

Inspection Report

25 September 2024



RH Laser Clinic

Type of service: Independent Hospital-Cosmetic Laser\Intense Pulsed Light
Address: Unit 4, 24 Market Square, Magherafelt, BT45 6ED
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www.rqia.org.uk

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/Provider: Rebecca Higgins</p> <p>Responsible Person: Rebecca Higgins</p>	<p>Registered Manager: Rebecca Higgins</p> <p>Date registered: 4 May 2023</p>
<p>Person in charge at the time of inspection: Rebecca Higgins</p>	
<p>Categories of care: Independent Hospital (IH) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using Class 3B or Class 4 lasers PT(L)</p>	
<p>Brief description of how the service operates: RH Laser is registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) as an Independent Hospital (IH) with the following categories of care: PT(L) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using Class 3B or Class 4 lasers.</p> <p>RH laser also provides a range of cosmetic/aesthetic treatments. This inspection focused solely on those treatments using a Class 4 laser 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>Laser equipment: Manufacturer:Skyncare Model:Ultra Diode Serial Number: 22121Q005 Laser Class: 4 Wavelength: 810nm</p> <p>Manufacturer:Skyncare Model: Biocare Ink Serial Number:2301LA084 Laser Class: 4 Wavelength: 1064nm and 537nm</p> <p>Types of laser treatments provided: Ultra Diode- Hair removal Biocare Ink- Tattoo removal, Carbon facials, Onychomycosis therapy</p>	

2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by a care inspector on 25 September 2024 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 staff recruitment; authorised operator training; safeguarding; laser and IPL safety; management of medical emergencies; infection prevention and control; 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. Ms Higgins confirmed that client feedback systems are still under development through a client satisfaction survey. This is further discussed in section 5.2.10 of this report.

Posters were issued to RH Laser by RQIA prior to the inspection inviting clients and staff to complete an electronic questionnaire.

Fourteen clients submitted responses. Client responses indicated that they felt their care was safe and effective, that they were treated with compassion and that the service was well led. All clients indicated that they were very satisfied with each of these areas of their care. Ten of client responses included comments, all of which were very positive and outlined that they found Ms Higgins to be very knowledgeable, professional and attentive in the delivery of the laser service.

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 RH Laser was undertaken on 4 May 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?

Ms Higgins told us that laser treatments are carried out by her as the authorised operator. The register of authorised operators for the laser machines reflects that Ms Higgins is the authorised operator.

A review of training records evidenced that Ms Higgins 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?

As discussed Ms Higgins advised that she does not employ any staff and does not intend to recruit any staff in the near future. Ms Higgins was advised to develop recruitment and selection policies and procedures that adhere 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.

Ms Higgins 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 in the future will comply 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?

Ms Higgins stated that laser treatments are routinely not provided to persons under the age of 18 years. However it was confirmed that one client is a 16 year old.

A policy and procedure were in place for the safeguarding and protection of adults and children at risk of harm. The policy 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 Ms Higgins 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 Ms Higgins, 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 advised that as laser treatment was provided to under 18 year olds, safeguarding children training must be undertaken also. Ms Higgins provided assurance on this matter.

It was confirmed that a copy 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 available for reference.

As a result of the assurances provided, 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?

Ms Higgins 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 treatment room was clean and clutter free. Discussion with Ms Higgins 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, Ms Higgins had up to date training in IPC.

It was determined that 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?

The management of operations to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission were discussed with Ms Higgins who outlined the measures taken by RH Laser 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, however it had been not been serviced within the last year. Ms Higgins was advised the CO₂ fire extinguisher must be serviced annually. Ms Higgins gave assurances on this matter.

As a result of the assurances provided, it was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to maintain the environment.

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

A laser safety file was in place which contained the relevant information in relation to laser 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 March 2025.

Up to date, local rules were in place which have been developed by the LPA. The local rules contained the relevant information about the laser equipment being used. It was advised to update RQIA's address in the adverse incident section of the local rules. Ms Higgins gave assurances on this matter.

The establishment's LPA completed a risk assessment of the premises during July 2023 and all recommendations made by the LPA have been addressed.

Ms Higgins confirmed that laser 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 March 2025. It was established that systems are in place to review the medical treatment protocols when due. It was advised to ensure the treatment protocols reflect the provision of treatment to under 18 year olds.

Ms Higgins confirmed she will follow this up with the appointed medical support service.

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

When the laser 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 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 equipment is in use but can be opened from the outside in the event of an emergency. Ms Higgins was aware that the laser safety warning sign should only be displayed when the laser equipment is in use and removed when not in use.

The lasers 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. It was advised to label the protective eyewear for client and authorised operator use.

RH Laser has two laser registers, one for each laser. One laser register had the name of the laser on the front, the other did not. It was advised to title each laser register with the name of the laser it was associated with. Ms Higgins addressed this during the inspection.

Ms Higgins 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 treatment given
- the precise exposure
- any accident or adverse incident

It was noted that details of the area of the body treated was outlined in the Ultra Diode laser register, however the area treated was not outlined for the Biocare Ink laser register. It was advised to include details of the area of the body treated in both laser registers. Ms Higgins gave assurances on this matter.

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

As a result of the actions taken and assurances provided, it was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to operate the laser 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?

Ms Higgins 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 laser 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.

Four client care records were reviewed. There was an accurate and up to date treatment record for three of the four clients 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)

One client record had not been fully completed. Ms Higgins was advised to ensure client records outline all of the above information and to establish a regular client record audit which should be made available for inspection. Ms Higgins was responsive to the advice and agreed to action same.

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.

As a result of the assurances provided, 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 Ms Higgins 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.

As discussed Ms Higgins confirmed that clients will be provided with the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey when their treatment is complete. Ms Higgins confirmed that the results of these will be collated to provide an anonymised summary report and made available to clients and other interested parties. Ms Higgins 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.

5.2.11 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 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.

Ms Higgins 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 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 patients and staff to follow. It was noted that the RQIA address was not up to date. Ms Higgins gave assurances to RQIA on this matter. 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.

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

Ms Higgins demonstrated a clear understanding of her role and responsibility in accordance with legislation.

Ms Higgins 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.

As a result of the assurances provided, it was determined that suitable arrangements are in place to enable the registered person 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 Ms Higgins.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

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



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