

Inspection Report

15 September 2023



The Skin Lounge

Type of service: Independent Hospital – Intense Pulse Light (IPL) service
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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website <https://www.rqia.org.uk/> [The Independent Health Care Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2005](#) and [Minimum Care Standards for Independent Healthcare Establishments \(July 2014\)](#)

1.0 Service information

<p>Organisation/Registered Provider: Mrs Claire McNulty and Mr Damien McNulty</p> <p>Responsible Persons: Mrs Claire McNulty Mr Damien McNulty</p>	<p>Registered Manager: Mrs Stephanie McAleer</p> <p>Date registered: 18 September 2020</p>
<p>Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Claire McNulty</p>	
<p>Categories of care: Independent Hospital (IH) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using intense light sources PT(IL)</p>	
<p>Brief description of how the service operates: The Skin Lounge provides a range of cosmetic/aesthetic treatments. This inspection focused solely on those treatments using an intense pulse light (IPL) machine that fall within regulated activity and the categories of care for which the establishment is registered with RQIA.</p> <p>Equipment available in the service:</p> <p>IPL equipment: Manufacturer: Lumenis Stellar M22 Model: Multi Platform Serial Number: SN0000180 Wavelength: 400nm – 1200nm</p> <p>The Lumenis Stellar M22 is a platform system where both IPL and laser technology can be utilised. It was confirmed that only the IPL modality is used at The Skin Lounge.</p> <p>Types of IPL treatments provided: Hair removal Skin rejuvenation</p>	

2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by a care inspector on 15 September 2023 from 11.00 am to 1.20 pm.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess progress with areas for improvement identified since the last care inspection and to assess compliance with the legislation and minimum standards.

There was evidence of good practice concerning staff recruitment; authorised operator training; safeguarding; IPL safety; management of medical emergencies; infection prevention and control (IPC); adherence to best practice guidance in relation to COVID-19; the management of clinical records; and effective communication between clients and staff.

Additional areas of good practice identified included maintaining client confidentiality, ensuring the core values of privacy and dignity were upheld and providing the relevant information to allow clients to make informed choices.

No immediate concerns were identified regarding the delivery of front line client care.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA is required to inspect registered services in accordance with legislation. To do this, we gather and review the information we hold about the service, examine a variety of relevant records, meet and talk with staff and management and observe practices on the day of the inspection.

The information obtained is then considered before a determination is made on whether the establishment is operating in accordance with the relevant legislation and minimum standards. Examples of good practice are acknowledged and any areas for improvement are discussed with the person in charge and detailed in the quality improvement plan (QIP).

4.0 What people told us about the service

Clients were not present on the day of the inspection. Client feedback was assessed by reviewing the most recent client satisfaction surveys completed by The Skin Lounge. This area is further discussed in section 5.2.10 of this report.

Posters were issued to The Skin Lounge by RQIA prior to the inspection inviting clients and staff to complete an electronic questionnaire. No completed client or staff questionnaires were submitted to RQIA prior to the inspection.

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

The last inspection to The Skin Lounge was undertaken on 21 September 2022; no areas for improvement were identified.

5.2 Inspection outcome

5.2.1 How does this service ensure that staffing levels are safe to meet the needs of clients and staff are suitably trained?

Mrs McNulty told us there are sufficient staff in the various roles to fulfil the needs of the establishment and clients.

Mrs McNulty informed us that IPL treatments are only carried out by authorised operators. A register of authorised operators for the IPL equipment is maintained and kept up to date.

A review of training records evidenced that authorised operators have up to date training in core of knowledge training, application training for the equipment in use, basic life support, infection prevention and control, fire safety awareness and safeguarding adults at risk of harm in keeping with the RQIA training guidance.

A review of completed induction programmes evidenced that induction training is provided to new staff on commencement of employment.

All other staff employed at the establishment, but not directly involved in the use of the IPL equipment, had received laser safety awareness training.

It was determined that appropriate staffing levels were in place to meet the needs of clients and that staff are suitably trained.

5.2.2 How does the service ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are safe?

A recruitment and selection policy and procedure was in place, which adhered to legislation and best practice guidance for the recruitment of authorised operators. These arrangements will ensure that all required recruitment documentation has been sought and retained for inspection.

There have been no authorised operators recruited since the previous inspection. During discussion Mrs McNulty confirmed that should authorised operators be recruited in the future all recruitment documentation as outlined in Schedule 2 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 would be sought and retained for inspection.

There was evidence of job descriptions and induction checklists for authorised operators.

Discussion with Mrs McNulty confirmed that she had a clear understanding of the legislation and best practice guidance in relation to recruitment and selection.

It was determined that the recruitment of authorised operators complies with the legislation and best practice guidance.

5.2.3 How does the service ensure that it is equipped to manage a safeguarding issue should it arise?

Mrs McNulty stated that IPL treatments are not provided to persons under the age of 18 years.

Policies and procedures were in place for the safeguarding and protection of adults and children at risk of harm. The policies included the types and indicators of abuse and distinct referral pathways in the event of a safeguarding issue arising with an adult or child. The relevant contact details were included for onward referral to the local Health and Social Care Trust should a safeguarding issue arise.

Discussion with Mrs McNulty confirmed that she was aware of the types and indicators of abuse and the actions to be taken in the event of a safeguarding issue being identified.

Review of records demonstrated that Mrs McNulty, as the safeguarding lead, has completed formal level two training in safeguarding adults in keeping with the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) training strategy (revised 2016) and minimum standards.

It was confirmed that copies of the regional policy entitled Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017) and the regional guidance document entitled Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015) were both available for reference.

The service had appropriate arrangements in place to manage a safeguarding issue should it arise.

5.2.4 How does the service ensure that medical emergency procedures are safe?

All authorised operators had up to date training in basic life support and were aware of what action to take in the event of a medical emergency. There was a written protocol in place for dealing with recognised medical emergencies.

It was determined that the service had appropriate arrangements in place to manage a medical emergency.

5.2.5 How does the service ensure that it adheres to infection prevention and control and decontamination procedures?

The IPC arrangements were reviewed throughout the establishment to evidence that the risk of infection transmission to clients, visitors and staff was minimised.

There was an overarching IPC policy and associated procedures in place. A review of these documents demonstrated that they were comprehensive and reflected legislation and best practice guidance.

The IPL treatment room was clean and clutter free. Discussion with Mrs McNulty evidenced that appropriate procedures were in place for the decontamination of the IPL equipment between use. It was noted that fabric towels were placed over the treatment couch and covered with a roll of disposable paper towel. Mrs McNulty was advised that the fabric towels should be replaced after each use; or alternatively the treatment couch is only covered with the disposable paper towel; and following use the paper towel is disposed of and the couch covering cleaned and disinfected. Mrs McNulty stated that in the interest of good infection prevention and control the use of fabric towels would discontinue with immediate effect and that the couch would be cleaned and disinfected with new paper towels renewed after each use.

Hand washing facilities were available and adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) were provided. It was noted that a hand hygiene poster was not on display near the handwashing facilities and the waste receptacle in the treatment room was not pedal or sensor operated. Advice and guidance was provided to Mrs McNulty who was very receptive to the advice offered. Mrs McNulty confirmed that a lidded pedal operated waste receptacle and a hand hygiene poster would be put in place.

As discussed previously, all authorised operators had up to date training in IPC.

Addressing the areas identified will strengthen the arrangements to ensure good IPC and decontamination practices are in place.

5.2.6 Are arrangements in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission?

The management of operations to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission were discussed with Mrs McNulty who outlined the measures taken by The Skin Lounge to ensure current best practice measures are in place.

It was determined the management of COVID-19 was in line with best practice guidance and appropriate actions had been taken in this regard.

5.2.7 How does the service ensure the environment is safe?

The premises were maintained to a good standard of maintenance and décor. Cleaning schedules for the establishment were in place.

Observations made evidenced that a carbon dioxide (CO₂) fire extinguisher is available which has been serviced within the last year.

It was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to maintain the environment.

5.2.8 How does the service ensure that IPL procedures are safe?

A laser safety file was in place which contained the relevant information in relation to the IPL equipment. There was written confirmation of the appointment and duties of a certified laser protection advisor (LPA) which is reviewed on an annual basis. The service level agreement between the establishment and the LPA was reviewed and this expires on 7 September 2024.

Up to date, local rules were in place which have been developed by the LPA.

The establishment's LPA completed a risk assessment of the premises on 11 September 2022 which had been reviewed by the LPA on 8 September 2023; and all recommendations made by the LPA have been addressed.

Mrs McNulty confirmed that IPL procedures are carried out following medical treatment protocols. The medical treatment protocols had been produced by a named registered medical practitioner. It was demonstrated that the protocols contained the relevant information about the treatments being provided and are due to expire during September 2024. It was established that systems are in place to review the medical treatment protocols when due.

Mrs McNulty as the laser protection supervisor (LPS) and authorised operator, has overall responsibility for safety during IPL treatments and a list of authorised operators is maintained. Authorised operators had signed to state that they had read and understood the local rules and medical treatment protocols.

When the IPL equipment is in use, the safety of all persons in the controlled area is the responsibility of the LPS.

The environment in which the IPL equipment is used was found to be safe and controlled to protect other persons while treatment is in progress. The controlled area is clearly defined and not used for other purposes, or as access to other areas, when treatment is being carried out.

The door to the treatment room is locked when the IPL equipment is in use but can be opened from the outside in the event of an emergency. Mrs McNulty was aware that the laser safety warning sign should only be displayed when the IPL equipment is in use and removed when not in use.

The IPL machine is operated using a keypad code. Arrangements are in place for the safe custody of the key and keypad code when not in use. Protective eyewear is available for the client and operator as outlined in the local rules.

The Skin Lounge has an IPL register. Mrs McNulty told us that the authorised operators complete the register every time the equipment is operated. The register reviewed included:

- the name of the person treated
- the date
- the operator
- the treatment given
- the precise exposure
- any accident or adverse incident

There are arrangements in place to service and maintain IPL equipment in line with the manufacturer's guidance. The most recent service report of the IPL machine was reviewed.

It was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to safely operate the IPL equipment.

5.2.9 How does the service ensure that clients have a planned programme of care and have sufficient information to consent to treatment?

Mrs McNulty confirmed that clients are provided with an initial consultation to discuss their treatment and any concerns they may have. There is written information for clients that provides a clear explanation of any treatment and includes effects, side-effects, risks, complications and expected outcomes.

The service has a list of fees available for each IPL procedure offered. Fees for treatments are agreed during the initial consultation and may vary depending on the type of treatment provided and the individual requirements of the client.

During the initial consultation each client's personal information is recorded including their general practitioner (GP) details in keeping with legislative requirements and clients are asked to complete a health questionnaire.

Three client care records were reviewed. There was an accurate and up to date treatment record for every client which included:

- client details
- medical history
- signed consent form
- skin assessment (where appropriate)
- patch test (where appropriate)
- record of treatment delivered including number of shots and fluence settings (where appropriate)

Observations made evidenced that client records are securely stored. A policy and procedure was available which included the creation, storage, recording, retention and disposal of records and data protection.

The service has a policy for advertising and marketing.

It was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to ensure that clients have a planned programme of care and have sufficient information to consent to treatment.

5.2.10 How does the service ensure that clients are treated with dignity, respect and are involved in the decision making process?

Discussion with Mrs McNulty regarding the consultation and treatment process confirmed that clients are treated with dignity and respect. The consultation and treatment are provided in a private room with the client and authorised operator present.

Information is provided to the client in verbal and written form at the initial consultation and subsequent treatment sessions to allow the client to make choices about their care and treatment and provide informed consent.

Mrs McNulty told us that clients are provided with the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey when their treatment is complete. It was noted that the client satisfaction feedback had not yet been analysed and a summative report produced. This area was discussed with Mrs McNulty and following the inspection RQIA received a copy of the anonymised summary report. Review of the client satisfaction summary report found that clients were highly satisfied with the quality of treatment, information and care received.

It was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to ensure that clients are treated with dignity, respect and are involved in decisions regarding their choice of treatment.

5.2.11 How does the registered provider assure themselves of the quality of the services provided?

Where the business entity operating the service is a corporate body or partnership or an individual owner who is not in day to day management of the establishment unannounced quality monitoring visits by the registered provider must be undertaken and documented every six months; as required by Regulation 26 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

Mrs McNulty was in day to day management of The Skin Lounge therefore the unannounced quality monitoring visits by the registered provider are not applicable.

Policies and procedures were available outlining the arrangements associated with IPL treatments. Observations made confirmed that policies and procedures were indexed, dated and systematically reviewed on a three yearly basis or more frequently if required.

The arrangements for the management of complaints and incidents were reviewed to ensure that they were being managed in keeping with legislation and best practice guidance.

The complaints policy and procedure provided clear instructions for clients and staff to follow. Clients were made aware of how to make a complaint by way of the client's guide.

Arrangements were in place to record any complaint received in a complaints register and retain all relevant records including details of any investigation undertaken, all communication with complainants, the outcome of the complaint and the complainant's level of satisfaction.

A review of records confirmed that no complaints had been received since the previous inspection. Mrs McNulty evidenced a good awareness of complaints management.

Discussion with Mrs McNulty confirmed that an incident policy and procedure was in place which includes the reporting arrangements to RQIA. Mrs McNulty confirmed that incidents would be effectively documented and investigated in line with legislation. All relevant incidents are reported to RQIA and other relevant organisations in accordance with legislation and RQIA [Statutory Notification of Incidents and Deaths](#). Arrangements are in place to audit adverse incidents to identify trends and improve service provided.

Mrs McNulty demonstrated a clear understanding of her role and responsibility in accordance with legislation.

Mrs McNulty confirmed that the statement of purpose and client's guide are kept under review, revised and updated when necessary and are available on request.

The RQIA certificate of registration was displayed in a prominent place.

Observation of insurance documentation confirmed that current insurance policies were in place.

It was determined that suitable arrangements are in place to enable the Mrs McNulty to assure themselves of the quality of the services provided.

5.2.12 Does the service have suitable arrangements in place to record equality data?

The arrangements in place in relation to the equality of opportunity for clients and the importance of staff being aware of equality legislation and recognising and responding to the diverse needs of clients was discussed with Mrs McNulty.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	0	0

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Mrs McNulty, Responsible Person, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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