

Insider

July 2020

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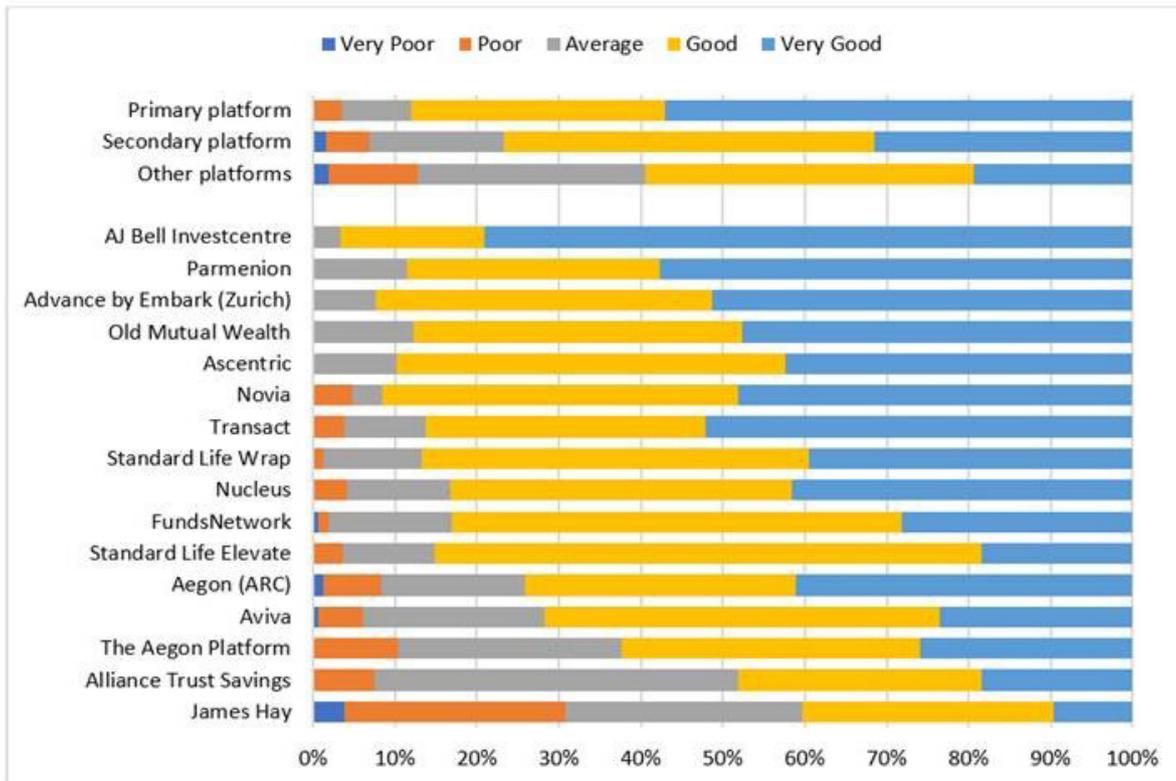


Fergus Lyons
Managing Director

As you may have noticed in the trade press, Platform surveyed advisers, asking how well they thought platforms had adapted to the new working environment, and how effectively they had enabled advisers to continue to service their clients and their investments during the pandemic. Well, I am extremely proud to say that, among individual platforms, the advisers surveyed rated AJ Bell Investcentre highest, with almost 80% giving us the best rating of 'very good'.

This is an amazing achievement and a real credit to the hard work and flexibility of all our people. While I have no doubt that we will continue to operate and serve you well from home, the Government's gradual easing of lockdown means we have now at least started the gradual process of considering ways to start operating with more people in the office again. As always, the safety of our staff is our top priority. The team has shown that it can work flexibly and retain its focus on providing a top class service so we are in no rush. I will keep you posted on our progress.

Chart: Platforms rated on ability to adapt to the new working environment



Source: Platform, May 2020

Changes are afoot in the South East

Some of you will already know that we changed the structure of our team in London and the South East recently, bringing both the South East (S) and South East (N) regions under the diligent eye of AJ Bell stalwart Alison Mollard, who has now been promoted to Head of South East Sales. This is a very well deserved move for Alison, who has earned a fantastic reputation in the region over the years.

Our new Business Development Manager for the [South East \(S\) region](#) is Arnie Millington, who has actually been looking after the area whilst we worked on our wider support model. Arnie has been with AJ Bell for many years and I know he will do a great job in his new role.

The [South East \(N\) region](#)'s Business Development Manager is now Marcus Paradiuk, another safe pair of hands, who stepped up from the role of Business Development Consultant for the Midlands earlier this year.

I'm sure this new structure will further improve the service we offer in the South East, and I wish Alison, Arnie and Marcus all the best of luck in their new roles.

Wage War on COVID

Our Wage War on COVID campaign continues to help people who have been affected by the crisis. We have now raised £382,000, which has allowed us to distribute almost 600 digital tablets to care homes and hospitals so that residents and patients can stay in touch with their loved ones.



We have also made a number of donations to foodbanks, charities and causes that have been impacted by the crisis – as nominated by our staff.

You can find further information about our efforts here: ajbell.co.uk/about-us/corporate-social-responsibility

New website functionality

I am pleased to announce that some new functionality has been added to the site recently, helping to make many of your day-to-day processes more efficient. In recent updates, I have openly stated our aim to retain a business-as-usual approach despite the current challenges. Being able to continue to enhance the platform is further evidence of our ability to deliver against that promise.

Illustrate to apply and prepopulated illustrations

We have added a dedicated tool enabling you to create an illustration for a new client with the option to proceed straight to an online application and also to create illustrations for existing clients without re-entering the client's personal information that we already hold.

- The new illustrations tool will save the new client's information, allowing you to return at a later date to complete an online application form.
- There is no longer a requirement to rekey the client's information at the application stage.
- From the client pages in the V2.0 website, you can create illustrations for existing clients without needing to rekey any personal information we already have.

AJ Bell Growth Funds | 1st Quartile | 3 Years

It is now over three years since we launched our own range of funds. Cognisant of the FCA's criticism that the world of funds was complex, opaque and expensive, AJ Bell Investments set out to manufacture a range of investment solutions that were genuinely straightforward, transparent and good value. It was quickly obvious that there was demand for this but any meaningful assessment of the funds' performance would have to wait.

Now three years on, I think the following tables paint a fairly positive picture:

Fund	Sector	1 year Quartile	2 year Quartile	3 year Quartile
VT AJ Bell Cautious	Mixed Investment 0 - 35% Shares	1	1	1
VT AJ Bell Moderately Cautious	Mixed Investment 20 - 60% Shares	1	1	1
VT AJ Bell Balanced	Mixed Investment 40 - 85% Shares	1	1	1
VT AJ Bell Moderately Adventurous	Mixed Investment 40 - 85% Shares	1	1	1
VT AJ Bell Adventurous	Flexible Investment	2	1	1

* Source: FE Analytics. 18 April 2020

	Distribution Technologies Risk Rating				
	3	4	5	6	7
AJ Bell Growth Funds	11.0%	12.3%	15.1%	13.9%	13.8%
Standard Life MyFolio Market	7.1%	7.0%	7.6%	8.2%	10.3%
L&G Multi-Index	11.0%	11.0%	11.7%	12.1%	12.7%
Premier Liberation	-	1.0%	0.2%	-2.2%	-3.9%
Schroders Multi-Manager	-	2.1%	-1.5%	0.1%	1.0%

* Source: FE Analytics. 30 June 2017 - 30 June 2020

Past performance is not a guide to future performance and some investments need to be held for the long term. The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up and your client may not get back their original investment.

Something we can be certain of, however, is our ability and determination to keep costs low. Because our asset management business is complementary to our platform, we can cut out distribution costs and pass them back for the benefit of the end investor. This has allowed us to cap our funds at 0.35% OCF, meaning that they are up to two-thirds cheaper than the average multi-asset fund.

Third-party MPS

Please keep an eye on your inbox for additional news in the coming weeks when we will formally announce the launch of our third-party MPS investment option and details of our new public area of the website.

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact your [Business Development Manager](#).

Off the Road

Our next 'Off the Road' seminar will be happening online on Thursday 16 July at 10am.

Our host this time will be Senior Technical Consultant Rachel Vahey, who will be looking at Lifetime ISAs – from applying and subscribing, to transfers and withdrawals – and how they fit in with financial planning.

To take part, visit investcentre.co.uk/event/road-webinar-series.

Money Marketing awards

I am delighted to announce that AJ Bell Investcentre has just been recognised with the Best Platform Award at the Money Marketing Awards 2020. Users of our platform will be aware that we never stand still and are constantly looking for ways to evolve and enhance the platform. We try to avoid getting too tied up in the wonderful world of awards but it is perhaps a gentle nod and note of appreciation to the many people involved across the business who work so hard to help make a difference.

UK Platform awards

Adviser voting for the UK Platform awards is now open, and AJ Bell Investcentre meets the criteria for two important categories. These are:

- best platform provider (AUM over £25 billion)
- the Intelliflo award for best platform service

You can find more details about the awards at: ukplatformawards.co.uk.

If you would like to vote, you can do so here: surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GPM65XS.

New Android client app

Your clients will soon be able to download our new Android client mobile app from the Google Play store. Built around Google's recommendations for user-experience best practice, it features a smart new interface and navigation, and should help us ensure a more consistent visual experience across different Android mobile devices.

We have also added facial recognition at login, and made it so clients can access any linked accounts for other family members under their own login. Additionally, there's a new dedicated menu option for XO customers, which gives them easier access to the dealing function. And as a further bonus, you can now also apply your firm's branding to this version of the mobile app.



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