



## 'Covid' cars, some with 'missing' items, are appearing on the used car market...

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“Covid cars” – models made during the pandemic with irregular specifications – are causing valuation issues as they start to appear



## on the used market, says the Vehicle Remarketing Association. Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) reports...

Marcus Blakemore, chair of the trade body's Industry Trends Committee, said that dealers and traders were buying cars expecting them to meet certain equipment and specification levels, then finding key items are missing.

"During the initial stages of the pandemic, there was massive supply chain disruption, especially around availability of microprocessors. As a result, manufacturers improvised on the production line, removing key items just to keep things moving.

Depending on the manufacturer and model, there are all kinds of items omitted - heated seats, head up displays, electric door mirrors, electric seats and more. Some cars were even built with analogue instrument clusters and clocks."

He explained that there was debate in the remarketing sector about how much this kind of 'decontenting' mattered to the valuation of a car, and that the effect seemed to vary from model to model.

"We're now in a phase where these cars are starting to leave their initial owners and come onto the used market, and are causing valuation issues among vendors, dealers and consumers.

There is generally agreement in the used sector that few items of equipment add much value to any used car. However, if there is equipment that buyers are expecting missing, it does make a vehicle more difficult to sell. For example, if you're trying to retail a prestige car at three years old that doesn't have heated seats, it's probably going to stick around on your stock list for a while.

So much stock is bought 'blind' by dealers and traders in 2024, most don't realise they have bought a Covid car of this type until it arrives and starts going through their inspection process. The question is what to do at that point? Is the buyer able to request some kind of



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discount? Should they return the car? Can the specification problem be resolved?"

Marcus added that further confusion was caused by the fact that little data was available about these cars, with few manufacturers having kept detailed records covering the ways in which cars were 'decontended'.