# US private equity giant Advent leads £4.4bn bid for Spectris as KKR plans rival takeover offer



Two more firms are set to depart from the London stock market in the wake of takeover bids, underscoring Britain's emergence as the foremost destination for dealmaking in Europe this year. Spectris, a FTSE 250 scientific testing kit manufacturer, accepted a £4.4 billion bid from the US private equity giant Advent International, marking the largest UK takeover in 2025. Despite Advent’s ascendancy, private equity heavyweight KKR is contemplating a rival bid, setting the stage for a possible bidding war.

Spectris’s shares jumped nearly 16%, with the price now up 86% since the company was first identified as a takeover target earlier in June. Advent’s offer of £37.63 per share includes a 28p interim dividend, representing an 85% premium on the price before takeover speculation began. Spectris, which supplies precision instrument technology to sectors such as pharmaceuticals and semiconductors, reported a recent sales decline reflecting market weaknesses. Nevertheless, Advent’s managing partner called the deal a “vote of confidence in British engineering and innovation.” The Spectris chairman expressed the board’s belief that the offer reflects the company’s value and benefits its stakeholders.

KKR, however, despite losing out to Primary Health Properties in its £1.8 billion bid for GP surgery owner Assura, has not stepped away from the fray for Spectris. The firm is reported to be in advanced due diligence stages and arranging financing for its possible bid, though its second bid for Spectris was rejected, with the company favoring Advent’s offer. According to UK takeover rules, KKR has until early July to formalize a competing bid or withdraw. Market commentators note that KKR will need to act swiftly to avoid losing two deals in quick succession.

This flurry of dealmaking is part of a broader trend that has seen UK firms increasingly targeted by overseas private equity and strategic buyers due to relatively low valuations on the London market. A report by law firm White & Case revealed a 52% increase in UK-related deals this year compared to last, with 1,207 transactions valued at nearly £89 billion so far. High-profile recent deals include DoorDash’s $2.9 billion acquisition of Deliveroo, Qualcomm’s £1.8 billion takeover of microchip designer Alphawave, and food manufacturer Greencore’s purchase of Bakkavor for £1.2 billion.

The mounting wave of delistings and take-private transactions has heightened concerns about London’s shrinking public equity market. Observers warn that if investors continue to overlook the value presented by UK-listed companies, the market will remain vulnerable to these takeover bids. Investment director Russ Mould commented that the multiple bid battles highlight how the UK market is increasingly “on sale” to trade buyers and private equity firms. Financial expert Susannah Streeter lamented that Spectris, a prime example of British engineering excellence with global reach, will likely forgo future growth as a listed entity, now under American ownership with deeper pockets.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves faces intensifying calls to revive London’s equity market, seen as pivotal for broader economic vitality. The UK is grappling with an ongoing trend of primary listings shifting to New York, as evidenced by companies like Wise and Flutter seeking US markets. IPO activity remains muted, despite occasional bright spots such as Circle’s recent IPO surge in the US, which reignited debate on the efficiency of the public offering system.

Spectris’s takeover illustrates that while geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainties persist, dealmaking activity—particularly involving private equity—remains robust. Advent’s prior acquisition of British defence group Cobham drew criticism after the company’s operations were disassembled and sold abroad, raising questions about the long-term impact of such takeovers on UK manufacturing.

In conclusion, the advent of the Advent-Spectris deal, potentially accompanied by rival bids, is emblematic of the high-stakes environment currently shaping the UK equity landscape. With significant deals continuing to surface, the pressure mounts on policymakers and investors alike to ensure London remains a competitive and attractive hub for public market investment.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14839741/US-predator-launches-4-4bn-swoop-Spectris-private-equity-giant-KKR-plots-rival-offer-FTSE-250-firm.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1fa72a9a-e229-4f18-8de3-c34b1abefd2f), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/44a2aa92-521f-4684-a0f7-6ca1ecb97b66), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-shares-flat-israel-iran-conflict-rages-on-dealmaking-focus-2025-06-23/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1fa72a9a-e229-4f18-8de3-c34b1abefd2f), [[7]](https://www.ajbell.co.uk/articles/latestnews/289531/spectris-jumps-after-44-billion-takeover-bid-advent), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/44a2aa92-521f-4684-a0f7-6ca1ecb97b66)
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* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14839741/US-predator-launches-4-4bn-swoop-Spectris-private-equity-giant-KKR-plots-rival-offer-FTSE-250-firm.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1fa72a9a-e229-4f18-8de3-c34b1abefd2f)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14839741/US-predator-launches-4-4bn-swoop-Spectris-private-equity-giant-KKR-plots-rival-offer-FTSE-250-firm.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-shares-flat-israel-iran-conflict-rages-on-dealmaking-focus-2025-06-23/), [[7]](https://www.ajbell.co.uk/articles/latestnews/289531/spectris-jumps-after-44-billion-takeover-bid-advent)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14839741/US-predator-launches-4-4bn-swoop-Spectris-private-equity-giant-KKR-plots-rival-offer-FTSE-250-firm.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1fa72a9a-e229-4f18-8de3-c34b1abefd2f), [[4]](https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-pro-rata-f84acf89-55d1-40a5-9e9b-21dd8a75823c)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14839741/US-predator-launches-4-4bn-swoop-Spectris-private-equity-giant-KKR-plots-rival-offer-FTSE-250-firm.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1fa72a9a-e229-4f18-8de3-c34b1abefd2f), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/44a2aa92-521f-4684-a0f7-6ca1ecb97b66), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/uks-spectris-rejects-second-kkr-takeover-approach-favour-advents-5-billion-2025-06-13/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14839741/US-predator-launches-4-4bn-swoop-Spectris-private-equity-giant-KKR-plots-rival-offer-FTSE-250-firm.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/1fa72a9a-e229-4f18-8de3-c34b1abefd2f> - Advent International has agreed to acquire UK-based precision instruments maker Spectris for £4.4 billion, marking one of the largest recent takeovers of a London-listed company. Spectris shareholders will receive £37.63 per share, including a 28p interim dividend, representing an 85% premium over the share price before the offer emerged. Spectris, a member of the FTSE 250, supplies high-tech measurement instruments to industries such as pharmaceuticals and semiconductors but recently reported a sales decline to £299 million in Q1 due to market weaknesses. The acquisition reflects growing private buyer interest in UK firms due to relatively low valuations and continues a trend of delistings and take-private deals, including DoorDash’s acquisition of Deliveroo and Thoma Bravo’s Darktrace deal. Advent's bid prevailed over rival interest from KKR, which may still submit an offer. The deal also coincides with investor shifts as UK firms consider New York listings and IPO activity remains sluggish. In a related development, KKR lost out to Primary Health Properties in a separate £1.79bn bid for NHS landlord Assura, highlighting shareholder concerns over low valuation takeovers.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-shares-flat-israel-iran-conflict-rages-on-dealmaking-focus-2025-06-23/> - UK shares remained flat at the beginning of the week amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, particularly Iran's expected response to recent U.S. airstrikes on its nuclear facilities. Fears over disruptions to global oil supplies through the vital Strait of Hormuz pushed oil and gas stocks higher, with BP and Shell climbing about 1% and Harbour Energy up 2%. Conversely, rising crude prices impacted airline stocks negatively, with EasyJet, Wizz Air, and International Consolidated Airlines declining between 1.1% and 2.3%. Market focus also shifted to significant merger and acquisition activity. Spectris surged 15.3% after agreeing to a £4.4 billion ($5.9 billion) takeover deal by Advent, overtaking a rival bid from KKR, marking the largest UK deal this year. In contrast, Primary Health Properties fell 3.8% following Assura's £1.78 billion ($2.4 billion) takeover attempt, although Assura’s shares rose slightly. Additionally, British business activity posted marginal growth in June, though concerns persisted over geopolitical instability. Investors also looked ahead to U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell’s upcoming testimony for signals on the economic outlook and interest rates.
4. <https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-pro-rata-f84acf89-55d1-40a5-9e9b-21dd8a75823c> - The latest Axios Pro Rata newsletter highlights Circle's IPO, which surged 675% post-listing, including a record 168% day-one "pop" for a billion-dollar IPO, renewing debate over the IPO system's efficiency. Critics argue that underpricing benefits bankers over companies, while defenders cite morale and investor support benefits. Circle's spike may be tied to crypto optimism and U.S. Senate passage of stablecoin legislation. Meanwhile, Bank of New York Mellon approached Northern Trust for a potential mega-merger that could reshape U.S. banking post-Biden-era regulation repeal. In venture capital news, major raises include Thinking Machines Lab's $2B seed funding, Harvey's $300M Series E, and big money for AI, robotics, and fintech startups globally. In private equity, deals include Advent's $4.4B acquisition of Spectris and Ares’ €2B stake in Enel's renewable unit. IPOs are quiet with Jefferson Capital the lone U.S. offering, though PhonePe and ProCap BTC plan listings. Liquidity events include Snap acquiring Saturn and Unilever purchasing Dr. Squatch. M&A activity includes food delivery, retail real estate, and Premier League club Crystal Palace ownership shifts. Morgan Stanley Capital Partners raised $3.2B for its new fund. Personnel news includes appointments at MetLife, HarbourVest, and Citi. Iran's threat to close the Strait of Hormuz hasn't rattled markets yet.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/uks-spectris-rejects-second-kkr-takeover-approach-favour-advents-5-billion-2025-06-13/> - Spectris, a UK-based scientific instruments maker, announced on Friday that it had rejected a second takeover proposal from private equity firm KKR. This decision comes shortly after Spectris expressed support for a competing $5 billion acquisition proposal from Advent International, agreeing to accept Advent’s offer of £37.63 per share if formally made. The company did not disclose details of KKR's latest bid but confirmed it as the firm's second rejected offer. While Advent declined to comment and KKR did not immediately respond, the Wall Street Journal initially reported on KKR's competing bid. Spectris, serving industries such as pharmaceuticals, steel, and automotive with software and hardware solutions, is currently the largest UK takeover target in 2025. Attributed to relatively low valuations, Britain continues to attract overseas acquisitions. According to UK takeover regulations, KKR has until July 11 to submit a formal bid or remove itself from the bid process.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/44a2aa92-521f-4684-a0f7-6ca1ecb97b66> - Private equity firm Advent International is in advanced discussions to acquire Spectris, a London-listed industrial group, for £4.4 billion. The proposed deal would offer shareholders £37.63 per share in cash, valuing the company’s equity at approximately £3.7 billion and including debt in the overall enterprise value. Spectris, a FTSE 250 company specializing in precision measurement instruments for industries such as pharmaceuticals and semiconductors, has recently seen a decline in sales due to weaker markets. The company has indicated that its board would likely support a firm offer from Advent. Advent has until July 7 to finalize the bid. Spectris shares surged 69% on the news, trading above £34. The deal is part of a trend of foreign private equity takeovers of undervalued UK-listed companies. Other recent deals include DoorDash’s acquisition of Deliveroo and Thoma Bravo’s purchase of Darktrace. The UK is simultaneously grappling with a trend of major companies shifting their primary listings to the U.S., with firms like Wise and Flutter making such moves.
7. <https://www.ajbell.co.uk/articles/latestnews/289531/spectris-jumps-after-44-billion-takeover-bid-advent> - Spectris PLC on Monday reported it has received a conditional takeover offer from private equity firm Advent International LP. The London-based provider of high-tech instruments, test equipment and software said the offer comprised 3,735 pence in cash plus a proposed interim dividend of 28 pence per Spectris share. Shares in Spectris were up 66% at 3,392.00p in London on Monday afternoon, giving it a market capitalisation of £3.40 billion. The bid by Advent would value Spectris’ equity at more than £3.7 billion, giving the firm a £4.4 billion enterprise valuation including debt. The dividend would be paid in line with Spectris’ current dividend calendar. The offer was made by Advent International Ltd, acting as an adviser to Advent. Should a firm offer be made, ‘the board has carefully considered the proposal together with its advisers and concluded that the proposal is at a value that the board would be minded to recommend unanimously to Spectris shareholders,’ said Spectris. Advent International has until July 7 to make a firm offer, and Spectris noted there can be no certainty any offer will be made.