

# Inspection Report

## 25 November 2021



## The Skin Lounge

Type of service: Independent Hospital –Intense Pulse Light (IPL)  
Unit 11, Torrent Valley Business Park, Donaghmore, BT70 3BF  
Tel No: 028 8776 7955

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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 the [Minimum Care Standards for Independent Healthcare Establishments \(July 2014\)](#)

## 1.0 Service information

<p><b>Organisation/Registered Provider:</b> Mr Damien McNulty Mrs Claire McNulty</p> <p><b>Responsible Individuals:</b> Mr Damien McNulty Mrs Claire McNulty</p>	<p><b>Registered Manager:</b> Claire McNulty – acting</p> <p><b>Date registered:</b> Awaiting application</p>
<p><b>Person in charge at the time of inspection:</b> Mrs Claire McNulty</p>	
<p><b>Categories of care:</b> Independent Hospital (IH) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using intense light sources PT(IL)</p>	
<p><b>Brief description of how the service operates:</b> 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>On 27 April 2021 RQIA was notified that Ms Stephanie McAleer, Registered Manager, is on a period of planned extended leave and that Mrs Claire McNulty would assume the position of acting manager. Mrs McNulty stated that it is her intention to come forward as the registered manager in the future.</p> <p><b>Equipment available in the service:</b></p> <p><b>IPL equipment:</b> Manufacturer: Viora Model: Multiplatform IPL Serial Number: U20-16460005</p> <p><b>Laser protection advisor (LPA):</b> Mr Ifran Azam (Lasermet)</p> <p><b>Laser protection supervisor (LPS):</b> Mrs Claire McNulty</p> <p><b>Medical support services:</b> Dr Paul Myers (Lasermet)</p>	

**Authorised operators:**

Mrs Claire McNulty

Mrs Stephanie McAleer

**Types of IPL treatments provided:**

Hair removal and skin rejuvenation

## 2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by a care inspector on 25 November 2021 from 11:00 am to 12.45 pm.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Northern Ireland (NI) Executive issued The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. These regulations specified close contact services that should close for identified periods of time; as a result of these periods of closure The Skin Lounge was not inspected by RQIA during the 2020-21 inspection year.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess progress with areas for improvement identified during 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); 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 and client feedback was assessed by reviewing the most recent patient satisfaction surveys completed by The Skin Lounge.

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 28 August 2020; 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?

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

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

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

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.

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

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

There were robust recruitment and selection policies and procedures, that adhered to legislation and best practice guidance should authorised operators be recruited in the future. This would ensure that all required recruitment documentation would be sought and retained for inspection.

There have been no authorised users 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.

The recruitment of authorised operators complies with the legislation and best practice guidance.

### **5.2.3 How does the service ensure that 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 2 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 was aware of what action to take in the event of a medical emergency. There was a resuscitation policy in place and a review of this evidenced that it was comprehensive, reflected legislation and best practice guidance.

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 in all areas.

The IPL treatment room was clean and clutter free. Discussion with Mrs McNulty evidenced that appropriate procedures were in place for the decontamination of equipment between use. Hand washing facilities were available and adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) were provided. As discussed previously, authorised operators has up to date training in infection prevention and control.

The service had appropriate arrangements in place in relation to IPC and decontamination

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

COVID-19 has been declared as a public health emergency and we all need to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19, and in particular, businesses need to consider the risks to their clients and staff.

The management of operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic were discussed with Mrs McNulty who outlined the measures that will be taken by The Skin Lounge to ensure current best practice measures are in place. Appropriate arrangements are in place in relation to maintaining social distancing; implementation of enhanced IPC procedures; and the client pathway to include COVID-19 screening prior to attending appointments.

The proposed management of COVID-19 was in line with best practice guidance and it was determined that appropriate actions had been taken in this regard.

### **5.2.7 How does the service ensure the environment is safe?**

The service has one treatment room and access to storage rooms. 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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) 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 IPL equipment. It was identified that a new IPL machine has been installed since the previous inspection. There was written confirmation of the appointment and duties of a certified LPA which is reviewed on an annual basis. The service level agreement between the establishment and the LPA was reviewed and this expires on 12 August 2022.

Up to date, local rules, in respect of the new Viora IPL machine were in place which had been developed by the LPA.

The installation report of the Viora IPL was reviewed and was dated 12 April 2021. Mrs McNulty confirmed that there are arrangements in place to service and maintain the IPL equipment in line with the manufacturer's guidance.

The establishment's LPA completed a risk assessment of the premises on 6 May 2021 and all recommendations made by the LPA have been addressed.

Mrs McNulty told us that IPL procedures are carried out following medical treatment protocols. The medical treatment protocols had been produced by named registered medical practitioner and systems are in place to review the medical treatment protocols when due. The medical treatment protocols contained the relevant information about the treatments being provided.

Mrs McNulty, as the laser protection supervisor (LPS) 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 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.

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

The controlled area is clearly defined and not used for other purposes, or as access to areas, when treatment is being carried out. Authorised operators were aware that the laser safety warning signs should only be displayed when the IPL equipment is in use and removed when not in use.

The Skin Lounge has an IPL register, Mrs McNulty stated that the register is completed every time the equipment is operated and was seen to include:

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

It was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to 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?**

Clients are provided with an initial consultation to discuss their treatment and any concerns they may have. Written information is provided to the client pre and post treatment which outlines the treatment provided, any risks, complications and expected outcomes. The service has a list of fees available for each laser and IPL procedure.

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, clients are asked to complete a health questionnaire. There are systems in place to contact the client's general practitioner (GP), with their consent, for further information if necessary.

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.

There is written information for clients that provides a clear explanation of any treatment and includes effects, side-effects, risks, complications and expected outcomes. Information is jargon free, accurate, accessible, up-to-date and includes the cost of the treatment.

The service has a policy for advertising and marketing which is in line with legislation.

**5.2.10 How does the service ensure that clients are treated with dignity respect and involvement 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.

Appropriate measures are in place to maintain client confidentiality and observations made evidenced that client care records were stored securely in a lockable storage case.

Mrs McNulty told us that she encourages clients to complete a satisfaction survey when their treatment is complete and that the results of these will be collated to provide a summary report to be made available to clients and other interested parties. Mrs McNulty confirmed that an action plan would be developed to inform and improve services provided, if appropriate.

**5.2.11 How does the responsible individual assure themselves of the quality of the services provided?**

Where the entity operating the service is a corporate body or partnership or an individual owner who is not in day to day management of the service, Regulation 26 unannounced quality monitoring visits must be undertaken and documented every six months. Mrs McNulty is in day to day charge of the service, therefore Regulation 26 unannounced quality monitoring visits do not apply.

Policies and procedures were available outlining the arrangements associated with the 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.

A copy of the complaints procedure was available in the establishment. Mrs McNulty evidenced a good awareness of complaints management.

Mrs McNulty confirmed that a system was in place to ensure that notifiable events were investigated and reported to RQIA or other relevant bodies as appropriate.

Mrs McNulty demonstrated a clear understanding of her role and responsibility in accordance with legislation. Information requested by RQIA has been submitted within the specified timeframes. Mrs McNulty confirmed that the statement of purpose and client's guide are kept under review, revised and updated when necessary and 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.

**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 patients and the importance of staff being aware of equality legislation and recognising and responding to the diverse needs of patients was discussed with Mrs McNulty.

**6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement**

	<b>Regulations</b>	<b>Standards</b>
<b>Total number of Areas for Improvement</b>	0	0

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



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