

New Capital Global High Yield Bond Fund



Quarterly Commentary | As of 31 March 2026

Market overview

Markets began the year on a positive note in January, with the MSCI All Country World Index rising 2.9% in US dollar terms, driven by a nearly 9% gain in emerging markets. US small caps outperformed, and value stocks continued their recovery versus growth stocks. Commodity prices saw unusual volatility, with gold, silver, and copper reaching new all-time highs and oil rebounding due to geopolitical tensions, including US military action in Venezuela, conflict with Europe over Greenland, and threats of intervention in Iran. Concerns about the Federal Reserve's independence, heightened by a criminal investigation into Chairman Powell, pushed government bond yields higher, though the nomination of Kevin Warsh as Powell's successor helped ease fears and led to a correction in commodity prices. Despite a partial recovery, the US dollar remained down 1.5% in trade-weighted terms since the start of the year. Stock markets were buoyed by a solid global economic cycle and expectations of Fed rate cuts, with corporate profits revised upward and projected to grow by double digits for a second consecutive year, though elevated valuations warrant caution.

In February, global equity markets continued to rise, with the MSCI All Country World Index up 1.3%, bringing year-to-date gains to 4.3%. Gains were driven by markets outside the US, as the S&P 500 fell 0.8% and lagged other developed and emerging markets, which were up more than 14%. Value, small, and mid-cap stocks outperformed growth and large caps, particularly as tech companies weighed on performance. Safe assets rallied alongside equities, with falling government bond yields, rising gold prices, and a stronger Swiss franc, reflecting heightened risk of US and Israeli military action against Iran and concerns about credit quality. The US earnings season remained robust, but the announcement of over \$600bn in artificial intelligence (AI)-related investment by US hyperscalers raised questions about future profits. The US Supreme Court's ruling against Trump's tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act led to a decrease in effective US tariff rates, supporting the global business cycle.

March saw a sharp reversal, with the MSCI All Country World Index falling 7.1%, erasing earlier gains and leaving first quarter performance at -3.1%. Bonds also declined as yields rose on fears of renewed inflation and more restrictive central bank policies. The shift in sentiment was triggered by the US and Israel's war against Iran, resulting in the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and threatening global supply chains, especially for energy, agri-food, steel, and semiconductors. The US, less dependent on these supplies, saw its equities and bonds outperform and the dollar strengthen, while non-US markets and currencies suffered. Notably, gold prices fell despite expectations of safe haven demand, as investors and central banks sought liquidity to address emergencies. Nevertheless, medium- to long-term fundamentals for gold remain supportive of a gradual price increase.

Fund performance and positioning

The fund underperformed its benchmark, the ICE Global High Yield Index, by -0.5% on a gross basis during the first quarter of 2026 and -0.7% on a net of fees basis. This underperformance was primarily driven by sector allocation and yield curve positioning, while ratings bucket allocation provided a partial offset.

The ratings bucket allocation contributed +13 basis points (bps) to performance. The portfolio maintains a defensive, higher-quality stance, with an overweight in BB-rated bonds and an underweight in lower-rated single-B and CCC bonds. This positioning was beneficial in Q1, as BB-rated bonds delivered an excess return of -0.71%, compared with -0.87% for single-B and -1.20% for CCC bonds. In addition, a cash position of around 5–7% during the period helped as spreads widened overall; global high yield spreads widened by roughly 50 bps over the quarter.

Sector allocation detracted -33 bps, mainly due to the portfolio's underweight in energy: the portfolio holds about 2% in energy versus approximately 13% for the index. Against the backdrop of the Iran conflict, energy outperformed significantly, with US high yield energy generating an excess return of +2.35% versus -0.82% for the broader US high yield market. Security selection detracted -12 bps, with notable underperformers including GoEasy, Virgin Media, and Shift4. GoEasy sold off following a write-down related to loan performance, Virgin Media lagged as investors focused on near-term operational concerns, and Shift4 declined amid broader weakness and concerns in the technology sector. Nonetheless, we remain constructive on the long-term fundamentals of these companies, believe position sizes are appropriate for the risk, and continue to monitor them closely. Yield curve positioning was also a headwind, costing -17 bps in Q1. The portfolio is

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positioned with an overweight to duration of around half a year versus the benchmark. The Iran conflict has raised concerns about near-term inflation, pushing rates higher, which hurt the portfolio, particularly as the duration overweight is concentrated in the GBP and EUR rates markets, which underperformed the US rates market over the period.



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	New Capital Global High Yield Bond Fund	BofA Merrill Lynch Global High Yield Constrained Index	Difference
1 Month	-2.18%	-1.54%	-0.64%
3 Months	-1.26%	-0.57%	-0.69%
6 Months	+0.12%	+0.69%	-0.57%
YTD	-1.26%	-0.57%	-0.69%
1 Year	+5.78%	+6.53%	-0.75%
3 Years	+26.26%	+28.82%	-2.56%
Since Inception Annualised	+2.27%	+3.86%	-1.59%
Since Inception (27/10/2021)	+10.44%	+18.25%	-7.81%

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Outlook

Spreads moved wider by around 50 bps over the period, largely driven by the Iran conflict, having moved off the sub-300 bps tightness seen in mid-January. The ICE Global High Yield Index ended the first quarter of 2026 with spreads at around 345 bps. Nevertheless, current levels still sit toward the lower end of the market's typical historical range, indicating that the market is not yet pricing in a severe credit downturn, but rather the uncertainty stemming from the conflict. Unlike spreads, all-in yields continue to offer a fairly attractive income profile. The yield-to-worst on the ICE Global High Yield Index as of the end of March

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2026 is approximately 7.31% unhedged and around 7.6% when hedged back to USD. Given that income is the primary driver of returns in high yield, these starting yields suggest that the asset class could still deliver attractive medium- to longer-term returns.

While all-in yields are attractive in our view, with credit spreads still near the lower end of their historical range, we continue to believe that now is not the time to “reach for yield” and take unnecessary risk. The fund therefore maintains a conservative positioning, favouring higher-quality credits, specifically bonds rated BB and above. As of the end of March, approximately 80% of the portfolio is invested in BB or better-rated bonds, compared to around 60% for the index. Within the single-B rating category, the fund remains focused on companies with robust fundamentals, resilient balance sheets capable of withstanding an economic downturn and, where possible, secured against assets. The portfolio has minimal exposure to CCC-rated bonds, holding less than 2%, compared to approximately 8% for the index. This disciplined approach aims to enhance the fund’s resilience in the event of material credit spread widening, while still providing returns by capturing the headline yield.

Looking ahead, a key risk is the potential emergence of a broader credit cycle, fuelled in part by stress in private credit markets. We are seeing early signs of strain, including large outflow requests from private credit vehicles, loans being marked down significantly, and banks tightening their lending standards to private credit funds. At the same time, the Iran conflict is likely to keep volatility elevated in the near term. Over the medium term, persistently higher oil prices could create recessionary pressures, which would be challenging for lower-quality credits. Against this backdrop, our positioning remains underweight to credit risk and a slight overweight to rates. We also expect that much of the recent outperformance in energy may be given back as the year progresses, either because the conflict de-escalates and energy reprices, or because the sector underperforms from what we view as rich valuation levels. Currently, the spread on US high yield energy stands at 239 bps versus 349 bps for the broader US high yield market, underscoring how expensive the sector has become on a relative basis.



While all-in yields are attractive in our view, with credit spreads still near the lower end of their historical range, we continue to believe that now is not the time to “reach for yield” and take unnecessary risk.



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+44 (0)20 7491 9111
enquiries@newcapital.com

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Contact us:
Park House
116 Park Street
London
W1K 6AP
UK