# UK Government Sells £1.24 Billion NatWest Shares in Step Towards Full Private Ownership



The UK government has sold £1.24 billion worth of NatWest shares, reducing its ownership stake in the bank from 26% to approximately 22.5%. The sale, executed in an off-market transaction at 316.2p per share, is part of a sustained strategy to return NatWest to full private ownership following its bailout during the 2008 financial crisis.

This latest divestment accelerates efforts to reduce the UK's involvement in the bank, which had been positioned at 84% ownership at its peak. The government aims to completely withdraw from NatWest by 2025 or 2026. Plans for a public share sale, originally set for this summer, have been postponed due to the upcoming General Election on July 4.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt has reaffirmed the commitment to sell off the government's stake but emphasized that no retail offer will occur during the election period.

Paul Thwaite, NatWest Group's CEO, described the transaction as a significant milestone toward full privatization, highlighting the positive use of capital for shareholders and the broader UK economy.

NatWest intends to cancel around 222 million of the shares acquired and retain 170 million in treasury for potential future use.