# Motorist's safety scare over faulty courtesy car sparks concern



A distressing incident involving a courtesy car has sparked considerable concern following complaints from a motorist regarding the vehicle's safety and the response from the rental firm. Paul Smith, a public relations manager from Falkirk, Scotland, alleges that Auxillis, the corporate fleet rental company, provided him with a courtesy car that had faulty brakes, which nearly led to a serious accident on the motorway.

The situation began when Mr Smith was involved in a crash on March 10, 2023. Under the terms of his insurance policy with Elephant, he was compelled to use Auxillis for a replacement vehicle without incurring a £500 excess fee to rent from another provider. Initially, he was supplied with a Volkswagen T-Cross, which he felt was of a lesser class than his policy entitled him to, before being upgraded to a Cupra Formentor sports SUV the following week.

Mr Smith later described the Formentor as “a really nice car” and praised it as enjoyable to drive. However, his satisfaction was short-lived. He reported that shortly after acquiring the vehicle, it began to exhibit concerning issues, including malfunctions of its parking assistance features and a troubling noise from the brakes. He recounted to MailOnline, “There was a sort of grinding and crunching noise coming from them,” prompting him to promptly contact Auxillis to express his concerns.

Despite his complaints, Auxillis advised Mr Smith that he needed verification of the issue from an RAC mechanic, their roadside assistance partner, before they would consider exchanging the vehicle. During this period of waiting, Mr Smith faced further issues; Auxillis mistakenly left a voicemail about the rental on an incorrect phone number, which meant he had to spend £100 on taxis to commute to work while waiting for the courtesy car arrangement to be rectified.

On March 27, events took a critical turn when Mr Smith was driving the Formentor in heavy rain. He experienced near-failure of the brakes as he approached the M90 motorway. Describing the incident, he stated, “I could hardly see two feet in front of me... Had I not left enough distance or time to brake I would've gone straight into the back of the person in front.” He expressed concern for his safety, saying, “Lucky to be alive - that car is a death trap,” after recounting his experience to family members that evening.

Frustration reached a peak when Auxillis refused to replace the car until it was assessed, leading Mr Smith to park across the entrance of the rental centre in Broxburn in protest. Following this, a representative from Auxillis addressed him and provided a second Formentor, but Mr Smith was taken aback to learn that this replacement car had also been previously involved in an accident, bearing visible damage such as a dropped bonnet and dislodged trim.

In a further assessment conducted by the RAC, it was revealed that the replacement vehicle had been fitted with "cheap brakes" that were reportedly worn to 70 per cent. The mechanic's inspection led to a formal report noting that several front components of the car were "broken" or "scratched."

Ultimately, Mr Smith's arrangement with Auxillis was terminated, and he was left without a car, despite claims of safety concerns being dismissed by the rental company. His frustration was compounded when he was informed by the firm that he would no longer be receiving a vehicle, leaving him with no other option but to consider paying the £500 excess to secure his own courtesy car as his Audi remains under repair for at least another fortnight.

In response to the unfolding situation, a spokesperson for Elephant confirmed they are investigating the matter as a priority, demonstrating an intent to resolve Mr Smith's grievances. Meanwhile, Auxillis has opted not to provide a comment on this particular episode. The incident highlights ongoing discussions about vehicle safety standards and rental practices in the automotive industry.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)