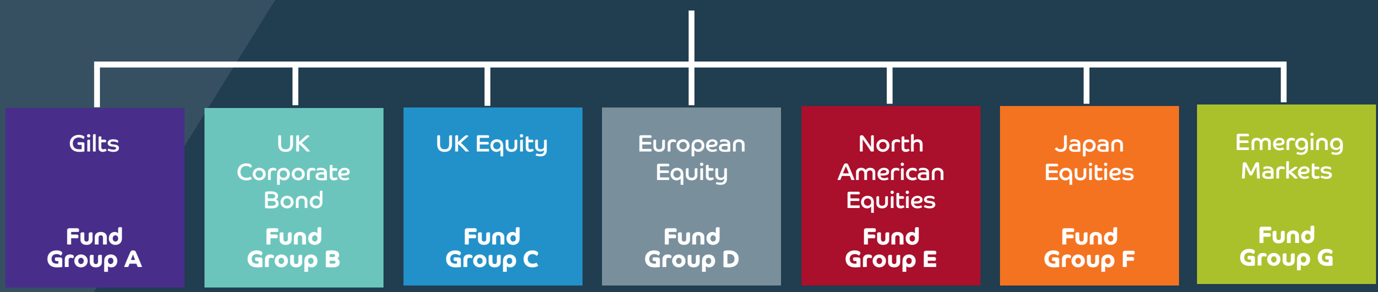
Multi-manager funds are another type of actively managed fund whereby a fund manager invests in different underlying funds run by different individual fund managers from different investment companies (unfettered).

The role of the manager of a multi-manager fund is to appoint a selection of specialist managers who make investment decisions in their area of expertise. This way the fund can invest across asset classes but still have specialists making decisions about where to invest. They then monitor these managers to make sure they are delivering against expectations.

Where the fund manager believes conditions are right they can change strategy and substitute the funds or fund managers within different sectors in order to make the fund more efficient, or depending upon prevailing market conditions they can adopt a more aggressive or defensive approach.

The manager of a multi-manager fund has a research team and carries out regular meetings with fund managers they wish to utilise.

Funds available from many different fund groups



Discretionary Fund Managers (DFM's)

Discretionary Fund Managers operate in a similar way to multi-manager funds, but can provide exposure to individual shares and bonds directly, as well as holding conventional investments such as Open Ended Investment Companies (OEICs), unit trusts, investment trusts and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) within the portfolio.

There are often additional costs for this more bespoke service which allows a client to delegate the execution of an agreed overall investment strategy to a discretionary fund managment service. We research the whole of the market and have developed strong relationships with a number of DFM's. Where suitable we will advise and support a client to help build a relationship with the DFM whilst also helping to hold them to account against the client's investment mandate. As this is a bespoke service there are usually minimum levels of investment for this type of service.

Smoothed Return Funds

Smoothed Return funds are offered by a small number of insurance companies and the money you invest is pooled together with that of other investors. These have widely replaced the traditional With Profit funds that still exist in old style investment and pension products.

Smoothing can offer some comfort against short term adverse market conditions. Traditional with profits investments apply regular annual and final/terminal bonuses whereas the newer smoothed return investments use varying methods to "smooth out" returns. This could be a rolling average of fund unit prices over a period of time or an annual expected growth rate.

However, smoothing will not stop the value of your plan reducing if investment returns have been low or provide any guarantee of return. In more extreme market conditions a smoothing mechanism may be suspended or the value of your investment could be valued on the actual underlying falling fund unit price and you may not get back what you invested.

Whilst smoothed return funds can provide the benefits of a diversified portfolio we believe that anyone investing in actively managed solutions should do so in a transparent manner to help understand that investments can fluctuate according to a range of factors and influences.

The value of investments and the income from them can fall as well as rise. You may get back less than you originally invested. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.

What to do next?

To find out more please speak to one of our Financial Planning Consultants or visit our website **www.armstrongwatson.co.uk**

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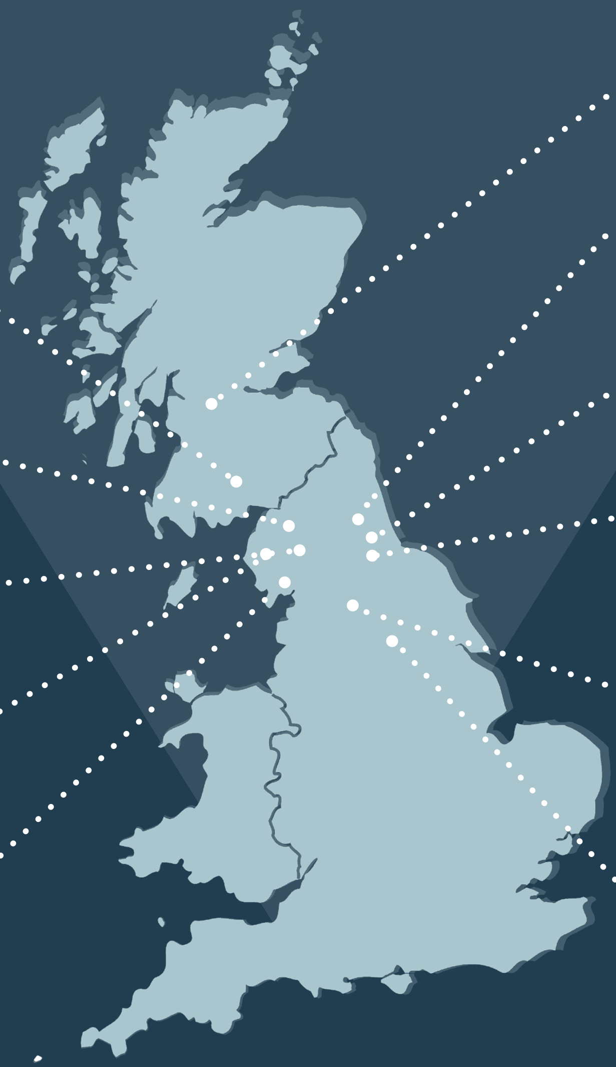

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