

# Friends Life sells Lombard unit to Blackstone

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By FastFT | Published Jul 11, 2014 | 0 comments

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Friends Life, the FTSE 100 insurer and pensions group, has finally sold off its Lombard wealth and tax planning arm to US-based private equity group Blackstone, and said it would use the proceeds to buy back shares.

The Luxembourg-based Lombard business, which specialises in helping the ultra-rich to manage their affairs, has been on the block since last year, [FastFT reports](#).

Blackstone will pay initial consideration of £317m, plus a possible further payment of as much as £39m through the value of a deferred loan note, depending on the value of Lombard's future assets.

Friends Life said it would return £261m to shareholders in a buy-back after the deal.

Said chief executive Andy Briggs: "Lombard formed part of the group's initial purchase of Friends Provident in 2009 and is a leading European provider of long-term wealth planning solutions for high and ultra-high net worth investors.

"It has always had a different profile to the rest of the group and we believe its disposal is in the best interests of both Friends Life and Lombard."