January 2025

Stocks in Focus

Legal & General Plc +6.08% – Long-trading on an attractive valuation, Legal & General perfomed well in December, pairing strong share price performance with a notably high-dividend yield of over 8% per annum. December saw Legal & General pass a milestone, with pension scheme liabilities surpassing £1 billion for the first time via the company's L&G Flow solution, adding £365m in 2025 alone. The shares appreciated 24.28% in 2025, as CEO António Simões's efforts to focus on shareholder value bear fruit. We continue to hold, with the company a key contributor to our 2025 UK returns.

Visa +3.30% – Visa experienced a strong December, with returns slightly offset by a weakening dollar eroding performance for UK investors. Visa announced positive performance of its AI-Agent pilot programme as part of the company's 'Visa Intelligent Commerce' strategy, with plans to roll out globally in 2026. December also saw the company report an increase in US retail spending to support payment-derived revenues, with particular growth in online orders. The company continues with a share buyback programme to strengthen share prices, alongside continuing to raise their dividend. In appreciation of these initiatives and Visa's future prospects, both Bank of America and HSBC raised their price targets for the stock in December, building investor enthusiasm further.

Adyen +2.81% – Adyen is a European payments provider, widely held within our European allocation. December saw the company announce payment volumes following November's Black Friday trading period. Adyen saw a 27% increase in volumes year on year, handling approximately $43 billion and demonstrating the company's continued growth. 2025 saw a number of investor concerns weigh on share prices, namely with US tariffs potentially deterring purchases and thus payments. Expansion of US operations was critical to the company's growth plans, thus concerns in this market resonate heavily with investors. Nevertheless, we continue to hold faith in the company and view it as a key part of our European allocation.

Intercontinental Exchange +1.73% – A relatively new addition to our portfolios, Intercontinental Exchange "ICE" experienced another position month, although again facing the currency headwinds that impacted all US and US Dollar denominated assets in December. Like Adyen, ICE saw a substantial increase year on year in trading volumes, with Average Daily Volumes up 19% for December 2025, primarily due to an increase in volumes relating to the trading of Natural Gas. Introduced to portfolios primarily as a defensive holding, we have been pleased with the early performance of the holding since it's introduction to our portfolios, increasing 6.22% since the stock's broad introduction to our portfolios on November 10th 2025.

Microsoft -3.17% – Artificial Intelligence was one of the key themes within 2025, with Microsoft a key participant in this investor enthusiasm. Appreciative of the technology's potential, concerns over capital expenditure became stronger during the year, as the revenues necessary to recoup costs grew ever higher. In early December, reports began to spread that Microsoft was failing to meet sales goals for their AI products, amplifying concerns. Combined with a broader sell off in US technology stocks in December (NASDAQ -2.15% in GBP terms during the month, again facing the currency headwinds) saw Microsoft perform negatively during the month. Microsoft delivered returns of 7.63% for 2025, making December's returns a tad disappointing against a good year.