

press release

6 July 2009

Blackrock UK Absolute Return fund – a flexible fund for volatile times says The Share Centre

- Blackrock's Absolute Return fund attempts to generate capital growth in any market condition
- As a Platinum 120* fund, customers will not be charged dealing commission when investing in this fund.

Many equity funds find it difficult to maintain the value of their clients' assets during long periods of market volatility. Andy Parsons, Advice team manager at The Share Centre, explains why he believes the Blackrock Absolute Alpha fund could just be flexible enough to steer its way through a choppy market.

"The Blackrock Absolute Alpha fund seeks to generate capital growth in any market condition by taking both long and short investment positions. The methodology of this fund is therefore very different from that of traditional long-only funds that attempt to outperform either their relative stock market or peer group.

"It is fair to say that investor confidence has taken a battering over the last six-to-twelve months, but this type of fund could prove to offer fund investors the flexibility many desire. The Blackrock UK Absolute Alpha fund uses derivatives and other investment tools to maintain both long and short positions in order to produce returns that are exposed to less volatility than those of a traditional fund. In essence, it allows the manager to profit from rising markets as well as falling markets.

"The Blackrock UK Absolute Alpha fund is suitable for investors who want to remain exposed to UK equities during volatile or flat market conditions, and who are comfortable accepting a medium degree of risk."

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Note to editors:

About The Share Centre's Platinum 120 range:

The Share Centre launched its Platinum 120 funds range in June 2009 in order to help investors identify the funds with the best long-term prospects and strong management. Customers who invest in a Platinum 120 fund will benefit from no purchase commission on all funds and no initial charge on almost 80%. Please visit www.share.com/p120 to view the full Platinum 120 range. Please be aware that this may require registration.

Purchase information for the Blackrock UK Absolute Alpha P fund:

- The minimum investment is £500 and £100 thereafter, although investors purchasing this fund through The Share Centre can do so from £10 via CoFunds
- The maximum initial charge is 5%, although investors purchasing this fund through The Share Centre will not have to pay an initial charge
- The annual management fee is 1.5%

About Andy Parsons:

Andy joined The Share Centre in 2006 as a fully qualified Financial Adviser via the Chartered Insurance Institute and has since become an Associate Member of the Securities and Investment Institute.

As the Advice team manager, Andy manages and develops the services offered by the Advice team. Part of his role is to establish and maintain close working relationships with external financial services providers: this includes Fund Managers and Andy has been instrumental in creating and managing our new Funds of Funds product, the SF Portfolio of Funds, offered through our sister company, Sharefunds.

Andy takes a broad view of financial planning and is a regular contributor of general financial advice and articles to the media. His views are often reported in the broadsheets and financial news e-publishers such as WhatInvestment.co.uk, where Andy supplies a regular fund blog.

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About Shares4Schools:

Shares4Schools is a competition organised by The Share Centre, a leading retail stockbroker. Established in 2003 and endorsed by pfege, this unique competition brings Economics and Business Studies to life as students invest real money in the stock market. The competition is

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open to schools throughout the UK, with teams of students competing in regional and national leagues.

How does it work?

Each team must raise an investment pot of £1,500 to invest in the stock market, with the aim of achieving the highest fund value over the period from October to June. Schools are encouraged to raise the initial investment pot through sponsorship from local businesses, funding from the Enterprise Initiative Fund and their PTA.

In addition to promoting and administering the competition, The Share Centre offers a limited number of sponsorships of £750 which schools can apply for when registering their interest in the competition.

All participating schools retain the proceeds of their investment fund to use at their discretion, and the team with the highest value fund at the end of the competition will be recognised at a special ceremony in London.

Shares4Schools can be used as part of broad lesson plans or with just a smaller group. It is designed to be self-sufficient, enabling teachers to give as much or as little direction as they feel appropriate. For regulatory reasons, the dealing account is in the name of two authorised representatives of the school, one of whom will carry out the investment decisions: these can be teachers, parents or any other nominated adult. So whilst the competition delivers a broad range of learning experiences, it is not a drain on valuable teaching time.

About trading:

The Shares4Schools trading account is based on The Share Centre's successful Investment Club service.

Funds are invested in the school's name through an online dealing account provided by The Share Centre. The value and make-up of the investment portfolio is visible 24/7 via the Shares4Schools website, using 15 minute delayed prices from the London Stock Exchange. The portfolio value goes to make up the league table, so changes in the values of investments are quickly reflected in the team's league position. To reflect realism, dealing costs are payable as normal, although The Share Centre will, at the end of the competition, donate to the school the total of its dealing charges.

About The Share Centre:

The Share Centre Ltd was formed in 1990 to provide low-cost share services for private investors. The Share Centre's range of services includes buying and selling shares (by Internet, telephone and post), provision of regular valuations, Investment Advice and Individual Saving Accounts. For more details contact 0800 800 008, or visit www.share.com