Technicians at JCT600’s Vauxhall dealership in Bradford discovered an unusual fault with a problem airbag – it had been completely eaten by a four week old hamster which was living in the car!

A Chevrolet Spark had been brought into the dealership by a car rental company which reported a short circuit in the passenger airbag.

When the JCT600 team investigated the roof of the car which houses the passenger airbag, hundreds of peanuts fell on their heads! Suspecting that there might be a furry visitor, the team left some bait in the car and by the next morning, something had carefully removed the bait and put all of the peanuts back in the roof! It seems that the car, which was owned by a rental company, could have been the scene of a hamster escape some weeks before.

Luckily, on the second morning, one of the team saw something moving in the boot and two days later (having removed various parts of the car), ‘Sparky’ was eventually caught.
The technicians discovered that not only had the wire to the airbag been chewed through, but the entire airbag along with trim had also been eaten, causing £2,500 worth of damage.

“It really has been quite a trauma, every morning we all rushed over to the car and peered through the windows to see if the nuts had been eaten; and each morning they had been, but with no sign of the culprit,” explained Tony Robinson, service manager at JCT600 Vauxhall Bradford.

“According to the rental company, the car had been rented to a customer with a pregnant hamster, but as she hasn’t claimed Sparky, the hamster has been adopted by our senior service adviser, Zoe Randle.

“Unfortunately, as a result of being a hamster’s home, the Chevrolet needs fairly extensive work, including completely rewiring. The good news is that having spent the day sleeping in a cardboard box in my office recovering from his exploits, Sparky is now happily settled in his new cage at home with Zoe where hopefully he will cause less damage.”

Picture shows: Tony Robinson, service manager at JCT600 Vauxhall Bradford, with senior service adviser, Zoe Randle, who has given Sparky a new home

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