The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Inspection Report

15 May 2025

On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal

Type of service: Independent Hospital-Cosmetic Laser\Intense Pulsed Light
Address: 51b O'Neill Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 6UN
Telephone number: 079 4304 1853

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

Organisation/Registered Provider: Mr David Raphael	**Registered Manager:** Mr David Raphael **Date registered:** 04 February 2020
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mr David Raphael	
Categories of care: Independent Hospital (IH) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using Class 3B or Class 4 lasers PT(L) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using intense light sources PT(IL)	
Brief description of how the service operates: On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal is registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) as an independent hospital (IH) with a prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using Class 3B or Class 4 lasers PT (L) and prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using intense light sources PT (IL) categories. On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal provides a range of cosmetic/aesthetic treatments. This inspection focused solely on those treatments using a Class 4 laser and an intense pulse light (IPL) machine that fall within regulated activity and the categories of care for which the establishment is registered with RQIA. **Equipment available in the service:** **Laser equipment:** Manufacturer: Lynton Lasers Model: Luminette Q Serial Number: LETQ-096-19 Laser Class: 4 Wavelength: 532nm and 1064nm	

IPL equipment:
Manufacturer: Lynton
Model: Excelight Flashlamp system
Serial Number: EXC-199-21
Wavelength: 585nm and 650nm

Types of laser treatments provided:
Tattoo removal
Fungal nail treatment
Skin pigmented lesion removal

Types of IPL treatment provided:
Hair reduction
Skin rejuvenation
Vascular lesion treatment
Pigmented lesion treatments
Acne treatments

2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by two care inspectors on 15 May 2025 from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.

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 authorised operator training; safeguarding; laser and IPL safety; management of medical emergencies; infection prevention and control; 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 client satisfaction surveys completed by On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal, this area is further discussed in section 5.2.9 in this report.

Posters were issued to On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal 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 On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal was undertaken on 12 June 2023; 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?

Mr Raphael told us that laser and IPL treatments are carried out by him as the authorised operator. The register of authorised operators for the laser and IPL machines reflects that Mr Raphael is the authorised operator.

A review of training records evidenced that Mr Raphael has 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.

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?

Mr Raphael told us he does not intend to employ any other authorised operators. During discussion Mr Raphael 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.

Discussion with Mr Raphael confirmed that he had a clear understanding of the legislation and best practice guidance in relation to recruitment and selection.

Arrangements are in place to ensure the recruitment of any authorised operator in the future 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?

Mr Raphael confirmed that laser treatments are offered to adults and also to persons under the age of 18 years only with specific arrangements in place.

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 Mr Raphael confirmed that he 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 Mr Raphael, 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 a copy of the regional policy entitled Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (October 2024) and the regional guidance document entitled Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015) were available for reference.

It was determined that 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?

Mr Raphael 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 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 (IPC) 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 laser and IPL treatment room was clean and clutter free. Discussion with Mr Raphael 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, Mr Raphael had up to date training in IPC.

Mr Raphael is aware that the Department of Health (DOH) and Public Health Agency (PHA) websites provide advisory information, guidance and alerts with regards to IPC.

It was determined that the service had appropriate arrangements in place in relation to IPC and decontamination.

5.2.6 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.

5.2.7 How does the service ensure that laser and IPL procedures are safe?

A laser safety file was in place which contained the relevant information in relation to laser and 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 23 April 2026.

Up to date, local rules were in place which have been developed by the LPA. Two sets of local rules were in place; one for the laser machine and one for the IPL machine. The local rules contained the relevant information about the laser and IPL equipment being used.

The establishment's LPA completed a risk assessment of the premises during April 2025 and all recommendations made by the LPA have been addressed.

Mr Raphael confirmed that laser and 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 April 2026. It was established that systems are in place to review the medical treatment protocols when due.

Mr Raphael, as the laser protection supervisor (LPS) and only authorised operator has overall responsibility for safety during laser and IPL treatments and had signed to state that they had read and understood the local rules and medical treatment protocols.

When the laser and 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 laser and 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 areas, when treatment is being carried out.

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

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

On Second Thought Laser Tattoo Removal has a register for each laser and IPL machine.

Mr Raphael told us that they complete the relevant section of the register every time the equipment is operated. The registers reviewed included:

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

However, it was noted that the type of treatment given was not fully outlined in the registers. It was advised full details on the treatment given should be recorded in the register. Following inspection confirmation was provided that action had been taken to address this matter.

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

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

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

Mr Raphael 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 pre and post treatment information.

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 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 mostly 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)

However, it was noted that details of the type of treatment provided was not fully outlined in the client treatment record or the consent form. It was advised the type of treatment should be fully recorded in the client record and the consent form. Following inspection confirmation was provided that action had been taken to address this matter.

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. Records were reviewed to assess they were maintained in accordance with legislative requirements and best practice guidelines.

On discussion with Mr Raphael it was noted that the service was not registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). Mr Raphael confirmed that he had previously contacted the ICO who indicated that the service did not require to register. The ICO upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals. As On Second Thought laser Tattoo Removal holds clients' personal information, Mr Raphael was advised to contact the ICO to seek further clarification on the matter. Following the inspection Mr Raphael confirmed he had contacted the ICO and provided evidence that On Second Thought Laser Removal had registered with the ICO from 16 May 2025. 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.

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

Discussion with Mr Raphael 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.

Mr Raphael told us that clients are provided with the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey when their treatment is complete.

However the results of these had not yet been collated to provide an anonymised summary report which should be made available to clients and other interested parties. Advice was provided on this matter. Following inspection confirmation was provided that action had been taken to address this matter. Mr Raphael confirmed that an action plan would be developed to inform and improve services provided, if appropriate.

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.

5.2.10 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 practice, 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.

Mr Raphael was in day to day management of the practice, therefore the unannounced quality monitoring visits by the registered provider are not applicable.

Policies and procedures were available outlining the arrangements associated with the laser and 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 to follow. The recording of complaints was discussed and advice was provided to ensure expressions of dissatisfaction were fully recorded as complaints and how to ensure clients were made aware of how to make a complaint. Mr Raphael was receptive to this advice. Following inspection confirmation was provided that action had been taken to address this matter.

Discussion with Mr Raphael confirmed that an incident policy and procedure was in place which includes the reporting arrangements to RQIA. He 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.

Mr Raphael demonstrated a clear understanding of his role and responsibility in accordance with legislation.

Mr Raphael confirmed that the statement of purpose are kept under review, revised and updated when necessary and available on request. However the client guide was not available during the inspection. Following inspection confirmation was provided that action had been taken to address this matter.

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 Mr Raphael to assure themselves of the quality of the services provided.

5.2.11 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 Mr Raphael.

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 Mr Raphael Registered Person, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JA

Tel 028 9536 1111
Email info@rqia.org.uk
Web www.rqia.org.uk
@RQIANews

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care