

# An Adviser's Guide to the Enterprise Investment Scheme

## Find inside:

- EIS landscape
- Risks and rewards
- Rules for investors and qualifying companies
- Claiming the tax reliefs
- EIS structures
- Charges and practicalities
- Suitability
- Research and due diligence
- Case studies

A practical resource outlining the nuts and bolts of working with EIS, including the latest rules, important technicalities and suitability considerations

First Edition

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Tax treatment depends on an investor’s individual circumstances and may be subject to change. Certain investments carry a higher degree of risk than others and are, therefore, unsuitable for some investors.

An Adviser’s Guide to the  
Enterprise Investment Scheme

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# Introduction

*This guide is designed as a practical resource for those interested in using the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS). It offers impartial, common-sense assistance outlining the nuts and bolts of the technical, planning and legislative aspects of EIS, as well as true to life case studies. We cover the current rules, including updates on recent changes, and give clarity on when and how EIS can be helpful. There are also useful tips on how to assess EIS offers, providers and client suitability considerations to help advisers make the best use of the EIS tax reliefs.*

*The key focus of this guide is to provide advisers with a broad knowledge of the day to day fundamentals of using EIS. However, for greater detail of opinions, forecasts and research on the market, our regular EIS Industry Report is the place to go. It also includes market analysis, with current key metrics and provider and adviser discussions. This insightful resource is available free of charge from Intelligent Partnership.*



## Learning Objectives

After reading this guide, advisers will be able to:

- Apply the main rules and practicalities that govern the EIS reliefs available.
- Explain the main risks associated with EIS investments.
- Define the key aspects that need to be taken into account when considering client suitability for an EIS investment.
- Conduct discussions for claiming EIS tax reliefs.
- Evaluate the main considerations for an EIS investment and investment provider.
- Access planning examples that can apply to real-life situations.
- Ascertain the circumstances in which EIS reliefs can be withdrawn.

## Acknowledgements

A publication like this is rarely the product of one organisation's efforts: to ensure that it is up to date, comprehensive, accurate and captures all of the key issues requires a wider input. We've had plenty of help producing this Guide and would like to thank David Adams, Roger Blears, Liz Brion, Mark Brownridge and Tom Wilde, who have contributed their thoughts to this Guide. Their input is invaluable, but needless to say, any errors or omissions are ours. We would also like to thank our partners: Deepbridge Capital, GrowthInvest, Seneca Partners, Jenson Funding Partners and Vala Capital. It would not be possible to produce educational material like this without their generous support and contribution towards the production, printing and distribution of the guide.



### MARK BROWNRIDGE

DIRECTOR GENERAL, ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT SCHEME ASSOCIATION

## Opening Statement

*2019 marks the **25th anniversary** of the Enterprise Investment Scheme. In that time, EIS has helped over 29,770 companies start and scale up their business and provided over £20 billion of equity funding. It's a phenomenal success story and has helped companies across a wide range of different sectors and industries to achieve their goals and ambitions.*

*It has continued to support the next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators and disruptors and a common thread amongst those that have received EIS investment, is that it was **vital to their success**, particularly in the early stages. Alex Cheattle, CEO and co-founder of Ten Lifestyle Group, an AIM listed lifestyle management business, has gone so far as to say: "We probably would not have a business today without EIS."*

*Alex was able to provide his EIS investors with a **15x initial investment return** but of course not all of those that have so far received EIS funding have been able to match that. It's the unfortunate nature of a start-up that failure rates are high and investors lose money. A tax*



*incentive scheme like EIS focuses investors on entrepreneurial firms based on a number of criteria, such as age and size, but no investors can guarantee that every one is a winner. Nevertheless, while the government doesn't undertake statistical analyses of the impact of the effectiveness of tax incentive schemes, but anecdotally for every £1 invested via tax efficient schemes, the government gets back £4.*



***It's clear that in a post-Brexit environment, the government wishes to reiterate that the UK is open for business.***

*In effect, we have come full circle. Further in fact. See these comments made by Geoffrey Howe MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1983, in respect of the introduction of EIS's forebear: "By concentrating help on those companies which do not have ready access to outside capital, the scheme will assist many more small or medium companies to realise their undoubted potential for growth."*

*So, 25 years on it's really a case of back to the future for EIS. In recent years, the government has changed the EIS rules to ensure every pound invested in the scheme is a pound at risk. The end result has meant the focus is firmly on three areas: **growth, innovation and technology**.*

*The portents are exciting: dealflow in the UK in these areas looks particularly strong as, increasingly, does the prevalence of exits; EIS remains one of the most tax efficient investments available and small businesses still require and respect EIS funding. EIS has been and will continue to be a British success story to be proud of.*



# The EIS landscape

## Purpose

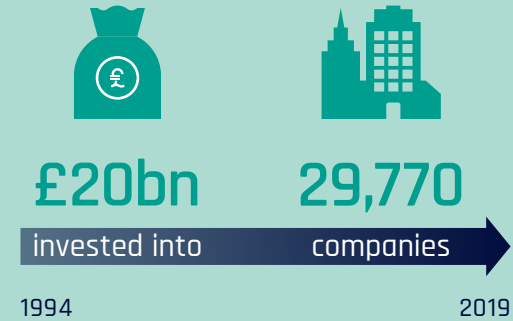
The Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) is a government scheme designed to encourage investment into small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have a permanent establishment in the UK.

Along with the other Venture Capital Tax Reliefs (which include the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) and Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR)), the scheme offers tax relief to individuals as an incentive to invest in SMEs and social enterprises that are not listed on any recognised stock exchange.

Many SMEs and unlisted companies are likely to struggle to obtain alternative sources of finance. However, these potentially high growth companies, while deemed risky, are recognised to be a vital contributor to economic growth and job creation.

Therefore, the government offers generous incentives to investors in these schemes to reward them for assisting such companies to grow and develop.

## History and main developments



EIS was launched in 1994 as a replacement for the Business Expansion Scheme. Since then, over £20 billion has been invested into almost 30,000 companies via EIS. This is widely seen as a great success and the scheme has enjoyed the support of successive governments.

Over its lifetime, a number of changes introduced to the rules governing EIS have been made with the intention of expanding the scheme – as well as ensuring that EIS continues to meet EU State-aid requirements and remains focused on growing and innovative businesses.



**2019 marks the 25th anniversary of EIS, making it one of, if not the, longest running tax incentive investment schemes in the world.**

**ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT SCHEME ASSOCIATION**

## SIZE OF EIS-QUALIFYING COMPANIES

- PRIOR TO 6 APRIL 2012
- ON OR AFTER 6 APRIL 2012



The rate of income tax relief was increased from 20% to 30% from April 2011 and the scheme was expanded in 2012 to allow greater levels of investment into larger companies.

This coincided with a boom in investment into renewable energy projects that often also qualified for other government subsidies and new investment managers entered the market to meet the increased demand.

However, in 2014 the Chancellor excluded subsidised electricity generation from the EIS reliefs (with ALL energy generation activities excluded from April 2016), recognising that these investments were not sufficiently risky (especially those subsidised through other means) to justify the EIS tax advantages.

Further changes were made in 2015 in order to ensure that the EIS reliefs continued to comply with EU State-aid requirements. These changes had the effect of tightening up the rules in some areas by adding further restrictions on the types of companies that qualify for EIS.

None of these recent changes should be interpreted as the government changing their support of EIS. The changes were designed and targeted to ensure that EIS continues to be both compliant with EU State-aid rules and meets the purpose for which it was introduced, namely to address the UK equity gap, i.e. equity funding for small businesses.

## Autumn Budget 2017

In addition, and in line with similar rules introduced for VCT and SEIS, it was announced in the Autumn Budget 2017 that the 2017/18 Finance Bill would include a new ‘principles-based approach’ to identify lower risk activities that should not benefit from the tax reliefs. In accordance with the Finance Act 2018, the ‘risk-to-capital condition’ applies to investments made on or after 15 March 2018.

The Autumn Budget 2017 also included a welcome boost for EIS investments into knowledge-intensive companies. Knowledge-intensive companies (explained in greater detail in later sections) are those which are carrying out significant levels of research and development (R&D); these can qualify for higher amounts of EIS (and VCT) funding than other companies. See page 31 for HMRC’s definition of R&D.

As a result, for EIS investments made from 6 April 2018:

- The 12-month investment limits were doubled (from £5 million to £10 million per company)
- Greater flexibility was provided to knowledge-intensive companies over how the age limit is applied (explained on page 31).
- The 12-month investment limit for individuals doubled from £1 million to £2 million, provided any amount above £1 million is invested into knowledge-intensive companies.

There is more detail on these changes in later sections.





# Risks and rewards

Investments into unquoted small and medium-sized enterprises are deemed high risk. It is important to understand the risks associated with EIS-qualifying investments in a general sense, and we will examine some of those risks here.

However, each individual EIS investment opportunity has its own unique risks and, therefore, each opportunity must be individually assessed.

## Investment risks

Statistically speaking, smaller companies fail more often than larger, established companies. The reasons for this include:

- They can be more reliant upon a small number of customers;
- They have less capital available to withstand a downturn in their fortunes;

- They can take a long time to bring new initiatives to fruition and become profitable.

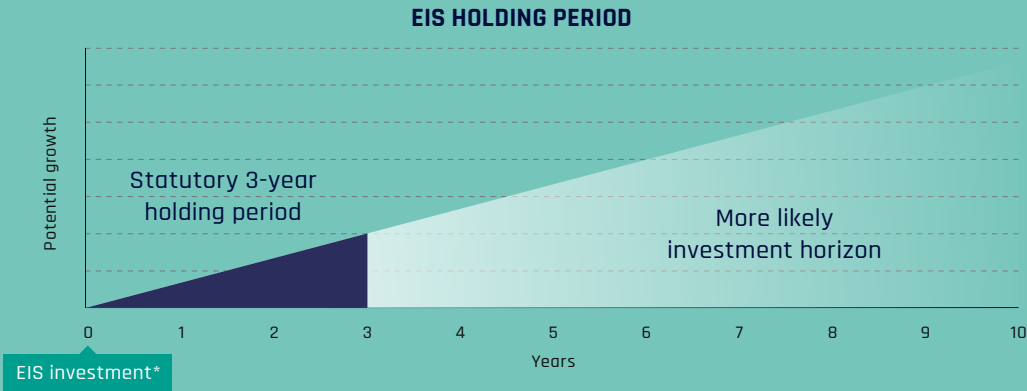
These risks can be offset, to some extent, by skilful stock selection and sufficient diversification.

## Liquidity

Although the minimum holding period to qualify for the full income tax relief and tax-free growth is at least three years (note, there is no minimum holding period for Capital Gains Tax (CGT) deferral relief), in reality investors are likely to have to commit their funds for much longer; most EIS investments should be viewed on a five to ten-year investment horizon.

Previously, some EIS funds have been positioned as ‘lower-risk’ and some may have had an objective of winding up as soon after the three-year period as possible. But this is still subject to being able to successfully dispose of the qualifying investments without there being any arrangements for this in place from the outset (as required by EIS rules).

However, the new risk-to-capital condition (explained on pages 26-27) means that anything structured to be ‘lower risk’ has no longer qualified for new EIS investment since 15 March 2018, when the Finance Act 2018 received Royal Assent.



\* EIS shares must be held for a period of at least three years – from the later of the issue of shares, or commencement of trade if the shares were issued when the company hadn’t commenced trading.

There is no large-scale active secondary market in unquoted shares and EIS managers do not offer buy-backs.

It may be possible to arrange a private sale of shares to a third party, but, at the point of investment, investors should regard themselves as locked in to the shares until the underlying company either lists on a recognised stock exchange, achieves a trade sale, or the company is wound up. (EIS rules dictate that should a company list on a recognised stock exchange within an investor’s relevant three-year holding period EIS relief for that investor will be withdrawn. However, some stock exchanges such as AIM fall outside the definition of a recognised exchange so it may be possible to list on AIM without a withdrawal of relief. This is considered further in the Rules for qualifying companies section).

## Exit risk

As unquoted investments, any gains in EIS-qualifying shares are only ‘attributed gains’ (unrealised) until the investor can exit and realise those gains. There is no active secondary market in unquoted shares, so an exit is most likely to come in one of THREE ways:

1. **An Initial Public Offering (IPO)** – The company lists on an exchange and shares can be sold on the open market.
2. **A trade sale or management buyout** – A majority of shareholders agree to sell their shares to another company or possibly the incumbent management team.
3. **Voluntary liquidation by shareholders** – The company is wound up and the assets are sold, with the proceeds distributed to shareholders. This doesn’t necessarily mean that the company has failed; depending on the remaining assets of the company, the distributions to the shareholders may be worth more than the initial price they paid for their shares.

## ‘Zombie companies’

There is a risk of an investment continuing indefinitely with no large-scale active secondary market in EIS shares; this is to the extent that described exit routes cannot be achieved at either a gain or a loss. A loss could at least be offset against other gains. Since very few small companies pay dividends and dividends paid from an EIS-qualifying company are subject to tax, there is unlikely to be any income. In this scenario the funds remain tied up indefinitely with little prospect of recycling them. EIS investee companies in this situation are often referred to as ‘zombie companies’.

## Tax risks

A company that issues EIS-qualifying shares must meet a number of different criteria. Some of these criteria apply at the point of investment and some apply for the minimum three-year holding period.

If the company changes its activities or structure in such a way that it no longer meets these qualifying criteria during that three-year period, then investors lose their tax reliefs. See the Rules for qualifying companies section on page 26 for more details.

Relief will be denied on any shares issued under arrangements that offer investors a protection against the risks of making the investment or which would effectively guarantee (or at least make it likely) that the investor will receive their money back at some point in the future through some mechanism introduced by the provider or the company itself. This would be considered to be part of an arrangement, for the purpose of tax avoidance.

However, simply making an investment with the aim of qualifying for relief is unlikely to be viewed as tax avoidance in itself.

# Comparison of risks with VCTs

The other major tax-advantaged venture capital scheme in the UK is a Venture Capital Trust (VCT). The biggest difference between VCTs and EIS is that VCTs generally operate a much bigger pool of investee companies, giving increased diversification and limiting investment risk.

Secondly, as they are listed on a recognised exchange and hold more liquid assets than EIS funds (up to 20% of the VCT’s funds are not

required to be invested in qualifying holdings, reduced from 30% for accounting periods ending on or after 6 April 2019), they have increased liquidity.

However, EIS has a broader range of tax reliefs. A comparison of the tax reliefs is provided on page 20.

## TAX RELIEFS IN SUMMARY

EIS tax reliefs are only available to investors with a UK tax liability, and are only available if the investee company maintains its qualifying status throughout an investor’s minimum three-year holding period. The amount of

relief an investor will get depends on their individual circumstances.

While it is important to understand the details of the tax reliefs available, tax should not be the only driver for investment in shares in an EIS-qualifying company.

The investment must be suitable for the client even without taking tax relief into consideration and there is likely to be a specific planning scenario involved.

There are FIVE potential tax reliefs available for EIS investors, some or all of which may be available/applicable to a particular investor:

- **Up to 30% income tax relief**
- **100% EIS deferral relief**
- **100% IHT relief** (via BR after a minimum holding period, applicable to most EIS-qualifying companies)
- **Tax-free capital growth** (subject to meeting certain conditions throughout the minimum holding period and claiming income tax relief)
- **Loss relief** (losses are available to offset against capital gains or, in certain circumstances, income tax)

TAX RELIEFS SUMMARY	RATE OF RELIEF	MINIMUM HOLDING PERIOD
INCOME TAX RELIEF	Up to 30% of the value of EIS-qualifying shares subscribed for	3 years from the acquisition date of the shares (however, if the company is not trading when the shares are issued, the period ends on the third anniversary of commencement of the trade)
EIS REINVESTMENT RELIEF (CGT DEFERRAL RELIEF)	100% of a gain can be 'deferred' if it is invested in qualifying shares, thereby deferring the CGT liability	The gain crystallises when the qualifying shares are disposed of (or deemed to be disposed of)
IHT RELIEF	100% of the value of the EIS shares at the time of death (or other chargeable event for IHT purposes)	2 years from the date of acquisition of the shares where the company is trading at the time of the share issue. Replacement business property rules may also apply
TAX-FREE GROWTH	100% CGT exemption on EIS shares	3 years from the acquisition date of the shares (if the company is not trading when the shares are issued, the period ends on the third anniversary of commencement of the trade)
LOSS RELIEF	Losses can be offset against capital gains or income tax and the prevailing rates will depend upon the individual's circumstances and tax position	None

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY	MAXIMUM LIMIT	FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS
The tax year of the share issue, with the potential to carry back some or all of the investment to the previous tax year	£300,000, based on the annual EIS limit of £1 million. It is also possible to carry back an investment of up to £1 million to the prior tax year. From 6 April 2018, the annual investment limit on individuals doubled from £1 million to £2 million, provided any amount above £1 million is invested into knowledge-intensive companies	Can only be offset against income tax paid. Income tax relief must be claimed, and not withdrawn, in order to achieve tax-free growth - see below
3 years after or one year prior to the disposal of the original asset giving rise to the gain	Unlimited	If the EIS shares are disposed of, the crystallised gain can be reinvested into further EIS shares and deferred again
Relief must be applied for by the executors of the deceased's estate (IHT must usually be paid within 6 months from the end of the month of death) or by the transferor in the event of a lifetime transfer	Unlimited	IHT is unlikely to be primary driver when considering an EIS investment
No CGT to pay upon disposal if EIS shares are sold at a gain	Unlimited	Income tax relief must have been claimed and not subsequently withdrawn in relation to the purchase of the EIS shares
Losses can be offset against other capital gains in the year of the loss and any excess can be carried forward. Losses can potentially also be offset against income tax in the current or preceding tax year	100% of the capital loss on the EIS shares (less the income tax relief), provided there are sufficient gains / income tax to offset the loss against	

# Income tax relief: Examples of use

EIS investors can claim a reduction in their income tax bill of 30% of the cost of the EIS-qualifying shares they have subscribed for.

The reduction can either apply to the tax year in which the shares were issued, or it can be carried back to the previous tax year (subject to how much, if any, of the previous year's allowance is still available).

Example

A client who subscribed for £250,000 of EIS-qualifying shares would be entitled to claim up to £75,000 of income tax relief (£250,000 x 30%).

While we recognise the potential benefits of EIS as an investment opportunity, it is important that investors who acquire EIS-qualifying shares have a clear understanding of the risks, as well as the benefits, associated with investing in them.

POINTS TO NOTE:

1

An investor's **overall income tax liability** cannot be negative (i.e. it is not possible to claim relief on tax that hasn't been paid or isn't due to be paid).

Example

A client who subscribed for £250,000 of EIS-qualifying shares would be entitled to claim up to £75,000 of income tax relief (£250,000 x 30%).

If the client had only paid £50,000 of income tax over the previous two years, £25,000 of that relief would be lost (£75,000 - £50,000).



We are doubling EIS investment limits for knowledge intensive companies, while ensuring that EIS is not used as a shelter for low-risk capital preservation schemes.

PHILIP HAMMOND, CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, BUDGET 2017

2

The **maximum** that can be invested in EIS-qualifying opportunities annually by an individual (and still qualify for the income tax relief) is £1 million.

From 6 April 2018, this was extended to £2 million provided that any amount above £1 million is invested in knowledge-intensive companies. The 30% income tax relief applies to this extra limit also. This means that the maximum income tax relief in a single year is £600,000 (£2 million x 30%).

Example 1

A client could subscribe for £2 million of EIS-qualifying shares and, assuming that they had not used any of the previous year's EIS income tax relief allowance, they could carry £1 million of the share purchase back, thus claiming £600,000 income tax relief in total:

(£1 million x 30% = £300,000 relief in 2019/20 + £1 million x 30% = £300,000 relief carried back to the previous year).

However, if the client had subscribed for £600,000 of EIS-qualifying shares in the previous year (and claimed the tax relief for that year), then they would only be able to carry back £400,000 of 2019/20's purchase (£1 million - £600,000) and claim £120,000 income tax relief for 2019/20.

Example 2

Alternatively, a client could subscribe for £2 million of EIS-qualifying shares, £1 million of which represents holdings in knowledge-intensive companies. They could then claim £600,000 income tax relief in total in the 2019/20 year (£2 million x 30% = £600,000).

3

The **minimum holding period** to retain income tax relief starts on the date of the share issue. It ends on the third anniversary of the later of the date of the share issue and the date of commencement to trade.

If an investor disposes of their shares prior to the end of the three-year period, HMRC claws back the income tax relief.

Example 1

The clawback can never be more than the amount of the initial income tax relief (subject to any interest that may be due). If the shares are disposed of at a gain within three years, HMRC will claw back the full amount of the tax relief received.

Assume a client subscribes for £500,000 of EIS-qualifying shares and receives £150,000 income tax relief. If the client was to then sell those shares for £1 million within three years, HMRC would claw back the full £150,000. It might only make sense to sell the shares within the three-year period, when the sales proceeds exceed any clawback of income tax relief and any CGT liabilities.

Example 2

If the shares are disposed of at a loss within three years, the clawback will be equivalent to the sales proceeds multiplied by 30%.

Assume a client buys £500,000 of EIS-qualifying shares and receives £150,000 income tax relief. If the client was to then sell those shares for £400,000 within three years, HMRC would claw back £120,000 (£400,000 x 30%) - the client may be able to claim share loss relief on the net loss of £70,000 i.e. £100,000 less the remaining income tax relief of £30,000.

CLAWBACKS

Transferring the shares to a spouse or civil partner within the three-year period does not trigger a clawback of income tax relief, but transferring the shares to any other third party does. (This may be driven by the investment manager for a commercial reason and be out of an investor’s hands). There is no clawback if the disposal or transfer is a result of the investor’s death.

HMRC claws back income tax relief by raising a special assessment for the tax year in which the relief was obtained.

Normally, interest is charged from 31 January following the end of the tax year for which the assessment is made. Where

the shares were acquired from a spouse or civil partner, the assessment is made on the person they were transferred to as if they purchased them on the date of acquisition by the transferor.

BRAND NEW SHARES

Finally, to qualify for income tax relief the client must subscribe, fully pay for in advance and be issued brand new shares that the investee company is issuing to the market.

Secondary purchases, either purchased on an exchange or arranged privately, do not qualify for EIS tax relief.



HMRC Guidance  
HS297 Enterprise Investment  
Scheme and Capital Gains Tax

Who can claim deferral relief?

You can claim relief if you are an individual resident or ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom (UK). You cannot claim relief if you are treated by double taxation arrangements as resident elsewhere, so that (ignoring any Disposal Relief) you would not be liable to UK Capital Gains Tax on any gain from the EIS shares. The trustees of certain settlements may also claim relief.

This can continue indefinitely and, if the investor were to die holding an EIS investment that had enabled them to defer gains in this manner, then the CGT liability is extinguished.

In order for the gains to be matched to an EIS investment, they must arise within a four-year time window commencing three years before and ending one year after the share issue date.

Example

*A client sells a residential property (that was not their main residence) for £300,000, making a capital gain of £50,000.*

*By investing that £50,000 into EIS-qualifying shares, the CGT on the gain is deferred until the client disposes of the EIS-qualifying shares. This has the effect of deferring the CGT liability of £14,000 (£50,000 x 28%), assuming the client has no remaining CGT annual exempt amount that year and pays CGT at the higher rate for property disposals.*

*If the client had sold their property 30 months ago, they still have six months in which to invest their gain into EIS-qualifying shares and defer the CGT on the gain. The same timeframe applies to each subsequent reinvestment in EIS shares.*

Reinvestment relief  
(deferral relief)

If a client reinvests a capital gain from the sale of another asset into qualifying shares in an EIS company, they are entitled to defer the gain on the original asset.

This means that any CGT liability on that gain is deferred. The gain is deferred until the investor sells their shares (or is deemed to have disposed of their shares) in the EIS company, at which point the gain crystallises and CGT is then payable at the prevailing rate applied at that time.

**EIS cannot be used to reduce, for example, the rate of CGT applying on the sale of property (currently 28% for a higher rate taxpayer). A revived gain is chargeable to tax at the rate applying to the original asset.**

If the proceeds from the sale of the EIS shares are reinvested in another EIS-qualifying company, the gain can be deferred again if reinvested during the relevant time window.

Only the capital gain (or a proportion of it) needs to be invested in an EIS, NOT the entire proceeds of the sale. This feature can be useful in scenarios where advisers want to ensure that conventional CGT annual exempt amounts are maximised.

Example

**a)** *Our client could choose to invest just £25,000 from the sale of their house into EIS-qualifying shares. Deferring £25,000 would leave them a CGT liability of £7,000 (£25,000 x 28%), assuming the client has no remaining CGT annual exempt amount that year and pays CGT at the higher rate for property disposals.*



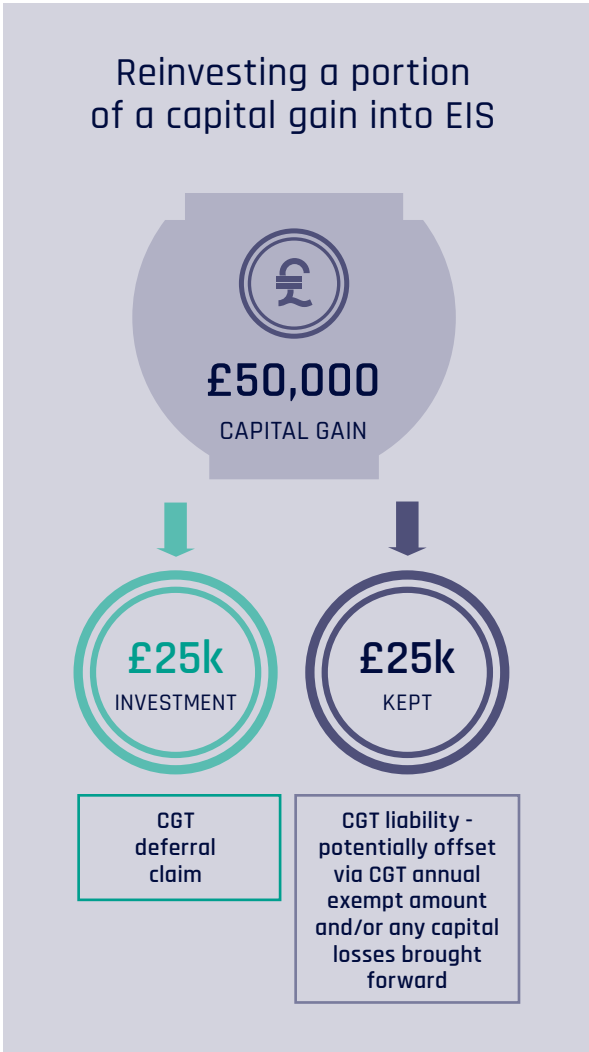
b) Let's assume our client does in fact have their full CGT annual exempt amount available (£12,000 for 2019/20). Rather than claiming CGT deferral relief on the full amount of the gain reinvested, they could claim less, for example, if they wanted to use their CGT annual exempt amount to cover part of their gain. For example, they could invest £38,000 in EIS and claim £38,000 in CGT deferral relief, leaving £12,000 to be covered by their CGT annual exempt amount and no CGT would be immediately payable.

Only UK resident individuals and trustees of a qualifying UK resident settlement can claim deferral relief. The qualifying settlement is where all beneficiaries are either individuals or charities. There is no restriction on connected individuals claiming EIS deferral relief as there is in relation to income tax.

There is no upper limit on how much capital gain can be deferred: the £1 million (£2 million for investments into knowledge-intensive companies) limit only applies to the income tax relief and even if the investor is not intending to claim income tax relief at all, there is no limit.

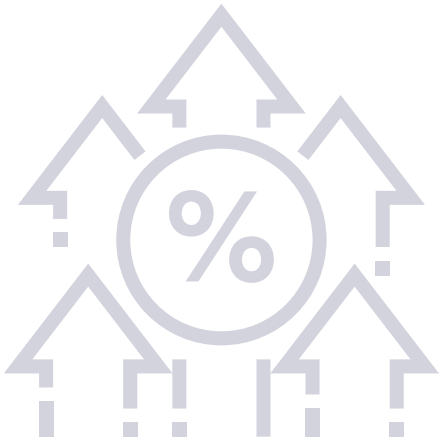
Similar to income tax relief, gifting the shares to a spouse or civil partner does not crystallise the deferred gain immediately; it only crystallises once the spouse or civil partner disposes of the shares (and the gain is assessable on the transferee). However, gifting the shares to a third party crystallises the deferred gain immediately.

There are other events that crystallise the deferred gain. If the investor becomes non-resident in the UK (however, going abroad for full-time employment and returning within three years is allowed) or if the shares themselves cease to be EIS-qualifying shares for some reason (see the section on Rules for qualifying companies), the gain crystallises. Deferral relief cannot be claimed before a compliance certificate (known as an EIS3) is issued by HMRC and



completed and signed by the company and then given to an investor in order to enable them to claim the relief. This applies when requesting CGT and income tax relief. In practice, this can mean CGT has to be paid in the meantime and reclaimed later on. There is more detail on the process of claiming the relief in the 'Claiming the tax reliefs' section which starts on page 34.

There is no stipulation as to which gains have to be deferred: earlier gains do NOT have to be deferred first. Which gains to defer (if there is more than one to consider) is entirely the investor's choice.



### Tax-free growth (disposal relief)

Providing EIS-qualifying shares are held for at least three years (from the later of when the shares were issued, or when the company started trading) and the investor successfully claims income tax relief, if the shares are sold at a gain, the gain on the EIS-qualifying shares is exempt from CGT.

If full income tax relief cannot be claimed (or is not claimed) because the investor's income tax liability is reduced to nil, full Disposal Relief is available. If partial relief has been claimed or part of the relief has been withdrawn, then only partial Disposal Relief is available.

As well as being restricted if, for example, there is 'value received', the CGT exemption is restricted in circumstances where the original investment exceeded the maximum permitted for income tax relief (£1million or £2 million providing at least £1 million is invested into knowledge-intensive companies). For example, ignoring carry back, if an investor bought shares for £3 million, including £1 million in knowledge-intensive companies, disposal relief would be restricted to two-thirds of any gain arising on a disposal.

### Example (Disposal relief)

A client invests £50,000 into EIS-qualifying shares and then sells the shares for £75,000 four years later (in 2019/20). Outside EIS, the investor could expect to incur a £2,600 CGT liability.

$(£75,000 - £50,000 = £25,000 \text{ gain.})$   
 $£25,000 - £12,000 \text{ CGT annual exempt amount (2019/20) = £13,000 gain.}$   
 $£13,000 \times 20\% \text{ CGT} = £2,600.)$

However, in these circumstances, the gain on the EIS shares is tax-free.

### Loss relief

Relief is available for EIS shares that are disposed of at any time at a loss (after taking into account income tax relief which is retained). The loss can be set against the investor's capital gains or their income tax liability.

### Example 1 (Partial loss)

If the client mentioned earlier invested £50,000 into EIS-qualifying shares and instead sold their shares for a £25,000 loss, they would be entitled to offset that loss against any other gains that year to minimise their CGT liability.

However, they would not be entitled to offset the entire loss. If we assume that they claimed the full £15,000 income tax relief available on the initial purchase, their loss relief is limited to £10,000.

$(£25,000 \text{ loss} - £15,000 \text{ income tax relief retained} = £10,000 \text{ available to offset against capital gains or income.})$

The amount that can be offset is dependent on the applicable CGT or income tax rate.

Since the loss relief is being applied to capital gains charged at 20%, the client can claim 20% of the loss, a total of £2,000 (£10,000 x 20%) against their CGT liability in the year of the loss or any future capital gains.

Example 2 (Loss relief - total loss)

Another client invests £100,000 in EIS qualifying companies. By doing so, they are entitled to reduce their income tax liability by a maximum of £30,000 (30% of £100,000).

The net cash cost of investment is then £70,000. If all the investments failed, the total loss before loss relief would be £70,000.

In the event of total loss, the amount of loss relief that can be claimed is dependent on the investor's marginal rate of income tax. (The investor wants to offset the loss against other income taxable at 45% as opposed to chargeable gains taxed at 20%)

This client pays 45% income tax and can claim 45% of the loss, a total of £31,500 (£70,000 x 45%) against their income tax liability. This means they have received tax reliefs totaling £61,500 against their £100,000 investment, limiting their exposure to 38.5% of the original investment.

If the entire loss cannot be relieved against income in the relevant two years (perhaps because there is not enough income to relieve the losses fully), any unused balance can be used against capital gains arising in the same year as the loss; or carried forward to offset against any future capital gains.

Other loss reliefs that can be set against income, such as trade loss relief, are restricted to the higher of £50,000 or 25% of the taxpayer's income annually.

However, this restriction does not apply to EIS, where EIS income tax relief is claimed (but it does apply where only CGT Deferral Relief is claimed).

Options for offsetting losses on EIS shares

Against Capital Gains

As with conventional capital losses, any losses from the sale of EIS-qualifying shares can be offset against any capital gains made in the same tax year, thus reducing any CGT liability;

Any remaining losses can be carried forward to a future tax year;

Any income tax relief received in relation to the initial investment is subtracted from the capital loss first.

Against Income

The loss can be offset against any income in either the same tax year or the preceding tax year, or both;

The loss is subtracted from the investor's net income when calculating their income tax liability;

Any income tax relief received in relation to the initial investment is subtracted from the capital loss;

In practice, as income tax rates are usually higher than CGT rates, offsetting against income tax will generally be more attractive where a client is subject to the higher rates of income tax.



Thought Leadership

FILM AND MEDIA FUNDS IN EIS - WHY THE WRULE CHANGES CAUSED THEM PROBLEMS

LIZ BRION PARTNER, GRANT THORNTON  
DAVID ADAMS SENIOR MANAGER, GRANT THORNTON

It's been no secret that the recent changes to the EIS and VCT legislation have had a huge impact on the ability of companies in the film and media sector to access EIS and VCT financing, leading to several high profile EIS media fund closures. Coupled with the ongoing HMRC disputes into film production companies, **it's been tough for the sector**, particularly for small independent film production companies seeking to raise external finance.

So why have the recent EIS changes made life so difficult for film and media companies compared with other sectors? Historically, companies would raise money under EIS using special purpose vehicles (SPVs), which would then be used to finance specific film or other sector-focused projects. The SPVs would have a minimal organisational structure, and most of the costs of production would be incurred via contractors and third parties as is the norm for the sector. Once the project was completed, the SPV would be wound up and any profits would be distributed to financiers and investors.

It's obvious therefore to see how this model struggles to satisfy a key element of the risk-to-capital condition: the need to evidence objectives to **grow and develop** a trade for the **long term**.

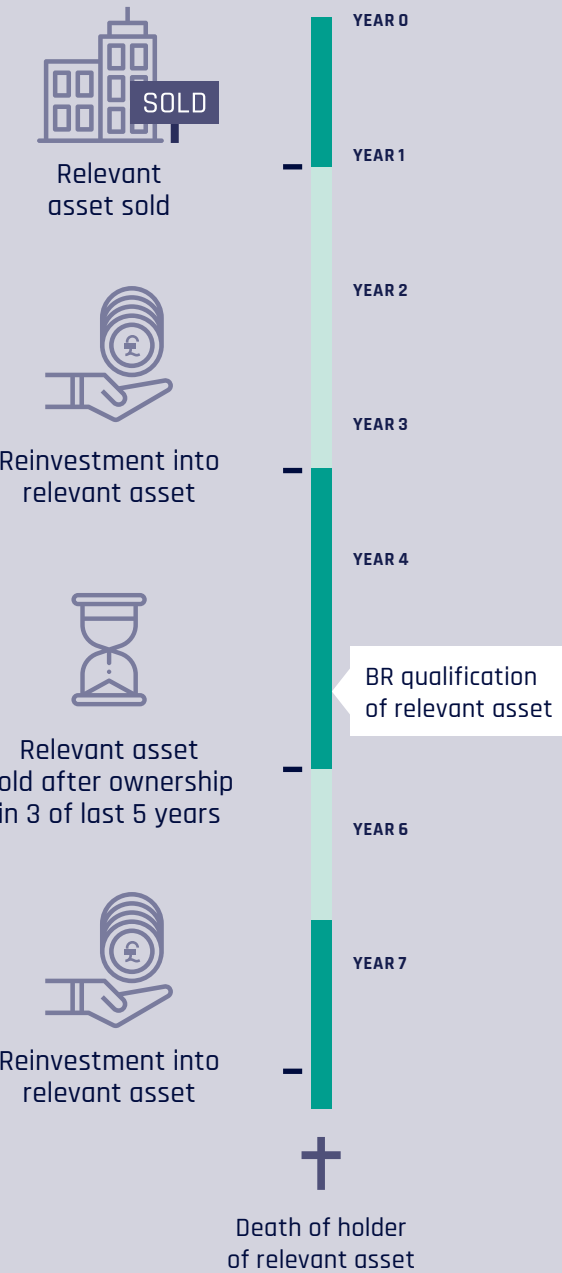
EIS funds and film and media companies have had to adjust their investment strategy to focus on investing in an underlying business rather than specific projects in order to operate within the new rules. Some of the key areas where they've had to adjust include:

- Investment in companies responsible for multiple projects which are seeking to build an IP library which they have produced and own, with profits and capital reinvested back in the company for the future. A **pipeline of future projects** which support a long-term growth proposition is key.
- EIS money being employed for the **growth and development** of the business, such as the recruitment of new staff, building a sales team or infrastructure to support future growth. That does not preclude the use of contractors, particularly where this is an industry norm, however HMRC wants evidence of real organisational growth through increased head count, revenues and customers.
- Projects may still be undertaken in SPVs but these must be **wholly owned subsidiaries** of the EIS investee company which itself retains creative and operational control of both the company and project. While HMRC's guidance indicates that EIS funds can be used to fund 'project activity', in practice we see HMRC taking a different stance and refusing to accept that project costs can be funded with EIS investment.

As a result of the sector adapting, we have seen an increase in the number of advance assurances provided by HMRC. Furthermore, a new BFI-backed EIS fund has been created specifically for investing in the creative industries and is hoping to raise £20 million in the first year alone. All in all, funding prospects for EIS-backed media businesses look much rosier now.

# Example of replacement business property

OWNERSHIP OF RELEVANT ASSET



The relevant asset is BR qualifying as it has been held for at least 2 of the last 5 years and it was held by the deceased on death. While this works for BR qualification, EIS qualification requires a minimum, uninterrupted holding period of at least 3 years.

## IHT relief via Business Relief

The vast majority of EIS-qualifying investments attract 100% IHT relief via BR because the qualifying trades for EIS purposes are very similar to those which qualify for BR. However, to be eligible for the EIS tax reliefs, there are additional qualification criteria including the risk-to-capital condition.

Qualification for BR is subject to the minimum holding period of two years (from the later of the share issue date and trade commencement). However the 'replacement property' provisions mean that a qualifying investment may also be treated as satisfying the two-year minimum ownership period. This is where it replaces (either directly or indirectly) other qualifying assets that have been disposed of. In order to qualify for replacement relief, the new investment needs to qualify as relevant business property and must be bought within three years of the disposal of the original qualifying asset.

It's also necessary that the replacement investment is still held at death (or the point of any other chargeable lifetime transfer), and that the combined holding period for both is at least two out of the last five years.

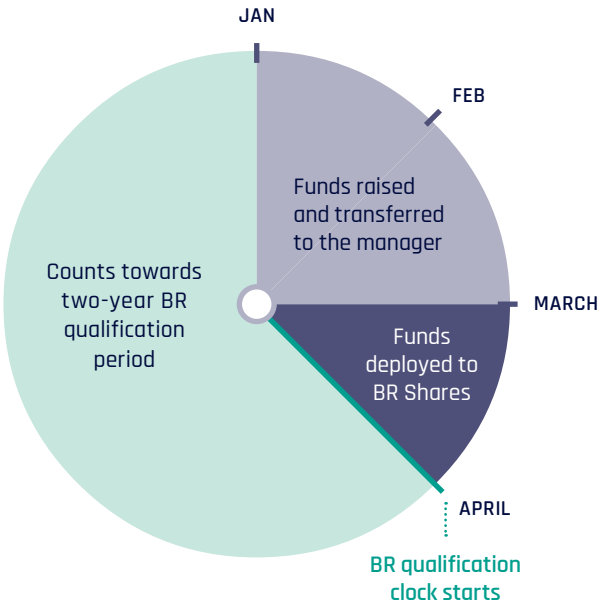
To attract 100% Business Relief, 'relevant business property' comprises: a business or interest in a business; unquoted securities that either by themselves or in conjunction with other securities or unquoted shares give their owner control of an unquoted company; or unquoted shares (including those listed on the AIM market).

### Example

Consider a client with an estate of over £2 million, who invested £100,000 into EIS-qualifying shares and held these for at least two years prior to their death (or has held qualifying assets for at least two years within a period of five years, where replacement relief has been utilised).

Provided that the shares still qualified for BR at the date of death, they will be passed on to their beneficiaries without IHT being suffered in relation to the value of the EIS shares.

## BR qualification clock



Business Relief is a retrospective relief in the sense that it is only assessed when a claim is made: either by the executors of the deceased's estate or when there has been a chargeable lifetime transfer.

When it comes to claiming BR, the two-year qualifying period starts when the money is used to purchase the shares in a trading company, not, for example, when the money is transferred to an EIS investment manager. There will be a lag of weeks or months between a manager receiving money and investing it on a client's behalf, and this lag must be taken into account when determining the dates for qualifying periods.

While EIS qualification brings additional tax benefits, they are usually riskier investments than those targeting BR benefits alone, with lower levels of liquidity and higher levels of fees and charges. So, if the objective is IHT relief while retaining access to the funds and the risk appetite is lower, BR should be preferred over EIS.

Most EIS qualifying investments also meet the requirements for business property relief and an EIS investment would usually fall out of an individual's estate for inheritance tax purposes once held for a period of two years.

SMITH & WILLIAMSON

## Comparison: EIS and VCT

There are some notable differences in how the tax reliefs available with EIS compare to those available through VCTs (the other major tax-advantaged venture capital scheme in the UK).

- Income tax relief is subject to a five-year minimum holding period with VCTs, compared to a minimum of at least three years with EIS (although realistically the holding period is likely to be much longer).
- Unlike EIS, VCT investment cannot be carried back to previous tax years.

- There is no loss relief, CGT deferral relief or IHT relief with VCTs.
- VCTs can pay dividends tax-free, EIS cannot.
- Both VCTs and EIS investments are not subject to CGT on capital gains made (subject to certain conditions).

With a VCT, income tax relief is claimed at the point at which the funds are invested in the VCT. This is also treated as the starting point for the minimum holding period. This is different from an “unapproved” EIS fund (which comprise most EIS funds), where the reliefs and associated minimum holding periods apply each time the manager invests a proportion of the clients’ fund in an underlying investee company.

	VCT	EIS portfolio/fund
INCOME TAX RELIEF	30%	30%
MINIMUM TERM	5 years	3 years
LIKELY INVESTMENT HORIZON	5-10 years	5-10 years
MAXIMUM ANNUAL INVESTMENT ELIGIBLE	£200,000	£1m plus £1m carry back (and from 6 April 2018, max £2m where at least £1m is invested in knowledge-intensive companies)
DIVIDENDS	Tax exempt	Taxed
CAPITAL GAINS	Tax exempt	Tax exempt
CGT DEFERRAL	No	Yes
LOSS RELIEF	No	Yes
LIQUIDITY	Up to 20% of the VCT’s assets (up to 30% for accounting periods ending before 6 April 2019) may be held in cash, or certain other liquid assets. VCT managers often offer share buyback schemes but usually at a discount to NAV and they are not guaranteed. VCTs’ shares are not widely traded and usually trade at a discount to their NAV.	There is no large-scale active secondary market in unquoted shares and EIS managers do not offer buy-backs. Investors should regard themselves as locked in to the shares until the underlying company either lists on a recognised stock exchange, achieves a trade sale, or the company is wound up. AIM listed EIS-qualifying shares have the potential for faster disposal.
DIVERSIFICATION	30-60 companies	4-15 companies
IHT RELIEF	No	100% after 2-year holding period
TARGET DEPLOYMENT TIMELINE	1 - 6 months unless there are fixed allotment dates for each tax year	12 - 24 months

Subject to conditions being met.

## EIS and other tax wrappers

### EIS AND PENSIONS

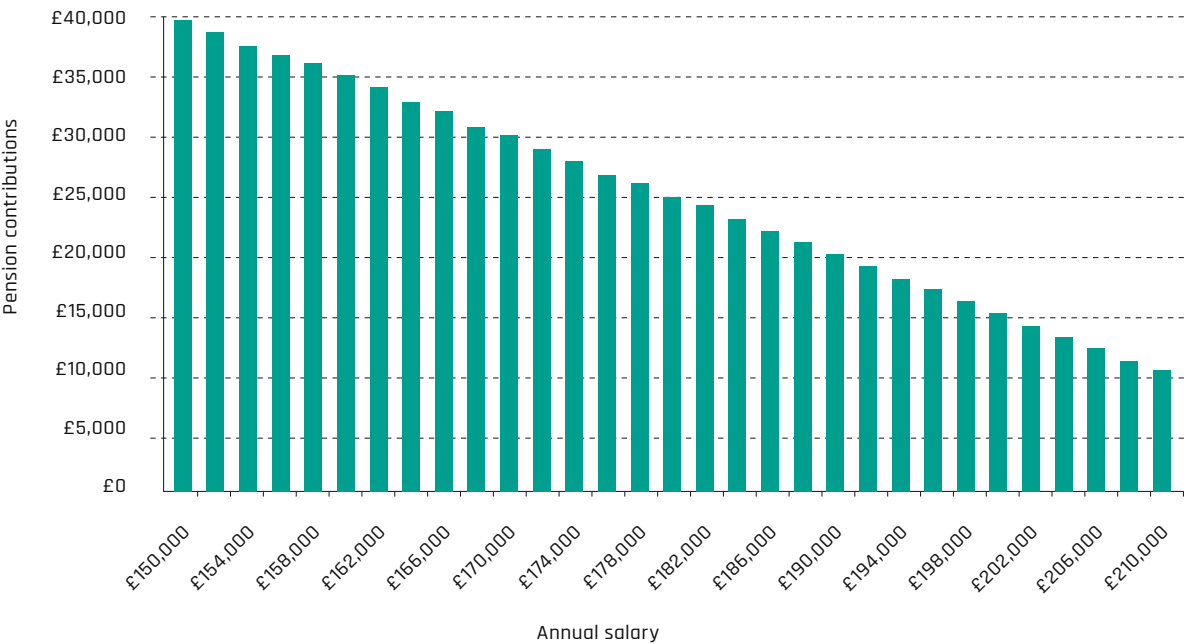
An investor may wish to use an EIS portfolio to complement existing pension and retirement planning strategies. However, it should be remembered that an EIS portfolio (which invests in what most would classify as high-risk companies) should NOT be considered as a replacement for pension investments, which will typically be lower risk.

Additional rate taxpayers (those who earn more than £150,000 per year) have their annual pension allowances reduced by £1 for every £2 extra income earned. For those earning over £210,000, their annual pension allowance is capped at £10,000.

If an investor exceeds the annual allowance in a year, they won’t receive tax relief on any contributions that exceed the limit and will be faced with an annual allowance charge. High earners may be concerned that they can’t get enough money into their pension as a result of this restriction.

In this situation, an investment into an EIS portfolio alongside the pension could provide an appropriate longer-term and tax-efficient investment.

ANNUAL PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS ALLOWANCE







However, each individual EIS investment opportunity has its own unique risks and, therefore, each opportunity must be individually assessed.

# Investors

The overarching criteria is that the investor should have an appropriate tax liability or a potential tax liability that they wish to offset and/or defer:

- prospective EIS share issue, or the prior tax year if carry back is available (in order to claim the EIS income tax relief and potentially qualify for disposal relief).

- ## Minimum holding periods

Any disposal of the shares (excluding a transfer between spouses) prior to the end of the minimum three-year period leads to HMRC clawing back some or all of any income tax relief. Any deferred capital gains are also crystallised on disposal (although this is the case whether the shares are disposed of before or after the expiration of the minimum three-year period, to the extent that a further EIS investment isn't made to further defer the crystallised gains).

Research and Development (if that is the qualifying business activity of the EIS company) is considered 'trading' for these purposes.

## Connected parties

Existing non-EIS shares in the company (other than certain subscriber shares)



## Connected parties

An individual is connected if he or she, whether alone or together with any 'associate' (associates can be business partners, spouses and civil partners, parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren), directly or indirectly possesses or is entitled to acquire:

- These conditions also apply to any 'follow on' investment: for example, if an investor already has a 20% stake in a company, and then subscribes for an additional 15% stake, they breach the '30% test'. If the second investment is made within the minimum three-year holding period for the first investment, income tax relief would be withdrawn in respect of the first investment.

There is also the "Independent Investor" requirement. This says that at the time of the share issue, if the investor holds other shares in the company for which SEIS or EIS income tax relief cannot be claimed, then the new share issue does not qualify either.

The only exception is if the existing shares are 'subscriber shares' issued to the individual when the company was founded or the shares were acquired when a pre-formed dormant company was bought 'off the shelf'.

## No linked loans

No relief is available (between the period commencing two years before the issue of EIS shares and the later of three years after the investment was made and the issue of EIS shares and the date the company commences trading) if the investor or any associate receives a loan from any person that would not have been made, or would not have been made on the same terms, were it not for the EIS investment.

## Genuine Commercial Purpose

There must be no arrangements or structuring of a company’s activities where those activities have no commercial purpose other than to generate tax relief.

## Pre-arranged exits

No relief is available if there are certain arrangements in connection to the share issue, including:

- Arrangements that might, in any way, lead to the disposal of the shares, or of other shares in the company;
- Arrangements that might lead to the cessation of the company’s trade, or of any trade carried on by a person connected with the company;
- Arrangements for the disposal of some or all of the assets of the company or of any person connected with the company.

This rule is intended to ensure that the company is capable of carrying on its trade indefinitely under its existing ownership. But, it does not stop the directors of a company from

indicating in advance to potential investors how they envisage that shares in the company might be disposed of at some later date.

## Receiving value

Investors (and their associates) must not ‘receive value’ from the investee company: if they do so the tax relief is withdrawn in proportion to the value received and any deferred capital gains crystallise.

Receiving value includes any kind of payment, service, goods, benefit or loan that transfers value from the investee company to the investor; this includes any transfer of this kind in exchange for the shares or any rights attached to the shares. It can also include repayment of loans to the investor or their associate. The investor can interact with the company as an ordinary customer, but this must be on the same terms as other conventional customers.

## Types of shares

Investors must subscribe for and purchase full risk, new ordinary shares with no arrangements in place to protect the investor from the normal risks associated with investing in shares. They cannot be redeemable, nor have any preferential rights to a company’s assets in the event of a winding up.

In certain circumstances, the shares may have limited preferential rights to dividends, but the rights to dividends cannot be cumulative (where unpaid dividends accumulate and are paid to the shareholder at a later date when funds are available) and the preferential rights to dividends cannot be subject to discretion as to the amount or timing of payment.

During an investor’s relevant three-year period, none of the company’s shares can

be quoted on a recognised stock exchange and there can be no arrangements in place to list on an exchange at the time the shares are issued. However, the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) is not considered to be a recognised stock exchange in the rules governing EIS. Nevertheless, the vast majority of EIS offers are not focused on companies that are listed on an exchange.

The shares must NOT be issued under any reciprocal arrangement (“I’ll invest in your company if you invest in mine and we can both benefit from the tax relief”) and the shares must be subscribed for, for genuine commercial reasons and not for the purpose of participating in a tax avoidance scheme of any description.

Finally, the shares can either be purchased directly by the investor, or via a nominee or EIS fund. See pages 38 and 39 for more detail on EIS funds.

## Underpinning value

There can be no arrangements that are intended to protect the value of the investment in any way. This includes, for example, schemes that insure investors against making a loss, and schemes to maintain the value of the shares artificially. There is an exception for ordinary commercial matters, such as insurance by the company against normal trading risks.

## Follow on investments

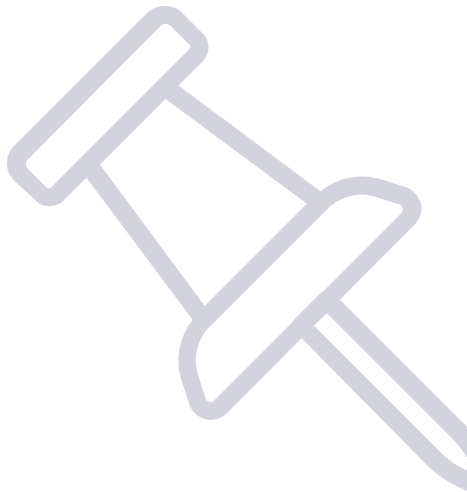
Following a review by the EU in 2015, it was perceived that the ability for existing, non-SEIS and EIS shareholders to subsequently claim EIS relief on a follow-on investment is not in line with the intention of the scheme to attract new full risk capital investment to the company.

As a result, since 18 November 2015, relief has been denied to ‘follow-on’ shareholders unless

the only other shares they hold at the time of the proposed EIS investment are:

- Shares that previously attracted relief under EIS, SEIS or social investment tax relief; or
- Subscriber shares that have either been held since issue or acquired from an ‘off-the-shelf’ formation agent before the company issued any non-subscriber shares.

Care should be taken to establish what holdings clients have in a company raising further share capital under EIS. This is particularly relevant for companies issuing new placings on AIM – shares may be held as part of a BR portfolio and may have been acquired in the open market and not from a prior EIS raise. The test is at the time of the prospective EIS share issue and therefore the existing shares can be sold or given away (and will be taxed accordingly) or transferred to a spouse or civil partner.



# Qualifying companies

In order to ensure that EIS is meeting its objective of financing small to medium-sized businesses that might otherwise struggle to obtain investment from other sources, there are stringent criteria that govern whether a company and its proposed share issue qualifies for the EIS reliefs. These criteria change from time to time.

This section sets out the rules as they stand today and also details some of the most recent changes.

## Risk-to-capital condition

Announced at the Autumn Budget 2017, the risk-to-capital condition applies to all investments made on or after Royal Assent of the Finance Act 2018 on 15 March 2018.

However, HMRC has applied the test for all EIS advance assurance applications submitted from December 2017. From this point, HMRC has declined to provide advance assurances for investments that, taking into account all the facts available to them, appear likely to fail the risk-to-capital condition.

The government is keen to stress that the Venture Capital Schemes are intended to support early-stage, entrepreneurial companies that have the potential to grow in the long term. The company must be set up to carry out trade on an ongoing basis, not to carry out a single project before being wound up.

Following the government’s 2017 consultation, ‘Financing growth in innovative firms’, the enactment of the 2018 Finance Bill on 15 March 2019 saw the introduction of new conditions. These are intended to exclude tax-motivated

investments, where the tax relief provides most of the return for an investor or with a limited risk to the original investment (that is, preserving an investor’s capital).

The risk-to-capital condition depends on HMRC taking a ‘reasonable’ view as to whether an investment has been structured to provide a low risk return for investors.

**The condition has TWO parts:**

- 1. Whether the company has objectives to grow and develop over the long term (which broadly mirrors an existing test with the schemes); and
- 2. Whether there is a significant risk that there could be a loss of capital to the investor of an amount greater than the net return.

The condition requires all relevant factors about the investment to be considered in the round.

The legislation contains a non-exhaustive list of the factors that may be considered. Even if one or more indicators of potential capital preservation are present, this does not necessarily mean that the risk-to-capital condition will not be met in a particular case.

A judgement about whether capital preservation activity is taking place will depend on the overall context of the investment.

Likewise, even if none of the indicators listed in the legislation are present, the risk-to-capital condition may NOT be met if the wider circumstances of a case suggest that capital preservation is taking place.

Ultimately, a judgement will depend on the level of risk posed to investors’ capital and whether the company has genuine intent to grow and develop in the long term.

Following Royal Assent of the Finance Act 2018 on 15 March 2018, the new risk-to-capital

condition will sit above the other existing eligibility requirements for the venture capital schemes. Even if the new condition is met, all other requirements must also be met for an investment to be eligible for tax relief under the schemes.



## Examples of non-qualifying companies

**Example 1**

In 2013, EIS manager A invested clients in a company that was constructing and operating a solar-photovoltaic farm. This would no longer be a qualifying investment for an EIS portfolio, as energy generation activities no longer qualify.

**Example 2**

In 2013, EIS manager B invested clients in a company that was undergoing a Management Buyout (MBO) and the EIS funds were being used to acquire the shares of exiting management.

This would no longer be a qualifying investment for EIS as EIS funds can no longer be used to acquire part of an existing business\*.

**Example 3**

In 2015, EIS manager C invested in a company that was established to operate, through subcontractors, a pub. Certain factors indicated a capital preservation strategy.

This would no longer be a qualifying investment for EIS as it is unlikely to qualify under the ‘Risk-to-capital’ conditions introduced for all EIS and VCT investments made on or after 15 March 2018\*.

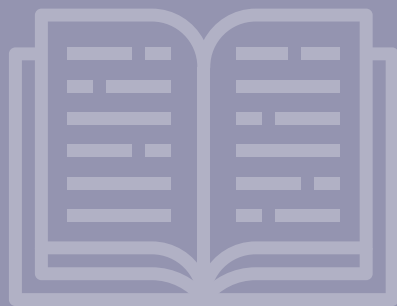
*The growth and development of your company should be permanent and not rely on the investor’s continued support.*

HMRC

\*See page 33 for a summary of the changes announced in 2015 and 2017.

# Rules governing the size and type of company

There are rules which set out in detail the criteria for firms that wish to issue EIS-qualifying shares. In summary, a qualifying company must:



1 NOT be in financial difficulty (as defined by EU guidelines).

2 Be unquoted (however, the AIM market is not a recognised exchange for this purpose).

3 NOT control another company which is not a subsidiary of the company; and it cannot itself be controlled by another company and there can be no plans in place at the time of the share issue that would jeopardise this independent status.

4 Have a permanent establishment in the UK (the company does not need to be a UK company, however).

5 Have fewer than 250 employees (or 500 for a knowledge-intensive company).

6 Have gross assets under £15m immediately before shares are issued and under £16m immediately after shares are issued. However, the company can continue to grow afterwards.

7 Not have been trading for more than seven years (ten years for a knowledge-intensive company) unless specific conditions are met.

8 Be operating in a qualifying trade, preparing to trade and commence trade within two years, or conducting research and development. Most trades qualify, however, there are a number of exclusions:

- Dealing in land, commodities, futures, securities or financial instruments (including investment activities)
- Dealing in goods other than normal retail or wholesale distribution
- Banking, insurance, hire purchase, money lending, and other financial activities
- Leasing
- Receipt of royalties or licence fees
- Legal and accounting services
- Property development
- Farming and market gardening
- Forestry
- Operating or managing hotels or residential care homes
- Coal production, steel production and shipbuilding
- All energy generation activities (from 6 April 2016)

! Excluded activities must not be a ‘substantial’ part of the company’s trade. HMRC takes ‘substantial’ to mean more than 20% of the company’s activities.



## Thought Leadership

THE SUBSTANTIAL PART TEST FOR QUALIFYING BUSINESSES

TOM WILDE  
PARTNER, SHOOSMITHS

A group of companies may carry out “non-qualifying activities” and still be eligible to receive EIS investment providing those activities do not amount to a “substantial part” of the group’s activities.

HMRC guidance states they will normally accept that such activities are not substantial if they account for **no more than 20%** of the activities of the trade as a whole.

Explaining this provision to clients often brings **a palpable sense of relief** as they realise that they may still be able to raise EIS investment, a critical source of funding to young, high-risk trading companies. On hearing that, they often think everything is fine and want to move the conversation on without further consideration.

However in our view there are two main risks which companies and their advisers should consider carefully before deciding to raise EIS investment by relying on this exception.

First, in determining whether or not the 20% threshold is breached, HMRC’s guidance states that you can use “any measure which is reasonable in the circumstances of the case”.

A CEO or adviser could be forgiven for thinking that they only have to find one reasonable measure on which the activities are below 20% for the exception to be available, even if other reasonable measures are above 20%.

We believe that is the correct interpretation of that guidance. However, we have seen a

number of examples (and are aware of a number of others) where HMRC argues that the only measure which is reasonable is the one which gives a figure of above 20%.

Given the potential damage to a company’s relationship with its investors if HMRC tries to withdraw EIS relief at a later date, **we would strongly recommend that an advance assurance is sought** prior to any EIS investment where the substantial exception is relied upon.

Second, a large number of EIS conditions have to be met for three years following investment (and possibly longer). Whilst the “substantial” test is no different, in our view the risk of breach and frustration for all parties is greater! It is much more difficult to ensure that a portion of a business remains below a 20% threshold, compared to, say, making sure that a company does not become controlled by a corporate shareholder.

For example, if turnover is being used to show that the 20% threshold is not met, changing economic or market conditions can mean that an area of the business that was anticipated to be successful underperforms, whilst the non-qualifying area performs significantly better than expected.

If this occurs, the company will be left with the unenviable choice of breaching the EIS legislation or having to scale back an area of the business that is performing extremely well and could be critical to the future success, or even survival, of the business.



# Rules governing the raising and spending of funds

Likewise, there are rules governing the amounts that qualifying companies can raise and how quickly that money must be deployed within the business.

The funds raised by the issuance of EIS-qualifying shares must be employed by the issuing company, or by a qualifying subsidiary which is at least 90% owned by the company, within two years of the share issue. The funds must be used either for carrying on a qualifying trade, or for preparing to carry on a qualifying trade which is then begun within two years of the share issue. They cannot be used to acquire the shares, goodwill or intangible assets of another company, even if that company is carrying on a qualifying trade.



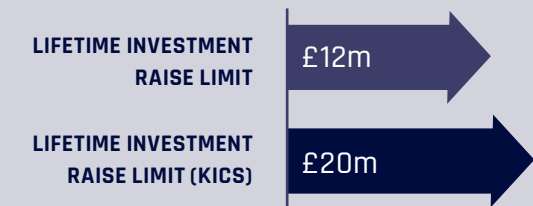
In calculating the maximum amounts that can be raised, funds raised from any of the UK's tax-advantaged venture capital schemes must be counted. The FOUR schemes are:

- The Enterprise Investment Scheme
- The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme
- Social Investment Tax Relief
- Venture Capital Trusts

In addition, any other relevant approved risk finance State-aid must also be counted. This includes Enterprise Capital Funds and certain Regional Development funding.



The maximum amount that a firm can raise from tax-advantaged venture capital schemes and any other form of risk finance State-aid in any 12-month period is £5 million (although for investments made on or after 6 April 2018, the 12-month maximum amount of funding that knowledge-intensive companies (KICs) can receive increased from £5 million to £10 million).



The maximum amount that a firm can raise from tax-advantaged venture capital schemes (and risk finance explained above) cumulatively over the firm's entire lifetime is £12 million (or £20 million for a KIC).



# Knowledge-intensive companies

Knowledge-intensive companies are defined broadly as follows:

- In at least one of three years prior to investment, the company or group has spent at least 15% of operating costs on research and development or innovation; or
- In each of those three years, the company or group has spent at least 10% of operating costs on research and development or innovation; and

either of the following conditions is also met:

- The **'innovation condition'** – When the relevant shares are issued, the company or group is engaged in the creation of intellectual property from which, within 10 years, it is expected, will derive the greater part of the company's or group's





business, either from the exploitation of the intellectual property or by the creation of new products, processes or services which use the intellectual property.

- The **'skilled employee condition'** – At least 20% of the company's or group's employees are 'skilled' and are engaged directly in research and development or innovation activities carried on by the issuing company or any qualifying subsidiary of that company. The definition of 'skilled' relies on higher educational attainments.

Since 6 April 2018, knowledge-intensive companies have been able to choose whether to use the current test of the date of first commercial sale or the point at which turnover reached £200,000 to determine when the 10-year period has begun.

Knowledge-intensive companies will also be part of the new approved fund structure – the Knowledge Intensive Fund, expected to be introduced in April 2020.

### More generous rules for knowledge-intensive companies

 <b>10YRS</b> AGE LIMIT	 <b>£20m</b> LIFETIME CAP ON TAX-ADVANTAGED VC	 <b>499</b> EMPLOYEE LIMIT	 <b>£10m</b> 12-MONTH RISK CAPITAL FUNDING LIMIT
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### WHAT IS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT?

R&D for tax purposes takes place when a project seeks to achieve an advance in science or technology. The activities which directly contribute to achieving this advance in science or technology through the resolution of scientific or technological uncertainty are R&D. Certain qualifying indirect activities related to the project are also R&D.

# The growth and development test

This was introduced in the 2015 Budget, based upon an examination of the business plan. Generic indicators of a focus on the growth and development of a business include proposals to:

- Increase revenues over time;
- Increase its customer base;
- Increase the number of employees.

In essence, the money must be employed to deliver something that enables the company to grow rather than preserve the status quo such as simply paying pre-existing day to day expenditure.

As part of the advance assurance process, companies need to state in their business plans how they meet the growth and development requirement.

## Advance assurance

Companies that are seeking subscriptions under EIS may seek an assurance from the Venture Capital Reliefs Team (VCRT) at HMRC that a prospective investment is likely to be eligible, before issuing the shares. The advance assurance service is discretionary and non-statutory. There is no requirement for a company to obtain an advance assurance before receiving an investment or issuing shares to investors.

The advance assurance service allows the company to provide information about its intentions; about its structure and activities, about the proposed investment and about how the monies raised will be used.

As mentioned, there is no obligation upon firms to go through this advance assurance process, but it does provide an opportunity to spot any problems before the shares are issued and an assurance from the VCRT is useful for companies to show to potential investors. In addition, HMRC requires a similar level of detail as an advance assurance application when the company submits an EIS1 application (if it has not had advance assurance), so providing this information in advance may well speed up the EIS1/EIS2/EIS3 process.

Advance assurance is NOT a guarantee that a share issue qualifies or that the company will continue to qualify. If something important was not disclosed to the VCRT or, if between receiving advance assurance and the share issue something changes, it may be that the share issue or company is no longer qualifying.

However, if nothing has changed, advance assurance is normally considered binding on HMRC (although EIS tax reliefs are also subject to the circumstances of the individual investor, which HMRC will not opine on in advance).

From early 2018, HMRC has declined to consider speculative applications. Confirmation of who the likely investors are is required before HMRC will give an opinion. If details can't be provided HMRC rejects the application.

HMRC has also confirmed that it does not intend to identify which companies qualify as KICs at the time of advance assurance review unless this status is relevant to the proposed investment (for example if a prospective investor is interested in investing over £1 million into the company in a single tax year, or if the company is raising more than £5 million from EIS investors in a tax year).

# Rules for EIS-qualifying companies

The changes made in two Budget statements in 2015 were primarily made in order to ensure ongoing compliance with EU State-aid rules.

The changes announced in the 2017 Budget were aimed at creating a tighter focus on innovative SMEs most in need of funding.

The current rules, both pre and post the final 2015 and 2017 Budgets and subsequent Finance Acts, are summarised below for reference:

Pre November 2015		Today
MAXIMUM AGE	No limit	7 years unless total investment represents more than 50% of the company's average turnover over the preceding 5 years and the company is using the funds to enter a new product or geographic market, or it received previous risk finance within its first 7 years
LIFETIME CAP FROM ANY COMBINATION OF VCT, EIS OR CERTAIN OTHER GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES	No limit	£12m
12-MONTH INVESTMENT LIMIT*	£5m	£5m
EMPLOYEE LIMIT (FTE)	Fewer than 250 FTE	Fewer than 250 FTE
USE OF EIS MONEY FOR ACQUISITIONS OF BUSINESS	Allowed	New rules to prevent EIS funds being used to acquire existing businesses or part of a business (incl. intangible assets that have already been used in a trade)
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT TEST	No requirement	Requirement that all investments are made with the intention to grow and develop business
EXISTING SHAREHOLDERS	No requirement	For EIS only, a requirement that investors are independent from the company at the time of the first share issue (excl. founder shares)
KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE COMPANIES	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TRADING YEARS	No limit
	12-MONTH INVESTMENT LIMIT*	£5m
	LIFETIME CAP	No limit
	EMPLOYEE LIMIT	Fewer than 250 FTE

10 years. From 6 April 2018, a KIC is able to use the date from which its annual turnover exceeded £200,000, instead of the date of its first commercial sale, when determining the date from which the end of the initial investing period is calculated

\*(ALL TAX ADVANTAGED VC)



# Claiming the tax reliefs

## Process for investee companies

### EIS1

- After a minimum of four months' trading (immediately if the shares were issued when the company had already been trading for at least four months), the investee company can complete and submit a form EIS1 to the VCRT in respect of the share issue.
- The EIS1 lists details of the share issue, the investors intending to claim EIS relief and details about the company's trade and funding.
- The investee company has to complete this form every time it issues EIS-qualifying shares.
- The form must be submitted within two years of the end of the tax year in which the shares were issued or (if later) within two years from the date the company commenced trading.
- The VCRT will assess the EIS1 claim and usually responds within 4-8 weeks, depending on whether the company had advance assurance specific to the issue of shares.
- If the company did not have prior EIS advance assurance, more information is likely to be required by the VCRT in order to process the EIS1 (and this can sometimes delay the process).

### EIS2

Assuming the VCRT are satisfied with the EIS1 and any accompanying information, they will issue form EIS2 to the investee company in respect of the share issue in question, informing them that they authorise the company to issue EIS3 forms to the investors listed on the EIS1.

### EIS3

- The VCRT send the company a blank EIS3 for each EIS investor listed on the EIS1.
- The investee company then completes the blank EIS3 form for each investor (with details of their name, address, details of the shares issued, the date they were issued and the relevant 'termination date' – the end of the 3-year holding period).
- The EIS3 form enables investors to claim the tax reliefs, so it is an important document that must be kept safe. The EIS3 also contains any information about restrictions on the relief because of "value received".

The investee company must (often assisted by an EIS fund manager) obtain tax certificates to enable investors to claim the associated tax reliefs; and EIS3 forms for each investee company in respect of each investor. For 'approved' EIS funds, the manager applies for a single EIS5 form in respect of an investor's investment in the fund.

HMRC's Venture Capital Relief Team (VCRT) is responsible for administering the EIS approvals process.

## Process for investors

### Option 1

#### EIS3

If the investor is 'carrying back' the investment to the prior tax year (for which they have already completed their Self Assessment Tax Return – or if they are otherwise not required to complete a Self Assessment Tax Return), they can make the claim by completing the relevant boxes on pages 3 and 4 of the EIS3 form and returning it to HMRC.

### Option 2

#### Self assessment

Alternatively, the claim can be made on an investor's Self Assessment Tax Return for the tax year in which the investment was made.

- The investor should make the claim on the 'Additional Information' pages of the Tax Return, including details of the investment in the 'additional information' box. Details of how to do this are included on HMRC's Helpsheet 341 (Enterprise Investment Scheme – income tax relief) and also the 'additional information notes'.
- Employed investors can request a change to their PAYE tax code for the year of investment in order to reduce the amount of tax collected by their employer.
- Investors can also request that their self assessment payments on account are reduced (if appropriate), in order to take account of EIS income tax relief.
- However, the appropriate claim still needs to be made on the tax return, once it is received.
- EIS Disposal Relief and CGT Deferral Relief claims are always made by completing a Self Assessment Tax Return.

Investors cannot claim EIS tax relief or defer payment of tax due because they are expecting to receive an EIS3 form.

This applies to both income tax and CGT, so, if an investor was looking to reinvest a capital gain in EIS-qualifying shares in order to defer CGT, they may still have to pay the CGT liability until they receive form EIS3 and their claim is processed.

Finally, what should be clear from the description of the steps involved earlier is that the whole process can sometimes be quite protracted, especially if the investee company takes two years to submit the form EIS1 that starts the process and where an advance assurance application hasn't been made to HMRC in advance of a share issue.

This should be taken into consideration when managing a client's expectations and incorporating any tax reliefs into financial plans.

## CLAIMING THE RELIEFS – EIS FUNDS

An EIS fund may have obtained 'approved EIS fund' status from HMRC.

Approved EIS funds have a number of criteria. They include that 90% of the fund must be invested within 12 months of the fund closing and the investments must be allocated between investors in proportion to the amounts they invested.

If a fund is an approved EIS fund, instead of an investor being issued individual EIS3 forms for each of the individual companies they are invested in, investors receive a single EIS5 form from the fund manager.

The EIS5 covers all of the investments made on their behalf. The relevant date for income tax relief purposes is the date the fund closed, rather than the individual dates the underlying shares were purchased.

The rest of the process is unchanged, although an EIS5 is only issued by HMRC once 90% of the fund has been invested, which should be borne in mind by investors and advisers.

If the fund is not an ‘approved EIS fund’, it is referred to as an ‘unapproved EIS fund’. An investor in an unapproved EIS fund will still receive individual EIS3 forms for each underlying investment made by the manager, and the relief for each investment has to be claimed separately, following the process described.

HMRC has made progress in digitalising the process of issuing EIS forms. This is expected to speed up advance assurance, EIS1 submissions, and EIS3 issuances. This is an ongoing process that has already started.

TIME LIMITS FOR CLAIMS

There are time limits for claiming the various EIS tax reliefs.

- An EIS1 must be submitted by the EIS company within two years of the end of the tax year in which the subscription took place or, if the four-month trading period straddles the end of a tax year, two years from the end of that four-month period.

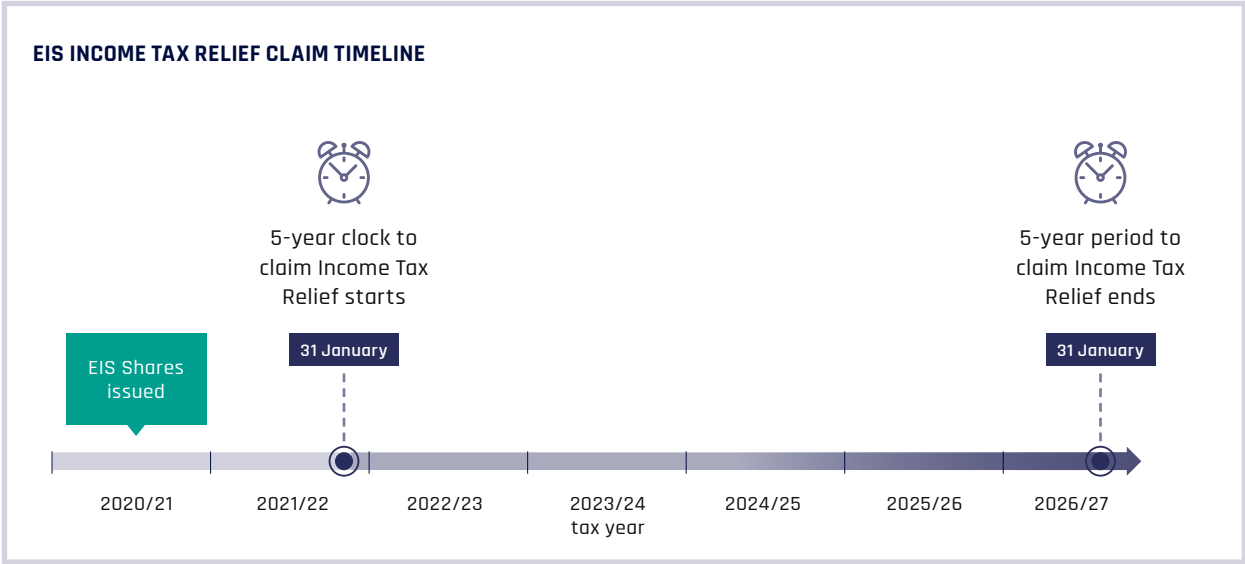
- The overall time limit for an investor to claim the income tax relief is five years from 31 January, following the tax year in which the EIS shares are issued.
- Deferral Relief claims must be made no later than 31 January falling five years after the end of the year of assessment in which disposal occurred.

IHT RELIEF

As noted earlier, the IHT relief is actually obtained by claiming Business Relief (BR), which is administered separately to the income tax and CGT reliefs.

A claim for BR would normally be made during the settlement of the shareholder’s estate (unless it relates to a chargeable lifetime transfer of business property).

To obtain IHT relief via BR, the executors of the estate will need to complete a copy of probate return form IHT412 and return this to HMRC as part of the overall probate process. HMRC will then assess the claim.



# EIS structures

There are a number of different ways to gain exposure to EIS-qualifying shares and, as with conventional equities, it is often better to engage the services of a professional manager, in order to benefit from their expertise and greater levels of diversification.

These arrangements are referred to as EIS ‘funds’ and the providers of these arrangements are known as fund managers. It is estimated that, collectively, EIS funds have accounted for the majority of annual EIS investment. In this section we’ll look at the concept of EIS funds in more detail.

SINGLE COMPANY EIS



The most straightforward way to get exposure to EIS-qualifying shares is by investing directly in a single company’s share issue.

However, this entails spending significant amounts of time and effort on research, and requires the investor or their adviser to have the requisite knowledge to assess the opportunity. It also makes diversification difficult or near impossible.

DISCRETIONARY MANAGED PORTFOLIO



A discretionary managed portfolio is an individual service provided by an EIS manager to an investor.

Technically, this is not a ‘fund’ at all; it is a bespoke portfolio specifically constructed to meet the needs and objectives of that particular individual. It is likely that every subscriber to a discretionary managed service will have a slightly different portfolio, as the EIS manager will make investments on the basis of their suitability for each individual investor.

ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT FUNDS



The Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) was announced on 22 July 2013, and introduced rules for qualifying fund managers on delegation, transparency, disclosure, remuneration, debt and reporting. Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) are collective investment undertakings (CIUs) that have a defined investment policy, among other criteria.

The FCA has advised that it is likely that, where the manager is not making investments on the basis of their suitability for any individual investor, an EIS fund should be considered to be a CIU and an AIF.

With an AIF, all investors will be invested into the same basket of underlying companies, as the EIS manager does not have to consider the individual needs and objectives of each investor – it only needs to consider whether the EIS fund is appropriate for the investor.



# EIS funds

EIS funds pool investors' money and invest in EIS-qualifying opportunities that are in line with the funds' investment mandate.

Each investor will have beneficial ownership of the underlying investments and will receive shares in each investee company, pro rata to the size of their investment into the fund.

Again, technically this is not a 'fund' in the same sense as a conventional OEIC or other form of collective investment. The investor does NOT own units or shares in the fund and their underlying investments may differ from other investors, depending on when they first invest into the fund.

This is the arrangement that is most commonly referred to as an EIS fund.

Specialist expertise in sourcing and selecting opportunities

Increased diversification

Access to professional service firms (or the in-house capabilities) to advise on the qualifying status of investee companies, both ongoing and at the point of the share issue

Ongoing oversight of investee companies, and a big enough stake in the underlying companies to have influence over board level decisions or a seat on the board itself

Expertise in negotiating and/or structuring of the eventual exit from the underlying investments



*The UK has set a precedent in creating a conduit that connects the UK's investors with its growing pool of entrepreneurial talent. Without schemes like these in place, the alternative finance arena could be perceived as too daunting for investors. This connection is vital for the growth and scalability of many of the UK's successful SMEs.*

MARK BROWNRIDGE, DIRECTOR GENERAL, EISA

Advantages of  
EIS funds

## Approved EIS funds

An 'approved' fund has 12 months to invest 90% of the funds it has raised across a minimum of four companies, with the amount invested in any one company not exceeding 50% of the fund capital.

The advantage for investors is that the administration is greatly reduced for them, with a single EIS5 form being issued once 90% of the funds have been invested.

Investors receive a single EIS5 form and can treat the date the fund closed as the date of investment for the purposes of claiming EIS income tax relief (the reference date for EIS deferral relief remains the date the investment is made into the investee companies).

The 12-month timeframe requires the manager to have a high degree of confidence that they can deploy the money quickly.

'Unapproved' (i.e. funds that aren't 'approved') funds don't have such constraints on how they deploy their money, giving them greater flexibility and, therefore, unapproved funds make up the majority of EIS funds today.

However, it should be noted that no tax relief is available until the funds are deployed and the administration is potentially more complex, with investors receiving multiple EIS3 forms (refer to page 34 for more details). It's worth noting that some investors and advisers favour receiving multiple EIS3 forms, as it allows for more flexibility in tax planning.

Whether a fund is approved or unapproved, CGT deferral relief, the holding period to qualify for IHT relief and the minimum holding period to qualify for income tax relief are based on the dates of the underlying investments.

As noted earlier, approved and unapproved funds are terms HMRC use to describe the status

of the funds in relation to the administration of the tax reliefs. They are NOT regulatory terms and they do not refer to the likely performance or quality of the funds in any way.

### EIS KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE APPROVED FUND

In the Autumn 2017 Budget it was announced that a new EIS 'knowledge-intensive' approved fund will be launched, replacing the current approved EIS fund structure. The new fund was introduced in the Finance Bill of 2019-20 and is intended to take effect from 6 April 2020. Its main features include:

- at least 80% of the funds raised will need to be invested in KICs within two years
- at least half of the funds raised will need to be invested within 12 months of the fund closing and 90% within two years
- the managers must provide 'appropriate' information to HMRC Commissioners.

The legislation offers certain advantages to investors in approved knowledge-intensive funds, in particular that they may be able to obtain relief "earlier than if the fund had not been approved".

It should be noted that the fund would be subject to EU State-aid requirements, and so the outcome is dependent on EU exit negotiations.





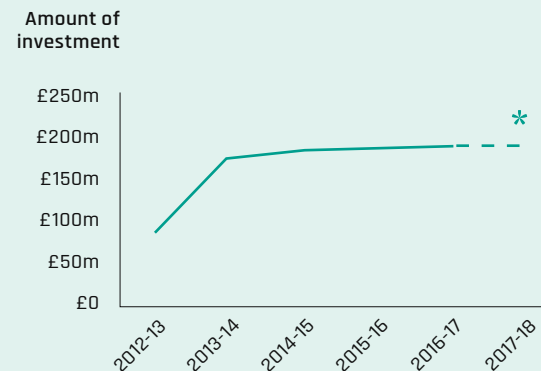
# The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme

## Introduction

The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) launched in 2012 as a derivative of EIS. Its aim is to encourage seed investment in early stage companies and while the rules governing it are similar, there are some important differences between the two.

Since its launch, 12,900 companies have received investment and over £1 billion of funds have been raised. It therefore remains a small section of the overall EIS market and as the above graph shows, since its launch annual investments have somewhat plateaued.

AMOUNTS OF FUNDS RAISED  
THROUGH SEIS, 2012-13 TO 2017-18



\* Estimated value after all returns processed

Figures for 2017-18 are provisional

SOURCE: HMRC

## Rules for investors and qualifying companies

While the majority of rules related to qualifying companies for EIS also apply to the SEIS, the latter has some slightly more stringent requirements.

An investee company must carry out a **new qualifying trade**, which means that the trade must not have been carried out for more than two years by either:

- the investee company
- any other person who then transferred it to the investee company

The investee company, or any qualifying subsidiary, must not have carried out any other trade before starting the new trade. It also cannot be a member of a partnership.

The size of the investee company must also be considerably smaller than the maximum size of an EIS-qualifying company when the shares are issued.

Size of SEIS-qualifying companies when shares issued



No more than  
**£200,000 gross assets**



Less than  
**25 full-time equivalent employees**

## Risks and Rewards

Clients will face the same risks as those for EIS, however due to the smaller size of the companies some of these will be magnified, with the likelihood of a company collapsing substantially increased, for example. In return for these higher risks, the SEIS offers reliefs more generous than EIS in two ways:

- Up to **50% income tax relief**, although this is limited to **£100,000** of SEIS investments per year and there is no special treatment for knowledge-intensive companies. As with EIS, the minimum holding period is three years and income tax relief can be carried back to the previous tax year.
- **50% reinvestment relief** - this is not deferral relief (as under EIS), but will see 50% of the reinvestment become exempt from tax. This is capped at £100,000 investment, so the maximum relief available is £50,000.

SEIS also offers reliefs similar to EIS:

- 100% CGT relief on disposal (capped at £50,000)
- 100% IHT relief (via Business Relief after a minimum holding period, applicable to most SEIS-qualifying companies)
- Loss relief (losses are available to offset against capital gains or, in certain circumstances, income tax)



**SEIS helps get companies off the ground.**

MARK BROWNRIDGE, DIRECTOR GENERAL, EISA

# Charges and practicalities

## Investment objectives

EIS funds have historically (and very broadly) been placed into two categories: ‘Capital Preservation’ and ‘Growth’ (with some funds offering a hybrid of the two).

As the name suggests, funds with a Capital Preservation objective would aim to be lower-risk than those with a Growth objective and would therefore target lower levels of return.

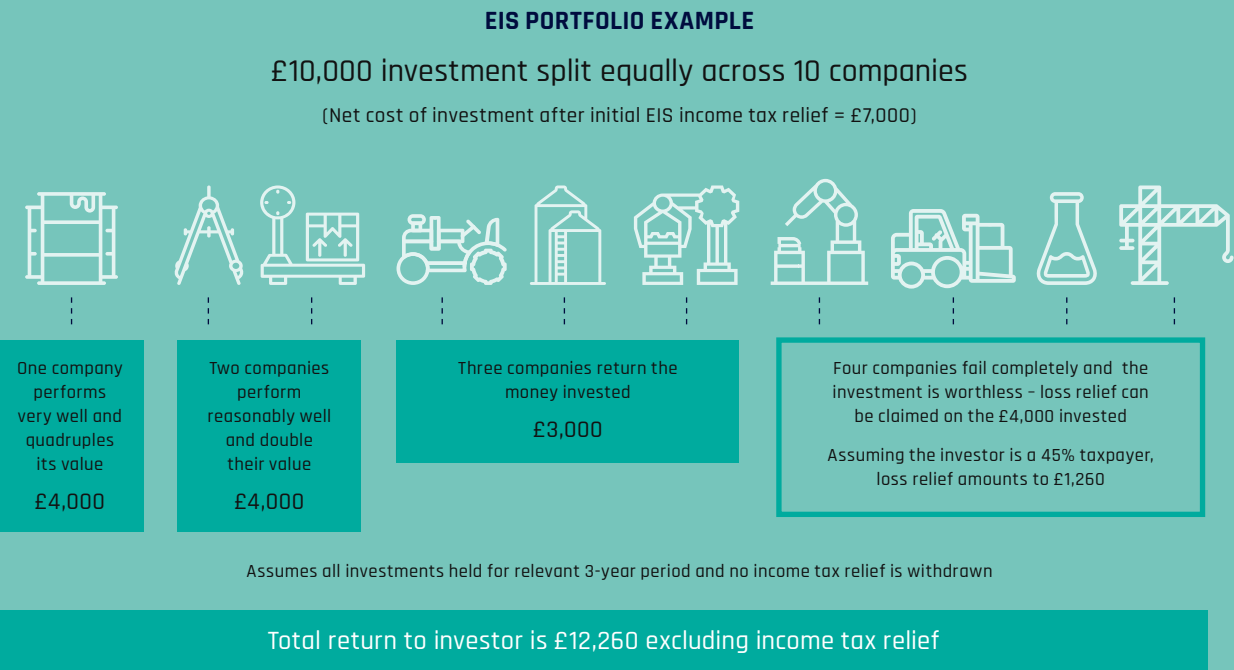
Following the Patient Capital Review, which took place during 2017, and legislation

announced at the Autumn Budget 2017, investments with a Capital Preservation strategy no longer qualify post enactment of the Finance Bill 2018, which came into force for investments made on or after 15 March 2018.

From this point, all EIS funds are expected to have a Growth strategy – with some offers targeting high growth (particularly in the technology/science sectors) and others perhaps targeting more modest growth.

Growth objectives will also be impacted by levels of diversification within a fund, with most funds investing in a range of underlying small, high-growth businesses and acknowledging that, while some may provide outstanding returns, others may fail. (This is where combining a portfolio strategy with loss relief is very effective).

Popular sectors include high-tech firms, retail and general enterprise and it could be argued that these funds are closer to the ‘true spirit’ of EIS.



## Typical target returns

Some funds quote specific target levels of return. Some providers do not publish a specific target return. However, they will usually give an indication of the growth they are seeking to achieve, whether this is 1.5x, 2x (net of fees) or more. (2x (net of fees) is the current average target return).

Some of the former Capital Preservation strategies did not target a specific return at all and were, therefore, largely relying on the tax relief to generate value for the investor. This is one of the reasons the government and HMRC were keen to refocus EIS and the wider Venture Capital Tax Reliefs, following the Patient Capital Review in 2017.

While the overall risk profile of EIS investments has gone up as a result of the changes announced in the 2017 Autumn Budget, the risk profiles of the offerings still vary. Returns must be placed in the context of the risk, liquidity and level of charges when choosing the most suitable fund for a client.

## Typical charges

Meaningful comparisons between different EIS fund charging structures can be challenging. Funds typically charge:

- An initial fee;
- An AMC (Annual Management Charge);
- A performance fee charged either annually or upon exit, usually subject to exceeding a certain hurdle.

Fees are usually charged on the investment amount rather than the value of the investment at the time of the fee. For example, the AMC is often charged on the initial investment sum, even if the value of the investment has decreased.

Tax relief is only available on the amount invested in the underlying EIS-qualifying companies. Any fees deducted from the initial subscription amount will reduce the amount actually invested and therefore the value of the tax reliefs.

**Example:**

After professional advice Brian invests £100,000 in EIS-qualifying shares. The initial charge from the EIS fund manager is 2% of the gross investment amount = £2,000

Brian has also agreed an adviser fee of 2% of the gross investment amount, which the EIS fund manager has agreed to facilitate from the investment = £2,000

The EIS manager also charges an AMC of 2% of the investment amount and for this offering it takes three years AMC upfront = £6,000

This leaves £90,000 for actual investment into EIS-qualifying companies. Consequently, instead of being able to claim £30,000 income tax relief on the investment (30% x £100,000), Brian can only claim £27,000 income tax relief (30% x £90,000).

Other fees to look out for are dealing fees, administration fees, exit fees and fees charged to the underlying investee companies.

Low fees in one area may offset higher fees in another, so, when comparing charges, it is important to look at them in total and not to just compare individual fees on different products. It is also necessary to consider the impact of fees charged to investee companies (often the case where there is no fee to the investors) on their ultimate performance.

MOST COMMONLY APPLIED FEES AND ENTRY LEVELS	
INITIAL FEE	0.35%-10% of the investment amount
AMC	0%-4.75%
PERFORMANCE FEE	0%-30% of profits above a certain hurdle
ANNUAL ADMIN CHARGES	0%-0.5% of the value of the investment
MIN. SUBSCRIPTIONS	£10,000 to £100,000



# Suitability

Suitability is an important topic, and what follows are guidelines to bear in mind when considering whether an EIS investment is a suitable investment for a client. Investments into smaller, unquoted companies are high risk and advisers need to spend time thinking about suitability and documenting the thought process in suitability reports when recommending an EIS.

## Attitude to risk

In general, a client for whom an EIS is likely to be a suitable investment has a high tolerance for risk. Where succession planning is relevant, you should also make the client’s intended heirs aware of the risks involved.

EIS investments should be considered as carrying the potential of a capital loss for investors. While this should never be a 100% capital loss when the income tax relief is taken into account (assuming it isn’t withdrawn for some reason), clients should be comfortable taking on this risk with the funds they have allocated to EIS investing.

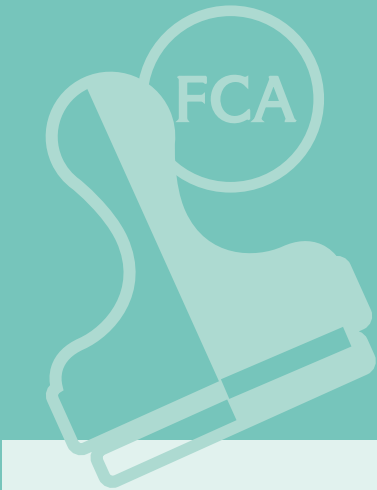
## FCA classification

A single company EIS investment is typically classified by the FCA as a non-readily realisable security (NRRS), unless the investee company is listed on the Alternative Investment Market or NEX Exchange.

An adviser who wants to advise their client to invest into an NRRS requires retail permissions to advise on shares.

An EIS fund will either be structured as a discretionary portfolio service or as an alternative investment fund. From the investor’s perspective, these structures may have few material differences – the EIS manager will allocate the investor into a portfolio of EIS-qualifying companies. However, for a discretionary portfolio service, the MiFID investment manager will have to consider the specific needs of the investor, while for an alternative investment fund the alternative investment fund manager will not.

With either structure, the adviser will have to determine whether an investment into unlisted securities is suitable for their client. Further information on Legal and Regulatory Status is also set out on page 54.



**The FCA rules on suitability reports require that advisers:**

- ✓ Specify the client’s demands and needs,
- ✓ Explain why the firm has concluded that the recommended transaction is suitable for the client, having regard to the information provided by the client,
- ✓ Explain any possible disadvantages of the transaction for the client.

## Tax capacity

Although tax benefits alone should not be the primary driver for the investment, a prospective investor would likely be someone who is in a position to take advantage of the tax reliefs available from investing in EIS.

Therefore, if they are planning to purchase newly-issued shares in an EIS-qualifying company, the client should have (or expect to incur in the near future) an income tax liability, a CGT bill, or an estate with a potential IHT liability (to the extent that BR was a consideration for the investment).

The client should also be aware that the tax reliefs can be withdrawn and that the shares might, at some point in the future, be worth less than they initially cost, although, where the reliefs are retained, income tax

relief and loss relief can limit losses. The client should also be aware that if they are looking to acquire EIS shares in a company which hasn’t yet started to trade, the three-year holding period does not start until the company starts its trade (which could be a number of months after investment). This could therefore delay the receipt of income tax relief and mean that shares have to be held for a longer period.

## Capacity for loss

If a loss of the capital earmarked for EIS investment would have a materially detrimental effect on the client’s standard of living, then they should be advised against investing in EIS shares.

Attitude to risk and capacity for loss should be assessed independently of each other. They

TAX WRAPPER OPTIONS SUMMARY	ISA	Pension	VCT	EIS	SEIS
ANNUAL MAX	£20,000	£40,000	£200,000	£1m (£2m for KICs)	£100,000
LIFETIME MAX	X	£1.055m	X	X	X
INCOME TAX RELIEF	X	✓	30%	30%	50%
POTENTIAL FOR LOSS RELIEF	X	X	X	✓	✓
POTENTIAL FOR IHT RELIEF	X only available for AIM	it depends	X	✓	✓
CGT FREE GROWTH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CGT DEFERRAL	X	X	X	✓	X*
TAX TREATMENT OF INCOME	No further tax to pay for higher rate taxpayers; Interest: tax-free.	No further tax to pay for higher rate taxpayers; Interest: tax-free - but only in roll-up phase; Payouts from annuity or drawdown will be taxable.	Dividends within £200k annual maximum subscription: tax-free.	Dividends: taxable.	Dividends: taxable.
TAX-FREE LUMP SUM	✓	25%	✓	✓	✓

\* However, where an investor disposes of an asset that would give rise to a capital gain, and reinvests all or part of the gain in shares which qualify for SEIS income tax relief, 50% of the gain reinvested will be exempt from CGT.



measure the risk an individual is willing to take (attitude to risk) and the risk an individual can afford to take (capacity for loss). Attitude to risk is subjective and based on a client’s personal opinions. This differs to capacity for loss which is objective in nature and based on fact.

## Liquidity and investment horizon

Although the minimum holding period to qualify for the full income tax relief and tax-free growth is three years from the issue of shares or (if later) the start of the trade, in reality investors are likely to have to commit their funds for much longer and most EIS investments should be viewed on a five to ten year investment horizon. There is no large-scale active secondary market in unquoted shares and EIS managers do not offer buy-backs.

Since EIS investments have no definite exit date, if clients anticipate an urgent need for their investment capital within at least three years, and very likely for several years longer, they should be advised against investing in EIS shares.

## Knowledge and experience

Investors (or their representatives) must have the capacity to understand the nature of EIS and the associated risks. In general, EIS investors have experience of investing in a portfolio of more conventional retail investment products, and/or experience in business or a profession and, therefore, should be in a position to make informed decisions about investing in EIS.

## Portfolio balance and diversification

It is not appropriate for a client to concentrate their wealth in EIS and, in most cases, EIS investors already have a substantial portfolio of conventional investments that meets the majority of their investment objectives.

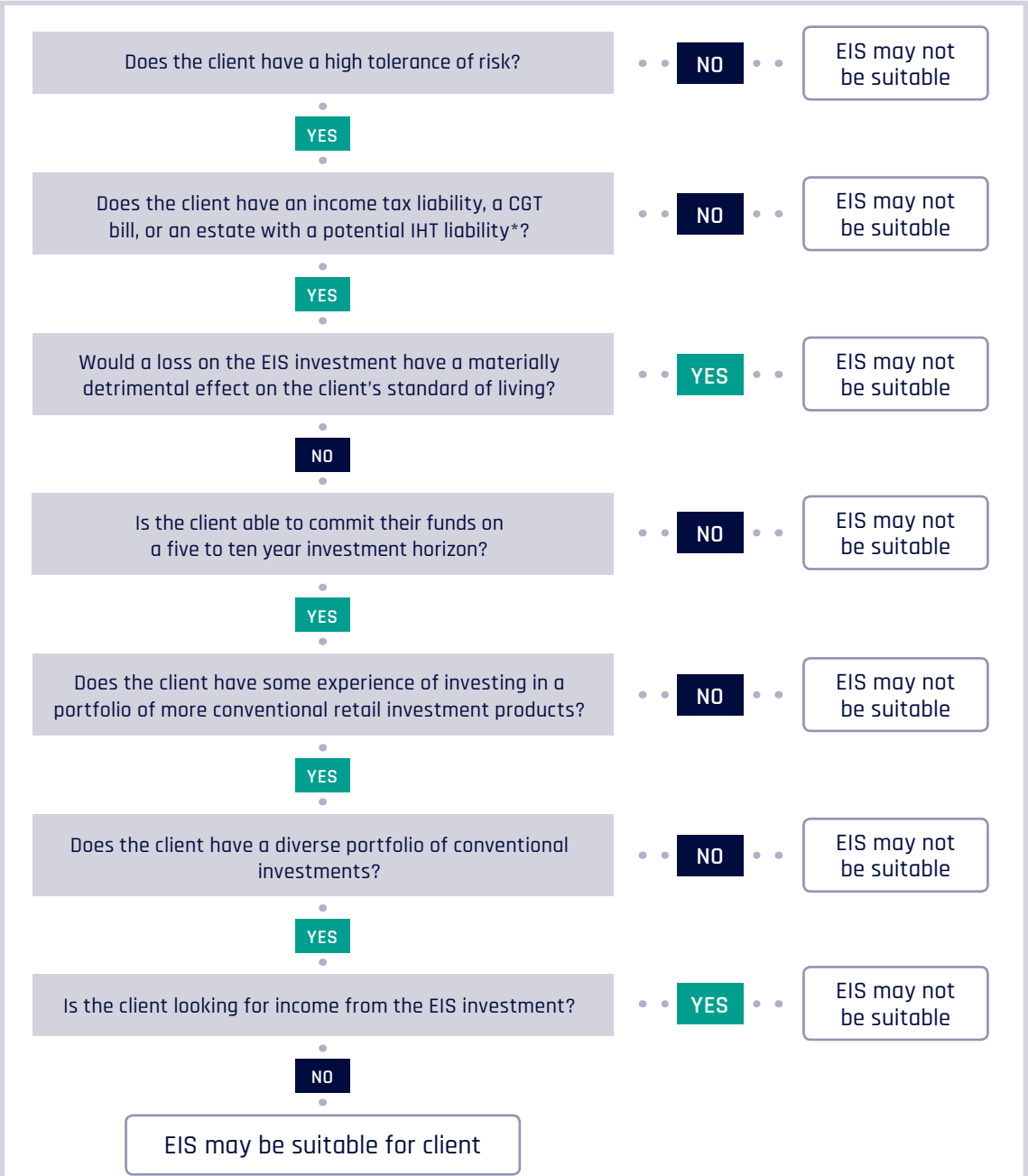
Investors should not be overexposed to high risk investments, illiquid assets or unquoted securities. The risks and disadvantages of EIS shares should be more than offset by the rest of their portfolio. Typically, EIS fund managers will deploy an investor’s subscription across multiple companies. The target number varies by manager, but typically is between two and 20.

It is also important to diversify a client’s EIS portfolio across different EIS fund managers and EIS offerings. There are varying methodologies for selecting potentially successful EIS investments across managers and the structures, objectives and strategies of investment offerings also vary.

### Income

Income distributions are not tax-free, and most EIS-qualifying companies do not pay dividends to their investors (they are investing to grow the business and are unlikely to have distributable reserves). For this reason, clients looking for income are not suitable for an EIS.

## Indicators of when an EIS recommendation may be right



\*An income tax liability must be in the tax year of the share issue; a CGT liability can be up to 3 years after or one year prior to the disposal of the original asset; IHT relief must be applied for by the executors of the deceased's estate or by the transferor in the event of a lifetime transfer.

*This is for guidance only and is not an exhaustive list.*



## RW Blears

Solicitors

### Thought Leadership

EU CONSULTATION: “FITNESS CHECK OF STATE AID RULES”

#### ROGER BLEARS

SENIOR PARTNER, RW BLEARS

In April the European Commission launched a consultation to inform its “fitness check” evaluation of the State Aid regulations and the various guidelines applying to venture capital schemes such as EIS, including the Risk Finance guidelines. Here were our recommendations:

#### **Abolish the age restriction on eligible recipients for VCT/EIS funding and replace with a gross assets test of £20 million to determine eligibility**

*Justification:* The age of a company is not a robust indicator of whether or not it has the capacity or knowledge to scale up its production and therefore neither is it an indicator of its ability to secure bank financing.

If this first recommendation above is not adopted, then:

#### **Redefine the definition of a first commercial sale as being the end of the accounting period in which a company’s annual turnover first exceeds £200,000**

*Justification:* This is the test for knowledge intensive companies, but all companies developing a new product or geographic market will undertake sample test sales before making a general entry to market. A company may also not keep adequate paperwork during the first years and months of development to assess when it begins to trade and has its “first commercial sale”. Therefore this concept should be interpreted flexibly so that the same turnover test can be used for all companies.

#### **Abolish the financial hurdle imposed on the entry into a new product or geographic market**

*Justification:* The exception to the basic age limit for companies entering a new product or geographic market requires a risk finance investment which is higher than 50% of their average annual turnover in the preceding five years. This is unduly restrictive and is interpreted as requiring that expenditure on each new market should exceed 50% of 5-year average turnover. This penalises an SME that has a business plan to enter two or more new markets rather than one. For example, a biotech company with only one new cure to alleviate pain might qualify for VCT/EIS funding whilst another with two new cures for different ailments might not. This is clearly nonsensical and is inconsistent with an overriding aim to stimulate growth in new risky market entries which commercial markets won’t finance.

The European Commission intends to adopt changes based on the “fitness check” in the first quarter of 2020. However, how and to what extent these changes might apply to the UK as it exits the European Union remains to be seen. Whether or not these changes are adopted at a European level, however, they remain in our view sensible options that could be adopted by the UK government going forward.



## Research and due diligence

### Performance information

Small, unquoted businesses are illiquid, hard to value and managers can be reluctant to disclose valuations of the businesses that they might be looking to sell in the near future. Consequently, performance information is limited.

Assessing and comparing the performance of EIS funds, or the track record of the fund managers, can be challenging. The best indication of (good) past performance is a track record of successful exits, but not all of the managers are in a position to evidence this yet.

Investors and advisers should not expect to find the kind of in-depth quantitative information that is used when researching stock market-based funds. The lack of past performance information is an additional risk of investing in EIS funds.

The changes in EIS rules announced in the Autumn 2017 Budget also introduced the possibility of some managers that previously focused entirely on EIS investments targeting low risk, capital preservation strategies, having to pivot their activities. This means it is important to review the relevance of their track record to their current investments.

### Other risks of funds

The risks of funds are broadly the same as those described on pages 6 and 7. The skill, experience and operational expertise of the fund manager should reduce some of the risks, as should the additional diversification that can be achieved.

Additional risks for funds include sufficient deal flow for the manager to deploy the funds raised in accordance with their stated investment mandate.

If there is not sufficient deal flow, there is a temptation for the manager to invest in opportunities that do not fit the mandate, that are more risky than deals they would normally invest in or at higher valuations (making it harder to earn returns).

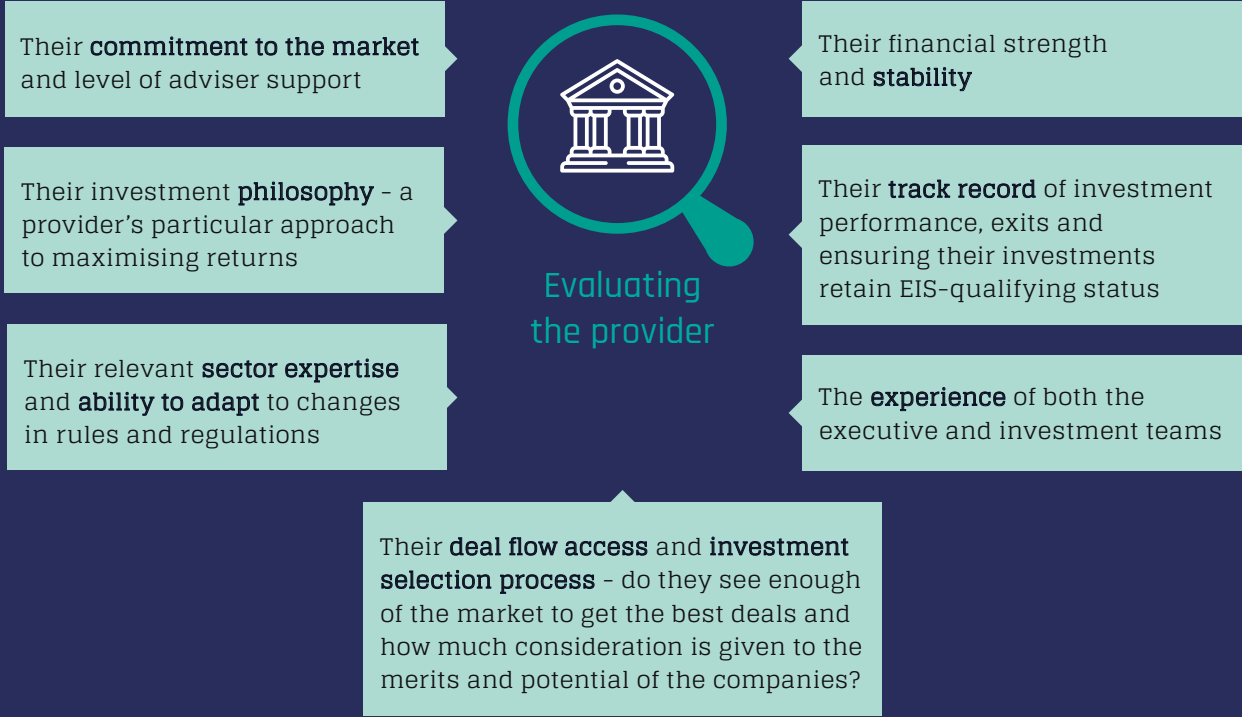
### Researching funds

Advisers cannot rely solely upon a provider’s marketing literature for their research and due diligence. The FCA has said: “Advisers can rely on factual information provided by other EEA-regulated firms as part of their research and due diligence. However, they should not rely on the provider’s opinion, for example, on the investment’s risk level.”

The expectations of both the regulator and the courts of what advisers are required to do by way of due diligence are set very high and it is clear that advisers owe a non-delegable duty of care to their clients. As well as assessing whether an EIS investment is suitable for a client, advisers must also assess the range of offers available in the market, and select the most appropriate investments for their clients.

In assessing EIS offers, there are a number of areas advisers need to cover and they should document their assessment of each of them to create a thorough research and due diligence process on record.

Advisers must assess **the investment provider**. The research should cover:



Always consider what could possibly go wrong with an **investment offering**, or events that could lead to a worse return than expected. When considering the investment provider’s experience and track record, verify that it is pertinent to the proposed underlying investments and investment strategy.



# Evaluating the investment

## INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE

The proposed underlying investments, the perceived risks of the investment and the anticipated returns that can be generated should all be commensurate with the investment objective.

## ANTICIPATED RETURNS

Advisers should assess how returns (without tax reliefs) are generated and take a view on the likelihood of those returns being achieved in different economic conditions.

Some trades have a fairly well-known range of gross returns and advisers should consider if the advertised expected return of the EIS is in line with their expectations.

The provider’s track record of delivering returns on previous investments should also be assessed.

Some funds use gearing (borrowing money to invest), which can enhance returns but also increase downside risk and advisers need to ensure they are aware of the level of gearing the fund intends to use.

## EXPECTED MINIMUM DURATION AND EXIT STRATEGY

There is generally no liquid, tradeable market for shares in EIS companies or independent or objective means of valuing them. Instead, while an EIS company must have no ‘pre-arranged exits’, EIS managers are likely to carefully plan for a possible exit, looking at a range of possible scenarios and outcomes, and then consider what a company would need to do in order to achieve them.

Exits will often occur via a trade sale (where an acquirer buys all the company’s shares from investors, management and any other shareholders) but may be in the form of a liquidation, a buy-out or, more rarely, a stock market listing.

In the vast majority of cases, this will be after the minimum three-year EIS holding period has passed.

Investors may well be keen to see an exit as soon as it is commercially viable to do so after the three-year minimum holding period for the EIS tax reliefs has passed. However, target time horizons will vary and may depend on a range of factors, including the level of return being sought, the overall economic climate and the nature of the companies in which a fund manager invests.

A tech start-up might require time-consuming and intensive research and development before its product or service can become commercially viable. A more mature business with a better-established product or service might reach exit sooner – though the tech start-up, if successful, may generate better returns for investors.

Advisers should examine what the intended exit strategy is, when it can be reasonably achieved, and what risks exist which might delay or prevent it. Some favoured trades have a track record of exits that can be examined, along with the provider’s track record in the sector.

NATURE OF UNDERLYING INVESTMENTS

It is important to understand:

- The nature of proposed underlying trades
- The investment stage
- The industry sectors they are in
- The risks they are exposed to
- The level of returns they can generate and how they are generated
- How quickly they return to cash or how liquid they are
- The manager’s experience investing in the proposed trades.

Advisers should also evaluate the anticipated deal flow and deal pipeline for the fund and assure themselves that the manager is able to deploy the funds they raise in line with the proposed investment strategy.

The EIS rules generally restrict companies that can receive EIS funding to smaller companies that have been trading for seven years or less (ten years or less for KICs - although a KIC also has more flexibility regarding when this ten-year point starts - see page 31 for more information on KICs). In commercial terms, this means that the companies in an EIS portfolio are all ‘early stage’. But, within this classification, there are various stages of fundraising depending on the development stage of the investee.

The funding stage definitions are not fixed, but are typically:

**Seed:** Seed rounds are among the first rounds of funding a company will receive, generally while the company is young and working to gain traction and build a product from an idea. It is likely to be pre-revenue. Some Seed rounds may also include SEIS investment (see page 40 for more on SEIS).

**Series A:** The company may have some established revenues and is typically pre-profit. At this stage, it is seeking to identify the commercial viability of its product or service (product-market fit).

**Series B:** The company may be making small profits but is looking to scale and has growth aspirations outside current revenue streams.

Therefore, the funding round is an indicator of risk, with earlier stage funding likely to be higher risk, but lower cost. This brings the opportunity for higher returns, but also greater potential for losses.

It is not unusual for EIS managers to diversify across funding stages. Some also reinvest in the same company at a later stage as it develops and proves its value.

It is also worth noting that follow on investment, by any party, can dilute the shareholding of earlier stage investors if they are not prepared to invest in the new round of funding. EIS shares can’t have anti-dilution rights. Consequently, each time equity investment is taken by the company, new shares are issued.

*“A trade is not a qualifying trade if it consists, at any time in the relevant period, of certain activities, or if such activities amount, in aggregate, to a ‘substantial part’ of it.”*

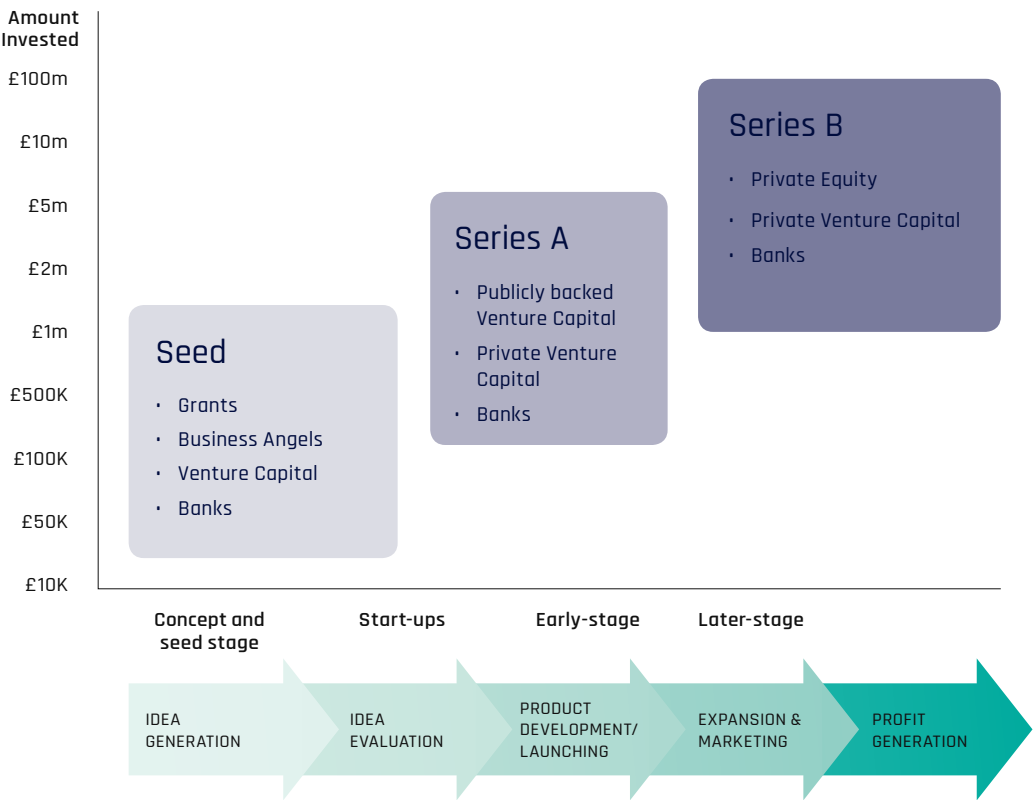
As a result the total number of shares in issue increases, meaning that an existing shareholder who does not invest in the new round (which would increase the number of shares they hold) will hold a smaller percentage of the new total number of shares.

Nevertheless, if the company is doing well, even without participation in follow on rounds, the smaller percentage of the company held by the shareholder should have a larger value than before the investment round. This is because the price of shares in new funding rounds is likely to rise as the company becomes more successful and this valuation is applied to the business as a whole.

The level of diversification across underlying investments varies, but advisers should assure themselves that it is in line with both the investment objective and is commensurate with the nature of the underlying investments. As a general rule, the riskier the underlying investments are, the greater the level of diversification should be.

However, some research suggests that beyond a certain point diversification can go too far and that the additional costs incurred do not bring any additional diversification benefits. Advisers need to be confident that the fund is not overly-diversified.

EIS Funding Stages





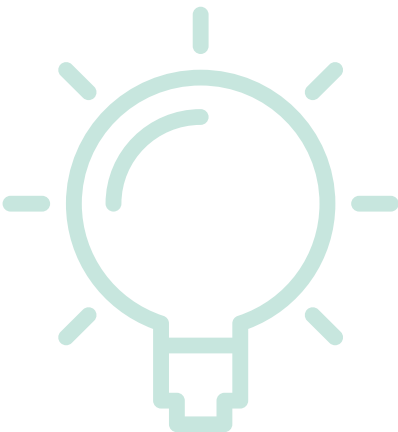
# Legal and regulatory status

For single company EIS investments, the shares are typically held in the investor’s name. However, in an EIS fund investors’ shares are typically registered in the name of a nominee company, although the investor will remain the beneficial owner of the shares.

EIS funds may be structured as MiFID discretionary portfolios or as alternative investment funds. Further information on EIS structures can be found on page 37.

For the purposes of the Retail Distribution Review (RDR), EIS funds are considered to be retail investment products and, therefore, advisers cannot receive adviser commissions. However, EIS managers may facilitate adviser charging, as agreed between the investor and their advisers.

As EIS funds (or single company investments) are not regulated funds, they are NOT covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) or the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS).



## Key Information Documents

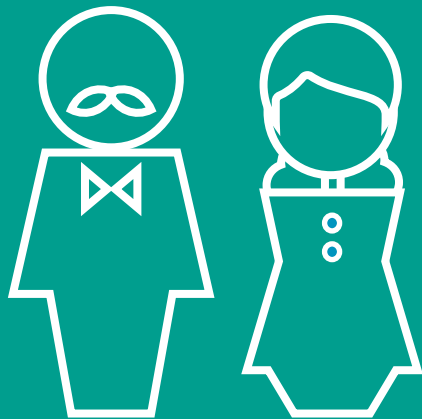
Although not specifically mentioned in the Packaged Retail and Insurance-based Investment Products (PRIIPs) Regulation, EIS funds fall under the definition of venture capital investments, which would classify EIS funds as PRIIPs. This means that the EIS manager must issue a Key Information Document (KID), designed to help investors to better understand and compare the key features, risk, rewards and costs of different PRIIPs.

Advisers should be aware, however, that there has been significant discussion regarding KIDs because of concerns that the regulation is not drafted in such a way to create consistent results that do not mislead the consumer. In an effort to deal with this issue, in 2019 the Joint Committee of European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) issued the following new wording to be included with KIDs:

“Market developments in the future cannot be accurately predicted. The scenarios shown are only an indication of some of the possible outcomes based on recent returns. Actual returns could be lower.”

In its 2019 Annual Report, the Financial Conduct Authority confirmed: “We will continue to work closely with the European Supervisory Authorities and the European Commission (subject to the nature of the UK’s relationship with the EU) as they conduct a full review during 2019 of the Regulatory Technical Standards under the Regulation. The review will primarily focus on improving how risk and reward are displayed in the Key Information Document.”

# Case studies



### Disclaimer

The following case studies are designed to demonstrate a number of different scenarios that might apply to certain prospective investors. Nothing here should be viewed as advice. Advisers should consider, among other things the impact of charges (including any initial fees as well as annual charges) and the quantum of tax relief that might be available to a particular prospective investor. Any suitability decisions should be based on a comprehensive review of a client’s objectives, needs, capacity for loss, investment experience, and attitude towards risk.

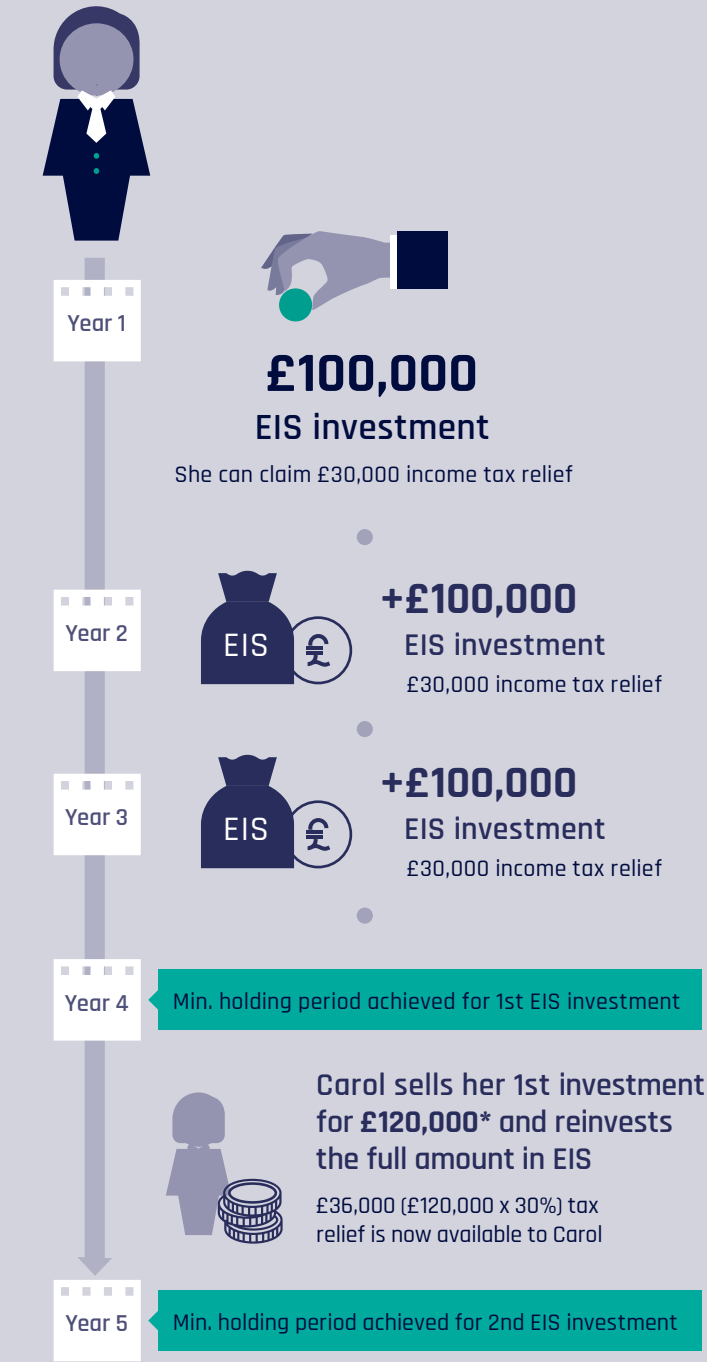
1

Building a portfolio of EIS investments

Carol earns a salary of £250,000 a year. She has maximised her pension contributions and has an existing portfolio of VCT investments. She is selling her buy to let portfolio and will have gains to carry over which she is looking to invest in something different this year. Carol seeks advice on building an EIS portfolio.

\*If she is making the investments through an EIS fund, the manager may dictate the timing of any exits, depending on the terms and conditions of the investment.

Additionally, the client or manager may not be able to dispose of the EIS-qualifying shares immediately after three years. This might not be possible unless there is a ready market for these shares. Any disposal of the shares may not necessarily realise a profit.



Carol can sell and reinvest her year two investment and again claim further income tax relief. And so on.

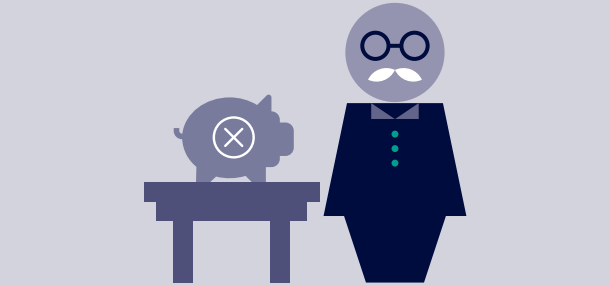
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
EIS Investment	£100K	£100K	£100K	£120K	£120K	£120K
Cumulative investment	£100K	£200K	£300K			
30% income tax relief	£30K	£30K	£30K	£36K	£36K	£36K
Cumulative income tax relief	£30K	£60K	£90K	£126K	£162K	£198K

2

Building a portfolio to accompany pensions

David is 55 years old (10 years from retirement) and works as a civil engineer at a large firm. He earns £155,000 a year, so in 2019/20 is a 45% taxpayer. He has now reached the lifetime allowance limit on his pension pot. After consideration of the tax relief available on the pension contribution and the future impact of the Lifetime allowance, David is advised to consider alternatives from his pension. He also has VCT investments.

\*If he is making the investments through an EIS fund, the manager may dictate the timing of any exits, depending on the terms and conditions of the investment. Additionally, the client or manager may not be able to dispose of the EIS-qualifying shares immediately after three years. This might not be possible unless there is a ready market for these shares. Any disposal of the shares may not necessarily realise a profit.



David stops making annual pensions contributions and instead he makes annual contributions of £40,000 into EIS



After each EIS investment reaches 3 years, he would like to exit subject to being able to dispose of the EIS-qualifying shares and reinvest the proceeds in EIS. The amount of relief available increases as the investment amounts are compounded. He does this until he is 65\*.

**£938,000**

David ends up with a large amount for his retirement

Tax year	Age	EIS investment	Gain & capital recycled from previous EIS investment reinvested	Total EIS investment in year	EIS income tax relief in year	Total CGT payable on gains	Total value
2019/20	55	£40,000	£0	£40,000	£12,000	£0	£52,000
2020/21	56	£40,000	£0	£40,000	£12,000	£0	£104,000
2021/22	57	£40,000	£0	£40,000	£12,000	£0	£156,000
2022/23	58	£40,000	£50,000	£90,000	£27,000	£0	£233,000
2023/24	59	£40,000	£50,000	£90,000	£27,000	£0	£310,000
2024/25	60	£40,000	£50,000	£90,000	£27,000	£0	£387,000
2025/26	61	£40,000	£112,500	£152,500	£45,750	£0	£545,250
2026/27	62	£40,000	£112,500	£152,500	£45,750	£0	£703,500
2027/28	63	£40,000	£112,500	£152,500	£45,750	£0	£861,750
2028/29	64	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£899,875
2029/30	65	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£938,000

The table assumes exits immediately after expiration of three year holding period and 25% gain at each exit.

3

Deferring your capital gains

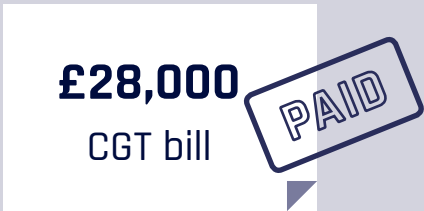
Edward, 58, made a capital gain of £100,000 on the sale of a property in the 2017/18 tax year. He had already used his CGT annual exempt amount for this tax year and the property was not his main residence. He has therefore already paid a CGT bill of £28,000 in January 2019.

\*Edward can also benefit from £30,000 income tax relief assuming he has sufficient income tax capacity.

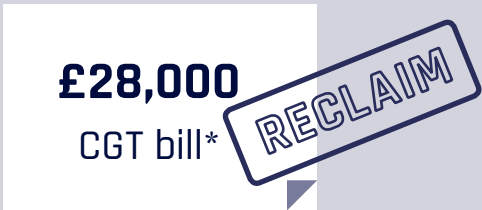
\*\*CGT is deferred until it comes back into charge at a later date if he disposes of the EIS-qualifying shares.



Edward sold his property in 2017/18 tax year and made £100,000 capital gain



**£100,000**  
EIS investment  
(2019/20 tax year)



Edward's EIS investment allows him to reclaim the CGT from HMRC and defer it\*\*

4

Income tax and IHT liabilities

Michelle is looking for a solution to resolve two issues - one from the past and the other for the future.

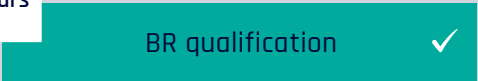


Michelle, 68, has a significant income tax liability for 2019/20 and is concerned about her increasing IHT liability



**£100,000**  
EIS investment made in 2020/21

**£30,000** income tax relief that can be carried back to 2019/20



When Michelle dies she still holds the investment

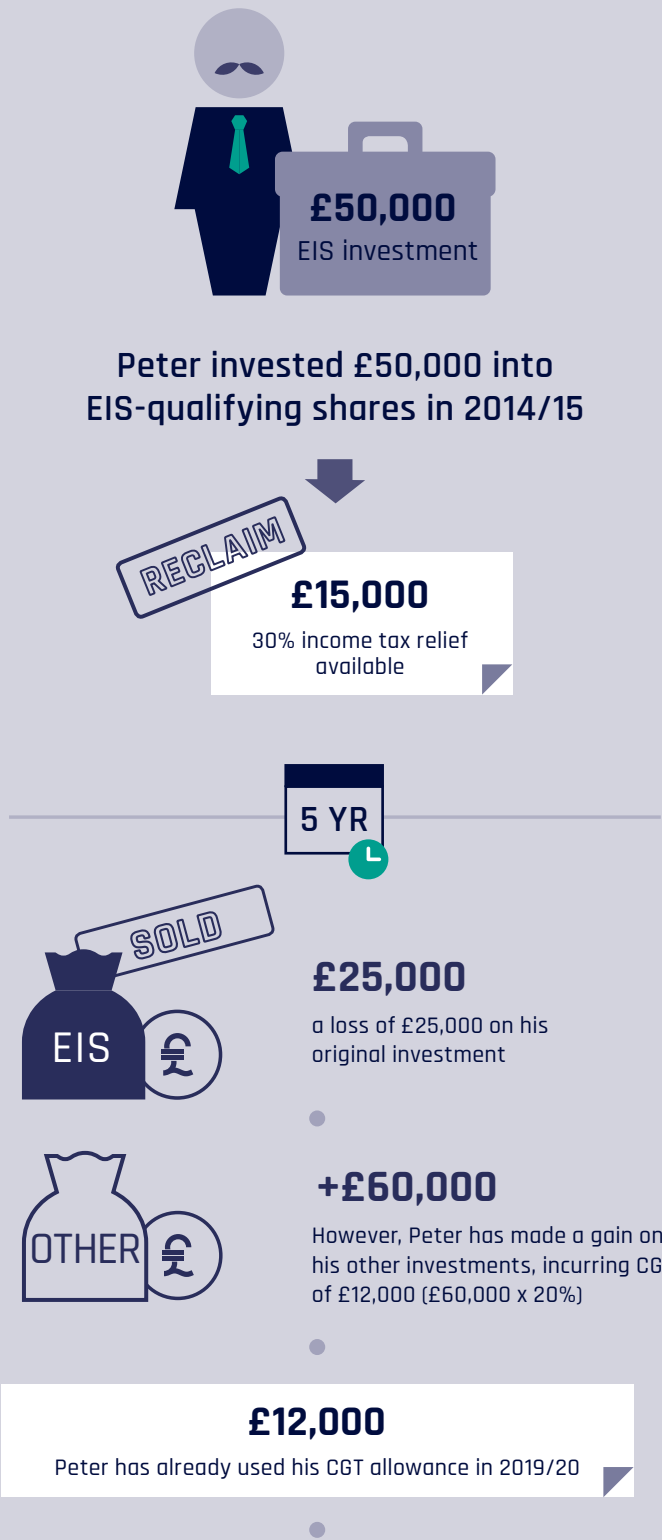


100% IHT exemption on the value of the investment

5

Loss relief

Peter is a higher rate taxpayer and has a diversified portfolio of investments, including £50,000 in EIS-qualifying shares. Due to unforeseen circumstances, in 2019/20 he decided to sell his investment portfolio. Peter’s EIS portfolio sold at a £25,000 loss, however his other (non-property) investments have resulted in a £60,000 gain, incurring CGT of £12,000, and he has already used his £12,000 CGT allowance in 2019/20.



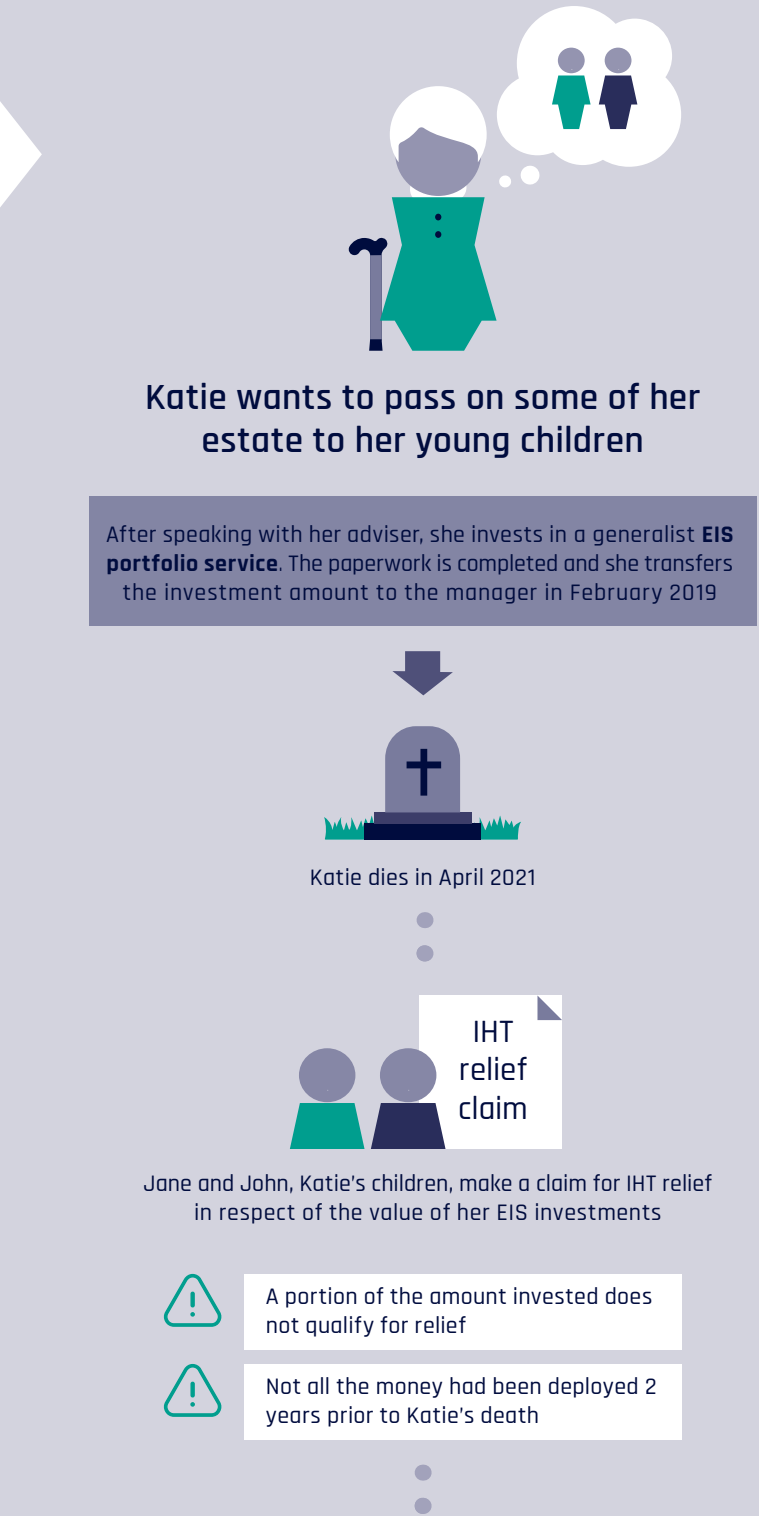
\* As a higher rate taxpayer, this £10,000 is multiplied by 20% = £2,000 available to offset against his CGT liability in 2019/20.

Peter is therefore able to offset a portion of his £10,000 loss against his outstanding £12,000 CGT liability (£25,000 loss - £15,000 income tax relief = £10,000 available to offset)\*

6

Timing and deployment of capital

Katie wants to invest in a portfolio of EIS opportunities to take advantage of the IHT relief. Katie is in ill health and wants to pass on some of her estate to her young children in the form of long-term investments.



Advisers need to be aware of this issue when they factor the date of the income tax relief into their planning and when they are using IHT relief for estate planning.

The qualifying period for investments through an EIS fund starts when the money is invested in an underlying investee company



## Example Deployment Timeline

Commonly, EIS managers quote a timeline of 12 to 24 months to fully invest each subscription into EIS-qualifying companies. This is dependent on the supply of deals the manager has access to and the number of investee companies it targets for each investor for diversification purposes.

The longer the time taken for full deployment, the bigger the potential impact of cash drag on an investor’s uninvested funds. Since the three-year qualification period does not start until funds are invested, it also extends that timeline. And from a tax-planning perspective, it is important to take deployment lead times into account, understanding that deployment may take place over several tax years:

**Scenario A** – Mr Jones invests £100,000 with an EIS discretionary fund manager in September 2019:

- Mr Jones wants to offset a £30,000 income tax bill he has incurred in August 2019 while also starting the clock to become eligible for IHT Business Relief.
- £60,000 of his EIS subscription is deployed into EIS-qualifying investee companies before the end of the 2019/20 tax year.
- The remaining £40,000 of the subscription is deployed into EIS-qualifying investee companies during the 2020/21 tax year.

In this example, Mr Jones has to use the carry-back facility, allowing funds invested in one tax year to be applied to relieve income tax incurred in the previous tax year in order to offset his full income tax bill.

**Scenario B** – Mr Jones invests £100,000 with an EIS discretionary fund manager in March 2020, the end of the 19/20 tax year:

- Mr Jones wants to offset a £30,000 income tax bill he has incurred in August 2019 while also starting the clock to become eligible for IHT Business Relief.
- £10,000 of the subscription is deployed into EIS-qualifying investee companies before the end of the 2019/20 tax year.
- £60,000 of the subscription is deployed into EIS-qualifying investee companies during the 2020/21 tax year.
- The remaining £30,000 of the subscription is deployed into EIS-qualifying investee companies during the 2021/22 tax year.

- Mr Jones can only offset £21,000 of the £30,000 income tax liability. This is because only 70% of his £100,000 subscription to EIS was deployed in the tax year the liability was incurred, or in the following year.

Of course, the £30,000 deployed in 2021/22 could be used to offset up to £9,000 (30% of £30,000) of other income tax liabilities incurred in 2020/21 or 2021/22, but that wasn’t the original plan.



SCENARIO A

£100,000 INVESTED WITH EIS MANAGER	Sep-19	
FUNDS DEPLOYED BY ACQUIRING EIS-QUALIFYING SHARES	£60,000:2019/20	£40,000: 2020/21
YEARS IN WHICH EIS INCOME TAX RELIEF CAN BE USED	£30,000 (30% of £100,000) relief available for 2019/20 tax year	

SCENARIO B

£100,000 INVESTED WITH EIS MANAGER	Mar-20		
FUNDS DEPLOYED BY ACQUIRING EIS-QUALIFYING SHARES	£10,000:2019/20	£60,000: 2020/21	£30,000: 2021/22
YEARS IN WHICH EIS INCOME TAX RELIEF CAN BE USED	£21,000 (30% of £70,000) relief available for 2019/20 tax year		£30,000 relief available for 2020/21 or 2021/22

# Providers in Focus

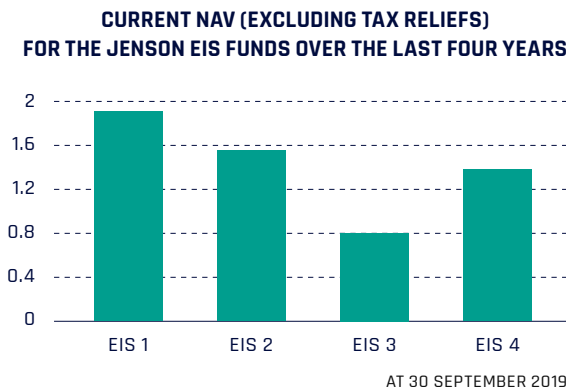
## About the provider

Since the launch of SEIS in 2012, Jenson Funding Partners has built a solid, scalable and efficient investment process, which has led to circa. 100 investments being made into SEIS qualifying companies.

Our first EIS Fund launched in 2015 and has since raised significant follow-on funding rounds for our portfolio companies. We have invested over £2.58 million over 16 companies (15 existing portfolio companies and one external) which has typically provided a cornerstone investment for additional syndicated investment.

## Our EIS offer

The Fund will offer a diverse portfolio of investments in a wide range of sectors and industries, which qualify for EIS tax relief with capital deployed through deal flow concentrating on the best of the existing Jenson portfolio. Demonstrating our support of existing investee companies our EIS follow-on fund has primarily been used to syndicate further funding rounds but will always be benchmarked relative to new external company opportunities. This is combined with the very best companies that we see in the classic equity gap which is typically under-served by the traditional EIS and VCT funds.



## Case Study

Jenson first invested £150,000 into Voneus from our SEIS Fund 1 in October 2013. Voneus is a technology business which provides super-fast broadband to rural areas and internet blackspots. Since initial investment we have raised follow-on funding for Voneus, acting as a cornerstone investor, investing just over £420,000 of EIS funds. For the last seven years Jenson has worked alongside founder Steve Leighton, CEO, and his team, to help them achieve their goal of becoming the market leader in super-fast broadband for hard to reach areas.

The company has changed significantly since first receiving investment. From zero revenues and only employing founders, it has been revenue producing for a number of years, employing over 20 people, has made acquisitions, raised venture debt finance (of almost £5 million) and recently partnered with Macquarie Capital, who made an initial investment of £10m with the potential to invest up to £30m in phases. Part of the proceeds will be used to support the rollout of further high-speed broadband to rural parts of the UK.

Voneus is now valued at £14 million and has a great team enabling significant growth.



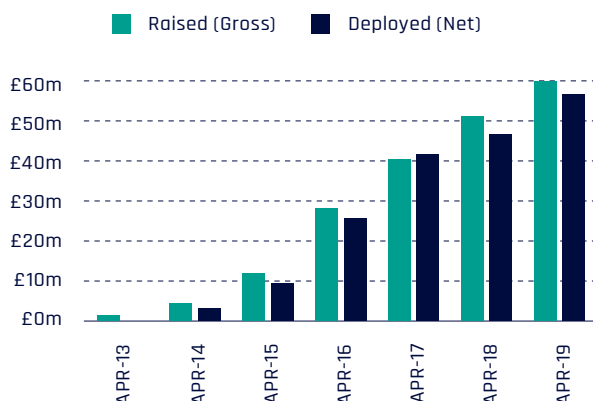
## About the provider

Seneca Partners is a specialist investment and corporate advisory business based in the North of the UK. Seneca provides equity and debt funding to UK SMEs, helping business owners to both finance their growth and realise value on exit either via trade sale, flotation or restructuring. With over £750 million of AUM across the various Seneca businesses, Seneca is a long-standing EIS and private equity investor with a strong track record of value realisation for investors. Seneca's strong regional presence provides access to high quality and unique investment opportunities.

## Our EIS offer

Seneca's EIS Portfolio Service invests growth capital in established businesses. To date, c. £60 million has been deployed in over 80 investments. The service targets a return of £1.60 to £1.80p per £1 invested excluding any tax reliefs over a five-year period. Each subscription will be invested in four to six companies and ordinarily will have a mix of unquoted and AIM-quoted holdings, building a diverse portfolio across a number of sectors. The service has so far exited nine investments with an average return of 2.5x (before fees).

GROWTH CAPITAL FUNDS RAISED AND DEPLOYED



## Case Study

Seneca invested £1m of EIS growth capital into Rockar in August 2014, to facilitate a retail rollout and further development and enhancement of its market leading ecommerce software platform. The business, the first of its kind in the auto industry, allows customers to research, test-drive, purchase and service a new car without sales team involvement.

The expansion plans have subsequently been supported through a £5 million funding round in July 2016, at significantly enhanced valuation to Seneca's entry point, with two established VCT managers investing via a process led by the Seneca Corporate Finance team. This has enabled the business to partner with additional car manufacturers who are now using Rockar's market leading software solution to launch their own online car retail solution and the management team remain very optimistic about Rockar's future prospects. Seneca has played an active advisory role since initial investment, supporting management with key strategic and commercial decisions.

Rockar.

## About the provider

Vala Capital was founded on the principle that experienced and successful entrepreneurs are ideally placed to find, invest in, and mentor fast-growing companies. Founder Jasper Smith and other members of Vala's Investment Committee have a long track record of starting, incubating, growing and selling businesses. They have collectively invested around £23 million of their personal capital into EIS-type companies, generating 3x returns to date. Vala believes in nurturing investments, building close relationships with inspiring entrepreneurs and committing wholeheartedly to helping them achieve their goals and profitable returns for investors.

## Our EIS offer

Vala EIS sees investors allocated shares in a diverse portfolio of 6-10 companies which are typically pre-revenue and revenue-generating, and a blend of new investments alongside follow-on rounds. Vala co-invests and hand-picks investments where its expertise is deepest, in sectors including technology, media, engineering and food & beverage. Companies are usually already trading, and investments take place in tranches, so subscriptions are deployed quickly and EIS3s returned rapidly. Fees are simple and fair; no initial or annual fees are charged to investors. A 20% performance fee applies to profitable exits.



## Case Study

Great British Biscotti Co. is a bakery business, making biscotti biscuits in flavours ranging from traditional Almond, to Coffee & Walnut and Chorizo & Parmesan. The company started out selling its biscuits at farmers' markets and artisan food stores in the New Forest area. CEO Paul Rostand saw the potential to build a much bigger brand; he joined the business in 2015 and quickly increased sales to the food service sector, and the company has twice had to move to larger premises to keep pace with demand.

With the support of Vala's Investment Committee member Paddy Willis (co-founder of Plum Baby and the Grocery Accelerator) Vala invested in 2018 and again in April 2019. Growth has been strong, and the company recently secured its first contract with a major supermarket chain. Vala EIS funding has upgraded equipment, increased manufacturing capacity, and helped develop a sub-brand for the retail sector. The biscuit industry is worth £2.5 billion in the UK alone, and Vala believes a trade sale to a major manufacturer is a likely exit route for the business.



Comparison table

	Jenson EIS Fund 2019/20	Seneca EIS Portfolio Service
MANAGER NAME	Jenson Funding Partners LLP	Seneca Partners Ltd
YEAR FOUNDED	2012	2010
AUM (IN TOTAL) / AUM (EIS)	£14m / £3.2m	£151.2m / £80.8m
DESCRIPTION OF OFFER	The EIS Fund has a mandate to focus on long-term capital growth, is a generalist fund, the sector focus is agnostic and the type opportunities can be anything that is EIS compliant. With access to an existing SEIS portfolio of companies and external applicants Jenson are able to identify the most promising companies for follow on funding	An Evergreen Discretionary Growth Capital Investment Service that looks to build each investor their own portfolio of 4-6 EIS qualifying investments in a portfolio of unquoted and AIM quoted companies. Seneca has deployed c. £50 million of investor subscriptions across c. 40 companies during the last 5 years
LAUNCH DATE	July 2019	01/12/2012
UNDERLYING ASSETS	Investment in a range of companies from a diverse portfolio of existing and new investee companies, in a wide range of sectors and industries	Unquoted and AIM quoted shares
TARGET NO. OF HOLDINGS	Up to 5 per tranche	4 to 6
TARGET ANNUAL RETURN	185p for every 100p invested gross of tax reliefs within four to seven years	1.6x to 1.8x over 5-6 years (exlcuding tax reliefs)
TARGET FUNDRAISE	£5m	Evergreen
INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE	A diverse portfolio of investments in a wide range of sectors and industries, which qualify for EIS Relief. Capital deployment through deal flow introduced by Jenson	To generate tax free income and capital growth over the longer term
INVESTMENT HORIZON	4-7 years	4 to 6 years
MINIMUM INVESTMENT	£10,000	£25,000 (initial), £5,000 (subsequent)
INITAL FEE	No initial fee to investors	2.5% + VAT
AMC	No annual management charge	2% + VAT
OTHER FEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Exit Performance Fee: On a deal-by-deal basis where funds are distributed back to investors following a realisation. *</li><li>Initial fee: up to 8% of the amount invested.</li><li>Annual administration fee: £350 per calendar month plus VAT</li></ul>	Performance fee 20% + VAT**, custodian's admin fee of £55 p.a.

\* Where: a) aggregate distributions to the investor exceed the net cost of the investor's subscription in the investee company in question by 20% an entitlement to a performance fee of 25% of further funds so returned will accrue to Jenson; and b) accrued performance fees will

become payable once, and to the extent, the investor has received 120% of their 'Net Subscription' (Subscription less facilitation fees) to the fund.

\*\* Higher fee applies for exits before 4th anniversary

Contact details



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[www.senecapartners.co.uk](http://www.senecapartners.co.uk)  
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[www.valacap.com](http://www.valacap.com)  
james@valacap.com  
0203 951 0590 / 07872 009069

Vala EIS
Vala Capital
2018
£4.7m / £3m
A discretionary portfolio service that provides investors with a diversified portfolio of 6-10 companies hand-picked by Vala. Companies are typically already trading and often revenue-generating. Simple fee structure with no initial or annual fees charged to investors. A 20% performance fee on profitable exits aligns Vala with investors
December 2018
Investee companies across diverse sectors, typically; fintech, engineering, media & entertainment, technology, food & beverage, lifestyle
Diversified portfolio of 6-10 investee companies
Target return of £2.00 per £1.00 invested (excluding EIS Relief) over investment lifetime
Evergreen fund but with target quarterly closings of £1.2m+
Growth
3-5 years
£25,000
0% to investors; 6% initial fee charged to investee companies
None
No annual or hidden fees to investors, no annual or hidden fees to investee companies. 20% performance fee on profitable exits



# Listings

[www.deepbridgecapital.com](http://www.deepbridgecapital.com)



Award-winning Deepbridge provides investment opportunities into portfolios of actively-managed, growth-focused technology and life sciences companies, taking advantage of the potential tax benefits available under the Enterprise Investment Scheme and Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme. Through the Deepbridge IHT Service, Deepbridge also offers an opportunity for investors to obtain relief from inheritance tax after only two years, by investing in Business Relief qualifying companies that trade in renewable energy generation assets.

Our team of passionate and experienced specialists comprises a genuine blend of people who know what it's like to run a business and who have a balanced approach between being pro-active investment managers and strong practical operators. With a proven track record of working with emerging companies, we work closely with investee companies throughout their funding journey, ensuring that they have the very best opportunity to succeed, with the aim of providing our investors with an optimum return on their investment.

[info@deepbridgecapital.com](mailto:info@deepbridgecapital.com)  
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GrowthInvest is an adviser-focused platform designed to simplify research, investment and reporting on tax-efficient and alternative investments. We provide you with digital solutions that give you choice, control and oversight. We are on a mission to make tax-efficient and private investments more widely accessible to wealth managers, financial advisers, and their clients, through the provision of digital solutions and education in a fast-growing but currently inefficient market. The GrowthInvest platform gives portfolio-level and individual investment analytics across SEIS, EIS, VCT and IHT products.

Investing into a diversified portfolio of SEIS and EIS products has historically been difficult to achieve, which is why we have digitalised the application and administration process to make it as simple as possible. The GrowthInvest EIS service allows you to access a diversified portfolio of high-quality SEIS and EIS providers, with minimal administrative burden. Using the GrowthInvest platform allows you to access granular online reporting, incorporating tax reliefs and real-time performance analysis across your underlying EIS investments and consolidated portfolio.

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# Final summary

## 1. High growth investment



- £18bn invested in 28,000 companies
- 'Risk-to-capital' requirement means focus in on investments with higher growth and risk potential

## 2. Potential tax benefits



- Up to 30% income tax relief
- 100% CGT deferral relief
- 100% IHT relief (via Business Relief)
- Tax-free capital growth
- Loss relief

## 3. Potential risks



- Investment risk of smaller companies
- Liquidity
- Exit risk
- Tax risks

## 4. Rules for EIS investors



- Minimum three year holding period
- Shares must be full risk, new ordinary shares
- No connected parties (for income tax relief)
- No linked loans from the investee company
- No receiving value from the investee company

## 5. Rules for EIS investee companies



- £5m per company per year investment limit
- £12m lifetime investment raise limit
- £2m per year per investor limit (provided any amount above £1m is invested into knowledge-intensive companies)
- 249 employee limit for investment company
- 7 year age limit
- Unquoted (other than AIM)
- Qualifying trade

## 6. Knowledge intensive companies



- Benefit from more generous rules
- £20m lifetime investment raise limit
- £10m per company per year investment limit
- 499 employee limit for investment company
- 10 year age limit



### GUY TOLHURST

MANAGING DIRECTOR, INTELLIGENT PARTNERSHIP

*EIS celebrates its 25th birthday in 2019. It has changed importantly over recent years, most notably through the risk-to-capital condition introduced in the Autumn Budget 2017, which has refocused the market onto those investments that are at the riskier end of the spectrum.*

*The latest government figures suggest resilience, with continued growth in investments for 2017-18. However, beneath the headlines, there are signs that the rule changes are beginning to leave their mark, with fewer advance assurance applications in 2018-19 than the previous year. The strong growth of previous years could see a slowdown when the next set of government figures are published.*

*This does not mean that EIS should move to the margins of tax-efficient investment options. With a growing number of clients considering their investment options, advisers now more than ever need to be aware of the risks involved in EIS investments, while at the same time being cognisant of the potential benefits that they can offer to the right clients.*

## Closing Statement

*I hope you have found that this guide has set the EIS regime in that context and provided a useful explanation of some of the basics that need to be considered when looking at these types of investment opportunities. While it will not be suitable for every client, EIS offers a potentially attractive option that plays to investors' desire to combine the potential of higher growth and beneficial tax treatment, while at the same time supporting small businesses.*

*We at Intelligent Partnership passionately believe that equipping advisers with the tools to support their clients is a vital cog in helping investors find appropriate homes for their money, in a way that can help small businesses across the country to grow and prosper. To that end, we provide a variety of guides and reports covering not only EIS but also markets such as Business Relief and Venture Capital Trusts, which together can provide advisers with a well-rounded basis on which to support their clients.*

4  
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## EIS Accreditation

Intelligent Partnership, in conjunction with the Enterprise Investment Scheme Association, provides an accessible, CPD accredited e-learning resource on EIS for regulated advisers, paraplanners, accountants, solicitors and investment professionals.



**eisa** .....  
enterprise investment scheme association



*The EISA is delighted to support and endorse Intelligent Partnership's EIS e-learning accreditation as the industry standard for learning and development on SEIS and EIS for regulated financial advisers and other professionals."*

MARK BROWNRIDGE, DIRECTOR GENERAL, EIS ASSOCIATION

### Why get involved with the EIS accreditation?

- Gain a recognised individual Accreditation in EIS
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The Certificate is valid for 12 months. EISA Members benefit from a **25% discount** using discount code: **eisamember**

Find more info and try a free sample at:

[intelligent-partnership.com/e-learning/eis-course/](https://intelligent-partnership.com/e-learning/eis-course/)



# Helpful resources

[www.eisa.org.uk](http://www.eisa.org.uk)

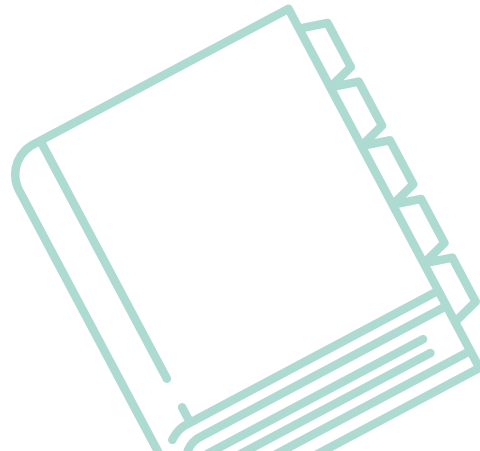


The official trade body for the Enterprise Investment Scheme, EISA is a not-for-profit organisation whose core aim is to help SMEs obtain the funding they need to grow

[www.micap.com](http://www.micap.com)



MICAP is a provider of quality independent due diligence and research on tax-advantaged investments



## Steps after reading

### Claim your CPD

This guide is accredited for structured CPD by the CISI, PFS and CII and readers of the guide can claim one hour of CPD for each hour spent reading the guide, up to a total of four hours. In order to claim CPD, readers will need to complete a short online test.

For more details on claiming CPD go to:

- [intelligent-partnership.com/cpd](http://intelligent-partnership.com/cpd)

Educational content is also available from Intelligent Partnership, which produces a regular CPD accredited EIS report.

The reports are available at:

- [intelligent-partnership.com/research-format/publications](http://intelligent-partnership.com/research-format/publications)

### Provide Feedback

Intelligent Partnership actively welcomes feedback, thoughts and comments to help shape the development of this guide. This guide is produced on a regular basis.

Feedback can be given on the website or via email:

- [Intelligent-partnership.com/feedback](http://Intelligent-partnership.com/feedback)
- [Guides@intelligent-partnership.com](mailto:Guides@intelligent-partnership.com)

**Participation and feedback  
are gratefully received**

# About Intelligent Partnership



Intelligent Partnership is the UK's leading provider of insights and education in the tax advantaged and alternative investments space.

We provide a suite of materials to keep advisers and industry professionals up to date with the latest developments and on course to meet their training and CPD targets.

Our range of engaging, accessible and CPD accredited resources includes:



### INDUSTRY REPORTS

Free, award winning series including EIS, VCT, BR and AIM Reports offering ongoing observations and intelligence, the latest thoughts and opinions of managers and providers and a comparison of open investment opportunities. Visit: [www.intelligent-partnership.com/research-format/publications](http://www.intelligent-partnership.com/research-format/publications)



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A weekly snapshot of the latest articles, commentary and market data for financial services professionals, in two easy-to-read briefings on Tax Efficient Investments and Alternative Finance. Visit <https://intelligent-partnership.com/investment-briefing-sign-up/>



### PROVIDER SPOTLIGHTS

A deeper dive into individual providers giving their input on particular market issues and more detail on the strategies and offerings they have developed to address them.



*Realigning the rules on EIS investments has increased the focus on risk and therefore on the types of businesses that it was set up to support. But, for the right client, EIS continues to offer a government-backed route to effective tax-planning, while also providing a source of growth for the UK economy.*

GUY TOLHURST, INTELLIGENT PARTNERSHIP