

For professional clients only, not suitable for retail clients.



# **Royal London Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL)**

**Quarterly Investment Report**

**31 March 2025**

# Quarterly Report

## The fund as at 31 March 2025

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Royal London Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL). The report has been produced by Royal London Asset Management. The report starts with a summary dashboard showing key information about the fund. A glossary is located at the end of the report covering the description of some of the more technical terms used within the report. All data is as at the report date unless otherwise stated.

# Contents

The fund	3
Performance and activity	5
Fund breakdown	7
Market commentary	8
Further information	9
Disclaimers	10
Performance net and gross	12
Glossary	13

# The fund

## Fund performance objective and benchmark

The Fund's investment objective is to aim to generate growth over the long term (5 years or more) through a combination of income and capital growth by primarily investing in other funds, known as collective investment schemes ("CIS"). The Fund is part of the Royal London Multi Asset Funds (IRL) ("MAF") range, which offers four funds with different combinations of expected investment risk and return.

MSCI All Countries World Net Total Return Index EUR 13.5%

MSCI Emerging Markets ESG Leaders Net Return Index (expressed in EUR) 1.5%

FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index (expressed in EUR) 2.5%

Bloomberg Commodity Total Return Index (expressed in EUR) 5%

BoAML BB-B Global Non-Financial High Yield Constrained Index (EUR Hedged) 5%

Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate - Corporate Index (Euro Hedged) 17.5%

ICE BofAML Euro Corporate & Pfandbrief Total Return EUR 12.5%

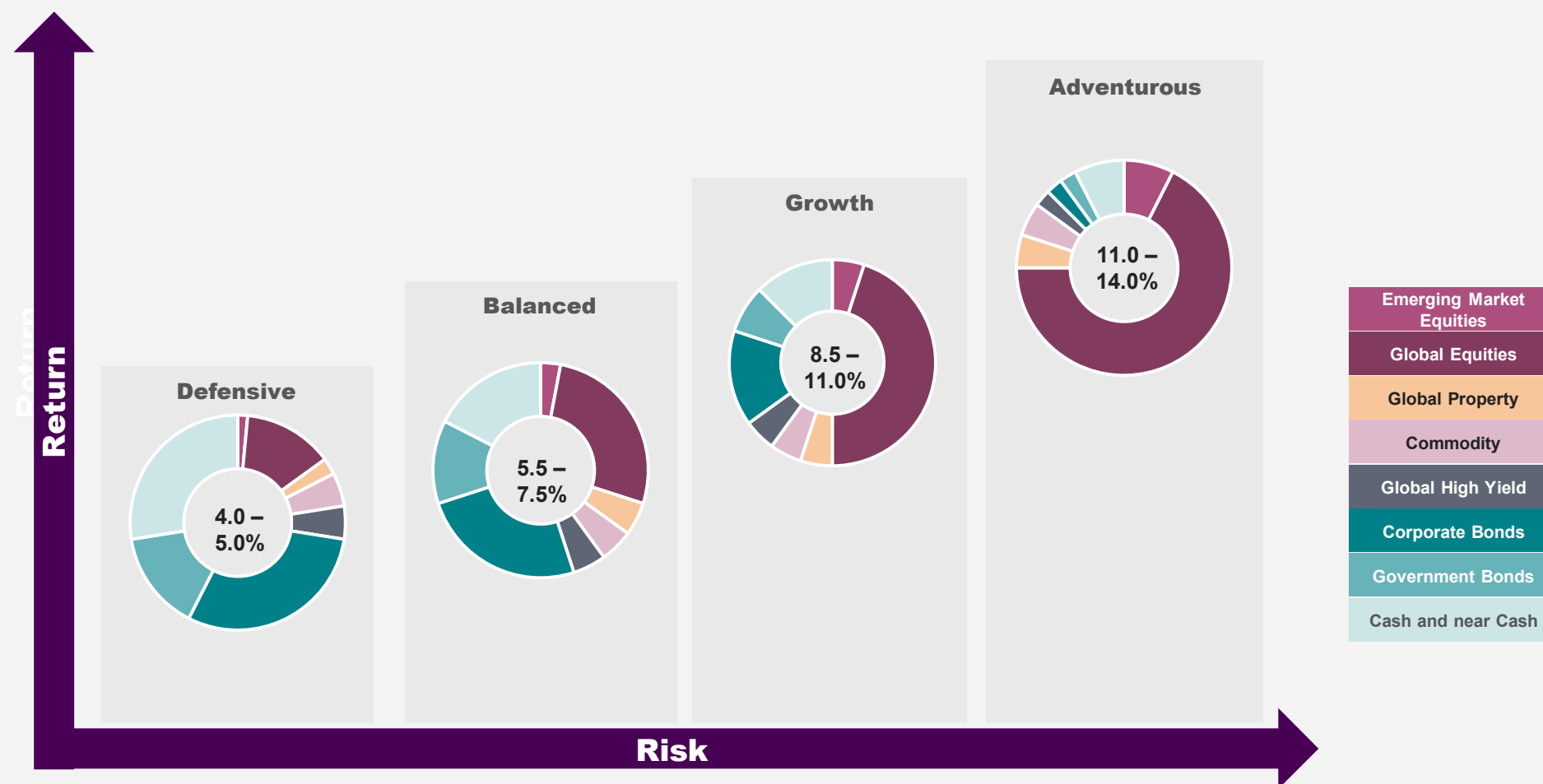
Bloomberg Barclays Euro Treasury Bond Index 15%

ESTER (Euro Short-Term Rate, €STER) 27.5%

## Fund value

	Total €m
31 March 2025	52.91
Fund launch date	17 August 2021

# Multi Asset (IRL) range



Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.

For illustrative purposes – reflects Strategic Asset Allocation weightings, may vary in accordance with tactical asset allocation.

Our fund range is designed to span the risk return spectrum, with each fund aiming to maximise the long-term real return for its given level of risk through a broadly diversified portfolio of investments

# Performance and activity

## Performance

	Fund (%)
Quarter	(0.44)
1 Year	3.64
3 Years (p.a.)	1.87
Since inception (p.a.)	1.04

Past performance is not a guide to future performance. Please refer to the Glossary for the basis of calculation and impact of fees. Performance and since inception date based on M Acc EUR. Source: Royal London Asset Management; Gross performance; Since inception date of the share class is 17 August 2021.

## Performance commentary

Following two consecutive years of double digit returns, global equities posted a much weaker start to the year, with the MSCI All Country World Index posting a return of -2.15% in local currency terms. Volatility surged over the quarter as investors turned their attention from President Trump's promised tax cuts and deregulation to tariffs, DOGE lay-offs and deportation. With megacap stocks entering the year at lofty valuations, worries of a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) model from DeepSeek, that is far cheaper than US alternatives, saw the S&P 500 index witness its eleventh quickest correction since 1928. Meanwhile, European shares put in stellar performance on the back of a larger-than-expected fiscal package, including a debt break reform and a €500bn infrastructure fund to rearm Europe. This underperformance of US stocks versus rest of the world was the most in any quarter since 2009.

One asset which has benefitted significantly from the currently elevated global uncertainty is gold. The asset class has been a standout performer in commodity markets, both last year and so far in 2025. Central bank demand for physical metal has been very strong over recent years and consumers have stepped up purchases as well more recently. Gold has historically acted as a good hedge in equity drawdowns, as we are seeing now, and expectations of large-scale US tariffs have led to additional upside pressure.

A very uncertain US policy backdrop and related disruptions to global trade seem likely to weigh on growth in the US and beyond. Fiscal stimulus may provide something of a shield in economies like the euro area and China. A few more rate cuts seem likely in major economies (except in Japan), albeit more gradual, careful ones, but the US inflation outlook is uncertain enough that US rate hikes can't be ruled out either.

Most major central banks are running with interest rates above neutral, but increasingly not by much. If growth remains positive but unimpressive and if inflation reassures somewhat then central banks can continue to cut towards neutral. But stickier than expected inflation, substantial policy uncertainty, and rates being closer to neutral suggests that at least some slowing of the pace makes sense beyond just the US.

# Performance and activity

## Top 10 holdings

	Weighting (%)
RLAM Global Sustainable Credit Fun	17.14
ISHARES GOVT BOND CLIMATE UCITS	14.76
ROYAL LONDON EURP SUST CRDT R EUR	12.24
RLAM Global Diversified Equity Fun	10.48
Royal London Glb Hi Yld Bd Fd C R	5.55
SPAIN (KINGDOM OF) 0 31 May 2025	4.68
FRANCE (REPUBLIC OF) 0 25 Jun 2025	4.65
FRANCE (REPUBLIC OF) 0 28 May 2025	4.61
SPAIN (KINGDOM OF) 1.6 30 Apr 2025	4.60
FRANCE (REPUBLIC OF) 0 30 Apr 2025	4.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.21</b>

## Fund activity

Global equities started the period with continued strength but ended up underperforming other asset classes over the quarter amid heightened volatility. Having benefitted from the initial equity market strength, we took profits over the second half and reduced our equity overweight towards neutral, driven by rising volatility and the deteriorating soft data in the US. Our positioning in global equities added value over the period.

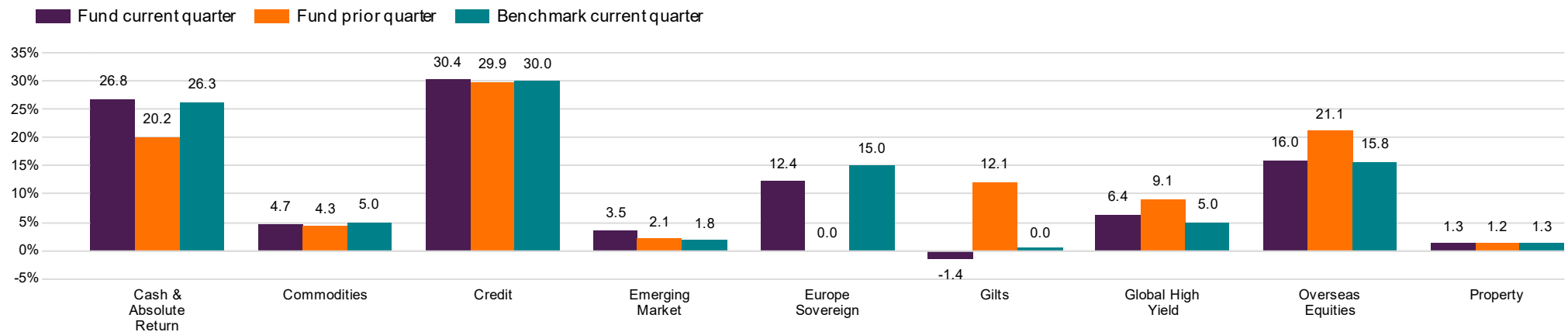
Bond yields were mixed over the quarter. UK yields ended broadly unchanged, while yields in the US fell as forward-looking data started to soften amid rising policy uncertainty. Meanwhile, the larger-than-expected fiscal support announcement in the euro area saw German 10-year bund yields record the largest weekly rise since the 1990 reunification period. We remained underweight government bonds, with our Investment Clock moving into the overheat quadrant – historically the phase where bond yields rise on inflationary pressures. Choppiness and regional divergence saw us lose some value from our positioning.

US equities led the losses at the regional level, with the Magnificent 7 index entering bear market territory, as lofty valuations were questioned amid fears of slowing growth and rising competition from China's AI model DeepSeek. European stocks rallied on hopes of positive developments around fiscal spending. Having been overweight US and underweight Europe in late 2024, we turned neutral earlier in the year as earnings expectations started to turn, and benefitted from the underperformance of the US market against rest of the world.

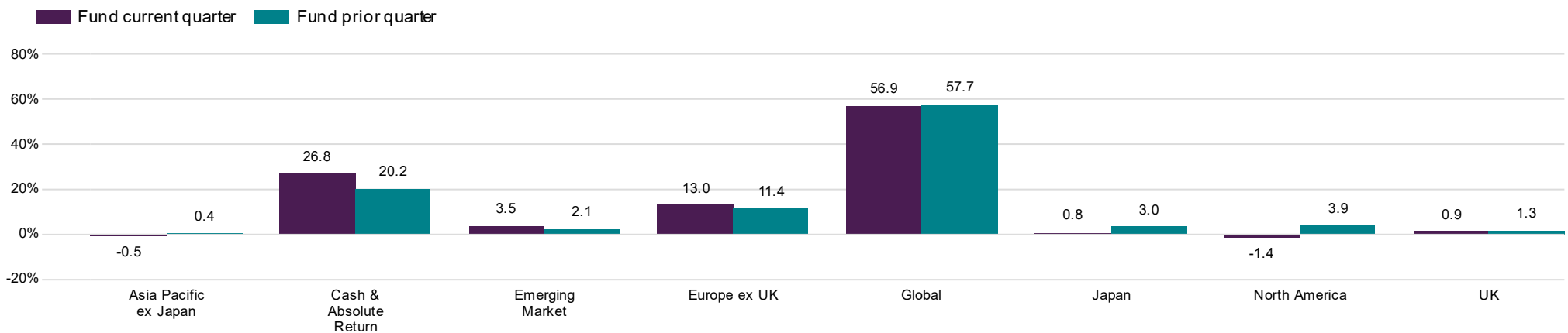
Growth stocks that had been leading the way higher last year came under pressure in the first quarter. We started the year overweight growth and cyclical sectors against an underweight in defensives, flagging the resilient macro backdrop as our Investment Clock remained in the recovery quadrant. However, as data started to turn and equity market volatility rose, we started to move towards a more defensive positioning. We lost some value in the initial tech-led sell-off, and then as the market recovered briefly in the middle of March.

# Fund breakdown

## Asset split



## Geographical breakdown



# Market commentary

## Market Overview

Following two consecutive years of double digit returns, global equities posted a much weaker start to the year, with the MSCI All Country World Index posting a return of -2.15% in local currency terms. Volatility surged over the quarter as investors turned their attention from President Trump's promised tax cuts and deregulation to tariffs, DOGE lay-offs and deportation. With megacap stocks entering the year at lofty valuations, worries of a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) model from DeepSeek, that is far cheaper than US alternatives, saw the S&P 500 index witness its eleventh quickest correction since 1928. Meanwhile, European shares put in stellar performance on the back of a larger-than-expected fiscal package, including a debt break reform and a €500bn infrastructure fund to rearm Europe. This underperformance of US stocks versus rest of the world was the most in any quarter since 2009.

One asset which has benefitted significantly from the currently elevated global uncertainty is gold. The asset class has been a standout performer in commodity markets, both last year and so far in 2025. Central bank demand for physical metal has been very strong over recent years and consumers have stepped up purchases as well more recently. Gold has historically acted as a good hedge in equity drawdowns, as we are seeing now, and expectations of large-scale US tariffs have led to additional upside pressure.

A very uncertain US policy backdrop and related disruptions to global trade seem likely to weigh on growth in the US and beyond. Fiscal stimulus may provide something of a shield in economies like the euro area and China. A few more rate cuts seem likely in major economies (except in Japan), albeit more gradual, careful ones, but the US inflation outlook is uncertain enough that US rate hikes can't be ruled out either.

Most major central banks are running with interest rates above neutral, but increasingly not by much. If growth remains positive but unimpressive and if inflation reassures somewhat then central banks can continue to cut towards neutral. But stickier than expected inflation, substantial policy uncertainty, and rates being closer to neutral suggests that at least some slowing of the pace makes sense beyond just the US.

## Outlook

The geopolitical outlook is uncertain, with Trump back in power and wars continuing in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The macro backdrop remains supportive for now, but the US-led post-election boom looks to be reversing. Risk of tariffs and other policy changes have started to weigh on business and consumer confidence. We have taken profits on global equities and moved underweight US equities; we prefer Europe where company earnings have been stronger and fiscal policy is likely to support growth.

We believe the pandemic ushered in a new regime of 'spikeflation' characterised by periodic price level shocks and shorter boom-bust cycles. A global trade war reminiscent of the 1930s could raise the cost of imports for the world over and challenge the low inflation consensus. Commodities, as always, are a useful hedge.



## Further Information

Please click on the links below for further information:



### Find out more

In an uncertain geopolitical and economic environment, we recognise the importance of keeping our clients updated on our current investment thinking.

Articles, videos, podcasts and webinars giving the latest views of our investment experts can be found in the Our Views section of [www.rlam.com](http://www.rlam.com), including regular updates from our Fixed Income, Global Equity, Sustainable and Multi Asset teams.

# Disclaimers

## Important information

For professional clients only, not suitable for retail clients.

This is a financial promotion and is not investment advice.

Telephone calls and written communications may be recorded and monitored. For further information please see the Privacy Policy at [www.rlam.com](http://www.rlam.com).

Issued in April 2025 by Royal London Asset Management Limited, 80 Fenchurch Street, London EC3M 4BY. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, firm reference number 141665. A subsidiary of The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited.

The Fund is a sub-fund of Royal London Asset Management Funds plc, an open-ended investment company with variable capital (ICVC), with segregated liability between sub-funds.

Incorporated with limited liability under the laws of Ireland and authorised by the Central Bank of Ireland as a UCITS Fund. It is a recognised scheme under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

The Management Company is FundRock Management Company SA, Registered office: Airport Center Building, 5 Heienhaff, L-1736 Senningerberg, Luxembourg and is authorised and regulated by the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF).

The Investment Manager is Royal London Asset Management Limited.

The Prospectus and Key Investor Information Document (KIID) are available in English via the relevant Fund Information page on [www.rlam.com](http://www.rlam.com). A summary of investor rights is also available in English, and can be accessed at [www.rlam.com/uk/policies-and-regulatory](http://www.rlam.com/uk/policies-and-regulatory)

RLAM may terminate the arrangements made for marketing of the fund pursuant to Article 93a of Directive 2009/65/EC.

For more information on the Fund or the risks of investing, please refer to the Prospectus or Key Investor Information Document (KIID), available via the relevant Fund Information page on [www.rlam.com](http://www.rlam.com).

Most of the protections provided by the UK regulatory system, and the compensation under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, will not be available.

The portfolio has no index as a comparison.

# Risks and Warnings

## Investment risk

The value of investments and any income from them may go down as well as up and is not guaranteed. Investors may not get back the amount invested.

## Credit risk

Should the issuer of a fixed income security become unable to make income or capital payments, or their rating is downgraded, the value of that investment will fall. Fixed income securities that have a lower credit rating can pay a higher level of income and have an increased risk of default.

## Derivative risk

This fund may undertake transactions in derivatives and forward transactions (both on exchange and over the counter (OTC)). These may include interest rate swaps and interest rate futures for the purposes of meeting the investment objective, protecting the risk to capital, duration and credit management, as well as for hedging. While the discerning use of derivatives can be beneficial, derivatives also involve specific risks. These risks relate specifically to market risk, management risk, credit risk, liquidity risk, the risk of mispricing or improper valuation of derivatives and the risk that derivatives may not correlate perfectly with underlying assets, interest rates and indices. The use of derivative instruments may from time to time alter the economic exposure of the fund causing it to deviate significantly from the performance of the market as a whole. The use of these derivatives will be within the parameters allowed for linked funds by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority.

## EPM techniques risk

The Fund may engage in EPM techniques including holdings of derivative instruments. Whilst intended to reduce risk, the use of these instruments may expose the Fund to increased price volatility.

## Exchange rate risk

Changes in currency exchange rates may affect the value of your investment.

## Interest rate risk

Fixed interest securities are particularly affected by trends in interest rates and inflation. If interest rates go up, the value of capital may fall, and vice versa. Inflation will also decrease the real value of capital. Unlike the income from a single fixed interest security, the level of income (yield) from a fund is not fixed and may go up and down. Bond yields (and as a consequence bond prices) are determined by market perception as to the appropriate level of yields given the economic background.

## Counterparty risk

The insolvency of any institutions providing services such as safekeeping of assets or acting as counterparty to derivatives or other instruments, may expose the Fund to financial loss.

## Fund investing in funds risk

The Fund is valued using the latest available price for each underlying investment, however it may not fully reflect changing stockmarket conditions and the Fund may apply a 'fair value price' to all or part of its portfolio to mitigate this risk. In extreme liquidity conditions, redemptions in the underlying investments, and/or the Fund itself, may be deferred or suspended.

## Liquidity and dealing risk

The Fund invests indirectly in assets that may at times be difficult to value, harder to sell, or sell at a fair price. This means that there may be occasions when you experience a delay in being able to deal in the Fund, or receive less than may otherwise be expected when selling your investment.

# Performance to 31 March 2025

## Cumulative (%)

	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	3 Years	Since Inception	3 Years (p.a.)	Since Inception (p.a.)
<b>Fund (gross)</b>	(0.44)	0.46	3.64	5.72	3.83	1.87	1.04
<b>Fund (net)</b>	(0.60)	0.14	2.97	3.68	1.42	1.21	0.39

## Annualised (%)

## Year on year performance (%)

	31/03/2024 - 31/03/2025	31/03/2023 - 31/03/2024	31/03/2022 - 31/03/2023	31/03/2021 - 31/03/2022	31/03/2020 - 31/03/2021
<b>Fund (gross)</b>	3.64	8.70	(6.17)	-	-
<b>Fund (net)</b>	2.97	8.01	(6.78)	-	-

Past performance is not a guide to future performance. The impact of fees or other charges including tax, where applicable, can be material on the performance of your investment.

Source: RLAM as at 31 March 2025. All figures are mid-price to mid-price for the Royal London Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL) M Acc EUR share class. Since inception date 17 August 2021.

# Glossary

## Asset allocation

Based on RLAM's holistic approach to fixed income management and fund weights relative to their respective benchmarks. May not reflect tactical exposures.

## Fund value

Total value of the fund as of the last business day of the calendar month. The fund value is as at close of business and on a mid-price basis.

## Geographical breakdown

Breakdown of assets by geographical regions. 'Global' region includes global fixed income and overseas securities exposures, which are sterling hedged and commodity exposures.

## Performance

Performance is calculated using the signed off NAV per share. The impact of fees or other charges including tax, where applicable, can be material on the performance of your investment. The impact of fees reduces the return.

## Top 10 holdings

Top 10 assets held by market value, excluding derivatives and cash.