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# Fleece Navidad
## Falling out of fast fashion

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As we approach Christmas Jumper Day this week in the UK, I find myself sifting through the depths of my wardrobe, searching for festive knitwear to raise money for Save the Children. The promise of chilly winter evenings and cosy Christmas gatherings tempts me to add yet another festive jumper to my collection, despite the fact that I already own enough to dress a small woolly army.

Sound familiar? It's a scenario many of us face as Christmas approaches. The appeal of new clothes, especially warm and comfy ones for the winter season, is undeniable.

Fast fashion retailers exploit this, tempting us with endless options that won't break the bank due to their ability to quickly produce inexpensive, on-trend clothing that appeals to the masses. These companies churn out new collections at a rapid pace, allowing consumers to stay up to date with the latest styles without burning a hole in one's pocket. However, this convenience comes at a cost to our environment and society.

From an environmental perspective, fast fashion falls short in several ways. The rise of ultrafast online retailers has flooded the market with cheap, poor-quality clothes made from environmentally harmful materials.

The production processes, involving copious amounts of water, chemicals, and energy, contribute to pollution and the overuse of natural resources. Additionally, the global supply chain dynamics of fast fashion play a significant role in exacerbating its environmental impact as many of these clothes are produced in countries with low labour costs. This geographical dispersion requires long-distance transportation, resulting in a substantial carbon footprint associated with shipping these goods around the world. The environmental toll extends beyond just the production phase. With many of the items from some fast fashion brands being priced ridiculously cheaply, it becomes more convenient for consumers to buy new than to repair existing clothing or buy second-hand. These items have little to no resale value and end up being incinerated or left to decompose for hundreds of years in landfills, usually in developing countries.

The social aspect is equally as distressing. Many fast fashion brands outsource their production to low-wage countries, where labour regulations are less stringent. This can lead to poor working conditions, low wages, and a lack of workers' rights. This raises ethical concerns about the treatment of workers and the lack of accountability in these global supply chains. Exploitative labour practices have been widely reported in the industry in order to maintain the low prices customers expect.

Fast fashion also raises red flags from a governance perspective. Fast fashion companies aren't always known for their transparency and often management and boards do not scrutinise their supply chain in search of best practices. To make informed investment decisions, one should consider whether a company commits to good governance principles, such as transparent financial reporting and ethical leadership.

Fast fashion may offer cheap and trendy clothing, but at a significant cost to society, the environment and ethical governance. As investors, we can choose to support companies that actively work to reduce their carbon footprint, minimise waste and prioritise fair labour practices.

These companies are more likely to make responsible decisions and contribute positively to society and the environment. Many sustainable fashion brands are emerging, with a focus on eco-friendly materials, fair labour practices and transparent governance. Investing in these companies can be financially rewarding while also contributing to a more sustainable and equitable future. Moreover, growth in the market for second-hand clothing might outpace fast fashion as consumers become more aware of the environmental, social and economic benefits of preloved shopping.

As the fashion industry continues to adapt to the climate emergency and resulting consumer demands, it is clear that investors and consumers have a significant role to play in bringing sustainable fashion brands to the fore. At Momentum, we manage three Sustainable Model Portfolios, which align closely with the responsible investing principles of our investment philosophy, offering diversified multi-asset exposure that cater for various risk and return objectives while enhancing the sustainable investment footprint. Our sustainable approach extends beyond fashion retailers, encompassing a comprehensive strategy that considers environmental impact, social responsibility, and ethical governance.

**"As the fashion industry continues to adapt to the climate emergency, it is clear that investors and consumers have a significant role to play in bringing sustainable fashion brands to the fore"**

# Market Focus - 4 December 2023

- Global equities rose 0.9% last week
- Slowing inflation helped markets in the US and Europe. November was the best month for global bonds since December 2008
- Brent crude fell 2.1% last week to $78.9 a barrel
- Gold rose 3.6% last week to $2072.2 per ounce

## US

- US equities rose 0.8% last week rounding out the best month for the S&P 500 this year
- Equities and bonds rallied last week as core inflation cooled to 0.2% in October. The year-on-year increase stood at 3.5%, the lowest increase since April 2021, but still above the target level of 2%
- Federal Reserve Chairperson Jerome Powell said interest rates were now 'well into restrictive territory' which helped equities and bonds. However, he also said that they would raise rates again if supported by data
- Continuing weekly jobless claims surprised to the upside at 1.93 million, the highest level in two years

## UK

- UK equities rose 0.5% last week
- Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey continued to push back against market expectations for interest rate cuts. He said he 'will do what it takes' to reduce inflation to its 2% target, but added that 'we are not in a place now where we can discuss cutting interest rates – that is not happening'

## Europe

- European equities rose 1.3% last week
- Eurozone annual inflation in November slowed more than expected to 2.4%, down from 2.9% in October and below expectations of 2.7%
- Germany's Federal Labour Office reported that the jobless rate rose to 5.9% in November, the highest level since 2021, up from 5.8% in October
- European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde told a committee of the European Parliament that strong wage growth and an uncertain outlook meant that this was not the time to start declaring victory in the fight to curb inflation

## Rest of the World/Asia

- Global emerging market equities rose 0.2% last week
- Japanese equities fell 0.3% last week
- Chinese equities fell 2.6% last week
- The Chinese Caixin PMI measure of the manufacturing sector unexpectedly expanded in November, hitting 50.7 (vs 49.6 expected). This was the fastest expansion in three months and up from 49.5 in October
- Japan's unemployment rate edged down to 2.5% in October (vs 2.6% expected) while the job-to-application ratio slightly went up to 1.30 after having stayed at 1.29 in the preceding three months

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# Market Summary - 4 December 2023

| Asset Class / Region | Currency | Week ending 1 December | Month to date | YTD 2023 | 12 months |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Cumulative returns | | | |
| **Developed Markets Equities** | | | | | |
| United States | USD | 0.8% | 0.6% | 21.0% | 14.0% |
| United Kingdom | GBP | 0.5% | 1.0% | 4.8% | 3.5% |
| Continental Europe | EUR | 1.3% | 0.8% | 14.1% | 9.4% |
| Japan | JPY | -0.3% | 0.3% | 29.0% | 23.0% |
| Asia Pacific (ex Japan) | USD | -0.1% | -0.6% | 1.9% | 0.0% |
| Australia | AUD | 0.5% | -0.2% | 4.6% | 0.3% |
| Global | USD | 0.9% | 0.6% | 18.7% | 12.8% |
| **Emerging Markets Equities** | | | | | |
| Emerging Europe | USD | 2.0% | 1.1% | 28.6% | 33.2% |
| Emerging Asia | USD | -0.1% | -0.8% | 3.5% | 1.6% |
| Emerging Latin America | USD | 1.6% | 0.9% | 23.7% | 18.5% |
| BRICs | USD | -0.4% | -0.4% | -0.4% | 0.1% |
| China | USD | -2.6% | -1.3% | -10.2% | -6.2% |
| MENA countries | USD | 0.3% | 0.0% | 1.0% | -3.3% |
| South Africa | USD | 0.9% | 1.1% | -3.6% | -1.4% |
| India | USD | 2.4% | 0.8% | 12.4% | 6.1% |
| Global emerging markets | USD | 0.2% | -0.5% | 5.2% | 3.0% |
| **Bonds** | | | | | |
| US Treasuries | USD | 1.7% | 0.8% | 1.7% | 0.1% |
| US Treasuries (inflation protected) | USD | 1.5% | 0.7% | 1.7% | -0.5% |
| US Corporate (investment grade) | USD | 2.2% | 0.8% | 5.0% | 3.5% |
| US High Yield | USD | 1.4% | 0.3% | 9.8% | 8.1% |
| UK Gilts | GBP | 1.0% | 0.0% | -1.7% | -6.1% |
| UK Corporate (investment grade) | GBP | 1.2% | 0.2% | 4.8% | 2.4% |
| Euro Government Bonds | EUR | 1.9% | 0.7% | 4.2% | -1.7% |
| Euro Corporate (investment grade) | EUR | 1.6% | 0.5% | 5.6% | 3.1% |
| Euro High Yield | EUR | 1.0% | 0.2% | 9.1% | 7.9% |
| Japanese Government | JPY | 0.4% | -0.1% | -0.1% | -1.5% |
| Australian Government | AUD | 0.5% | -0.4% | 1.2% | -1.6% |
| Global Government Bonds | USD | 1.5% | 0.4% | 0.2% | -1.6% |
| Global Bonds | USD | 1.5% | 0.4% | 2.6% | 0.8% |
| Global Convertible Bonds | USD | 0.9% | 0.4% | 4.1% | 2.1% |
| Emerging Market Bonds | USD | 1.5% | 0.5% | 5.4% | 4.1% |

| Asset Class / Region | Currency | Week ending 1 December | Month to date | YTD 2023 | 12 months |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Cumulative returns | | | |
| **Property** | | | | | |
| US Property Securities | USD | 4.6% | 2.6% | 5.1% | -0.1% |
| Australian Property Securities | AUD | 1.2% | 0.0% | 2.4% | -4.4% |
| Asia Property Securities | USD | -1.8% | -0.1% | -9.9% | -8.5% |
| Global Property Securities | USD | 2.7% | 1.6% | 2.9% | -0.1% |
| **Currencies** | | | | | |
| Euro | USD | -0.5% | -0.1% | 1.6% | 3.6% |
| UK Pound Sterling | USD | 0.7% | 0.6% | 4.9% | 3.5% |
| Japanese Yen | USD | 1.8% | 0.9% | -10.8% | -7.8% |
| Australian Dollar | USD | 1.2% | 1.0% | -2.2% | -2.0% |
| South African Rand | USD | 1.2% | 1.3% | -8.5% | -5.7% |
| Swiss Franc | USD | 1.3% | 0.5% | 5.9% | 7.8% |
| Chinese Yuan* | USD | 0.3% | 0.1% | -3.3% | -1.1% |
| **Commodities & Alternatives** | | | | | |
| Commodities | USD | -0.6% | -0.7% | -3.5% | -4.3% |
| Agricultural Commodities | USD | -0.1% | -0.7% | 1.0% | 2.4% |
| Oil | USD | -2.1% | -4.8% | -8.2% | -9.2% |
| Gold | USD | 3.6% | 1.7% | 13.6% | 15.0% |

Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P. Past performance is not indicative of future returns.

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