Inspection Report

3 September 2026



The Skin Health Clinic

Type of service: Independent Hospital-Cosmetic Laser \ Intense Pulsed Light
Address: 19 Lower Catherine Street, Newry, BT35 6BE
Telephone number: 028 3082 8808

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

Provider: The Skin Health Clinic LTD **Responsible Individual:** Mrs Victoria Shields	**Registered Manager:** Mrs Victoria Shields **Date registered:** 17 May 2023
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Victoria Shields	
Categories of care: Independent Hospital (IH) 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)	
Brief description of how the service operates: The Skin Health Clinic 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 and PT(IL) Prescribed techniques or prescribed technology: establishments using intense light sources. The Skin Health Clinic also provides a range of skin 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:** **Multiplatform equipment:** Manufacturer: Inmode Model: Optimas Serial Number: M34325504 Laser Class: 4 Wavelength: 450-1200nm Handpieces: Two: one for laser treatments and one for IPL treatments The Inmode Optimus is a multi-platform machine that is capable of operating as a laser and an IPL by changing the hand piece.	

Type of laser treatments provided:
Hair removal

Types of IPL treatments provided:
Pigmentation
Vascular
Skin Rejuvenation
Acne

2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by two care inspectors on 3 September 2026 from 10.00 am to 12.30 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 (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 client satisfaction surveys completed by The Skin Health Clinic. This matter is discussed further in section 5.2.9.

Posters were issued to The Skin Health Clinic 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 Health Clinic was undertaken on 4 August 2025; 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 Shields told us there are sufficient staff in the various roles to fulfil the needs of the establishment and clients.

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

Mrs Shields confirmed that an induction programme and training will be provided to newly recruited authorised operators on commencement of employment.

A review of training records evidenced that authorised operators haveup to date training in core of knowledge , application training for the equipment in use, basic life support, and fire safety awareness in keeping with RQIA training guidance. A number of training records with regard to IPC and safeguarding adults at risk of harm had exceeded their expiry date. Advice and guidance was provided to Mrs Shields in this regard. Following the inspection, RQIA received confirmation that this matter had been addressed.

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

It was determined that appropriate staffing levels were in place to meet the needs of clients and, as a result of the action taken following the inspection, that staff are suitably trained.

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

Recruitment and selection policies and procedures were in place, which adhered to legislation and best practice guidance for the recruitment of authorised operators.

There have been no authorised operators recruited since the previous inspection. During discussion, Mrs Shields 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 Mrs Shields 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 Shields stated that laser and IPL treatments are not provided to persons under the age of 18 years.

A policy and procedure was in place for the safeguarding and protection of adults 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. 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 Shields 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.

As discussed in section 5.2.1, following the inspection it was confirmed that authorised operators had up to date adult safeguarding training. Mrs Shields, 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 guidance document entitled Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015) was available for reference.

As a result of the action taken following the inspection, 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?

All authorised operators had up to date training in basic life support and Mrs Shields confirmed authorised operators 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 (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 Mrs Shields 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. Cleaning schedules for the establishment were in place. As discussed in section 5.2.1, following the inspection it was confirmed that authorised operators had up to date training in IPC.

Mrs Shields 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.

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

It was confirmed that the fire risk assessment had been reviewed since the previous inspection.

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 the multiplatform 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 during January 2027.

Up to date local rules were in place which have been developed by the LPA. The local rules contained the relevant information about the multiplatform equipment being used.

The establishment's LPA completed a risk assessment of the premises during March 2026 and all recommendations made by the LPA have been addressed.

Mrs Shields 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 January 2027. It was established that systems are in place to review the medical treatment protocols when due.

Mrs Shields, as the laser protection supervisor (LPS), has overall responsibility for safety during laser and 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 multiplatform equipment is in use, the safety of all persons in the controlled area is the responsibility of the LPS.

The environment in which the multiplatform 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, whilst treatment is carried out.

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

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

The Skin Health Clinic has a laser and an IPL register.

Mrs Shields told us authorised operators complete the relevant section of the registers 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

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

It was determined that appropriate arrangements were in place to operate the multiplatform 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?

Mrs Shields 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.

One client care record was 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.

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

Discussion with Mrs Shields 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 Shields told us that clients are provided with the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey when their treatment is complete. The results of these are collated to provide an anonymised summary report which is made available to clients and other interested parties. Mrs Shields confirmed that an action plan would be developed to inform and improve services provided, if appropriate.

Review of the most recent client satisfaction report, dated August 2026, 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.

5.2.10 How does the registered provider 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, 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 Shields was in day to day management of the establishment, 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 and staff to follow up. Mrs Shields was advised to further develop the complaints policy and procedure in keeping with the DoH complaints guidance which was updated during February 2026. Mrs Shields was receptive to this advice. 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.

Discussion with Mrs Shields confirmed that no complaints had been received since the previous inspection.

Discussion with Mrs Shields confirmed that an incident policy and procedure was in place which includes the reporting arrangements to RQIA. Mrs Shields confirmed that incidents would be effectively documented and investigated in line with legislation and 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 Shields demonstrated a clear understanding of her role and responsibility in accordance with legislation.

Mrs Shields 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.

It was determined that suitable arrangements are in place to enable Mrs Shields, Responsible Individual to assure herselfof 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 Mrs Shields.

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 Mrs Shields, Responsible Individual, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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