

The complaint

Ms S has complained about the damage charges Mitsubishi HC Capital UK PLC trading as Novuna Vehicle Solutions applied when she returned her car.

What happened

Ms S entered into a car finance agreement with Novuna. However, when she returned the car, she was charged £1,666.17 for damage. This was later reduced to £1,201.17, but Ms S feels this is too high.

One of our investigators looked into what had happened. She explained that when a car is returned at the end of a lease agreement, it's standard for it to be assessed, taking into account the fair wear and tear guidance produced by the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA). And, she was satisfied that the charges Ms S had incurred were for damage that fell outside of normal wear and tear.

Ms S disagreed. In summary, she feels the guidance is too strict. She also explained that she isn't a paint expert, so didn't realise the paint was below standard after repairs were carried out.

What I've decided – and why

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Having done so, I'm not upholding it. I know it can be unwelcome to receive a large bill, and I understand Ms S's frustration. However, Novuna is entitled to charge for damage in line with the BVRLA guidelines. This is the industry standard. I'm satisfied that this is what it did here. And there's nothing to suggest any of the 'damage' was actually a manufacturing fault. As regards the paint, I'm satisfied the photos show it is substandard.

Finally, Ms S has suggested that damage shouldn't be charged for, if repairs aren't then carried out. I can't comment on whether or not repairs have been carried out here. But Novuna is entitled to charge, as per the terms and conditions, and it's true to say that any damage will likely reduce the value of the car.

My final decision

For the reasons given above, it's my final decision not to uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms S to accept or reject my decision before 9 June 2025.

Elspeth Wood
Ombudsman