

Medical cannabis remains a complex and often misunderstood treatment option within the UK healthcare landscape. Despite its legal status for medical use in Great Britain, real-world access—especially through the NHS—is limited. This creates a growing private market where clinics offer consultations and prescriptions for medical cannabis products, often under considerable variation in service quality, transparency, and regulatory oversight.

If you're considering booking with a medical cannabis clinic, it's crucial to arm yourself with the right questions and information. This blog post walks you through key aspects to clarify before proceeding, ensuring you understand the legal framework, regulatory environment, pricing transparency, and the credentials of the healthcare professionals involved.



## Legality vs Real-World Access

Since November 2018, medical cannabis products can legally be prescribed by specialist doctors in the UK. However, NHS prescribing remains extremely limited due to the lack of robust clinical evidence approved by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and the high cost of products.

Many patients find the NHS route difficult or impossible to access, leading them to private clinics where they can consult specialists who may prescribe medical cannabis off-NHS funding. This is legal but comes with important caveats:

- Prescriptions must be made by a doctor on the General Medical Council (GMC) Specialist Register.
- Private prescriptions incur out-of-pocket costs that can be considerable and ongoing.
- Regulatory authorities such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England monitor clinical services but do not regulate the products themselves.

This divide between legality and practical availability means that, when dealing with private clinics, patients should be vigilant about understanding exactly what they're paying for, who is prescribing, and how ongoing monitoring is arranged.

## Who Can Prescribe and Why It Matters

Only doctors on the GMC Specialist Register are currently permitted to prescribe medical cannabis products in the UK. This is a legal requirement reflecting the need for specialist oversight on a treatment area that requires careful consideration due to limited evidence and potential side effects.

Important questions you should ask a clinic to confirm prescribing legitimacy include:

- **Who is the prescribing doctor?** Get the full name, GMC number, and specialty.
- **Are they on the GMC Specialist Register?** You can verify this independently on the GMC website.
- **Is the prescribing part of a multidisciplinary team (MDT) review?** Complex cases usually need input from relevant specialists.

Clinics that <https://todaynews.co.uk/2026/08/10/inside-the-uks-private-medical-cannabis-clinics-how-the-sector-actually-works/> cannot provide these details transparently should raise a red flag.

## Regulation and CQC Oversight (England)

In England, any healthcare provider offering medical cannabis consultations and prescribing must register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC regulates the quality and safety of the clinical service but does not assess the efficacy of prescribed cannabis products.

Concerns about video consultations and remote prescribing have grown, especially amid the rise in telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clinics must declare these practices to the CQC and comply with strict guidelines to ensure patient safety.

When enquiring with a clinic, ask:

- **Are video consultations offered?** If yes, what platforms are used, and how is patient identity verified?
- **Is remote prescribing part of their service?** Confirm that this is declared to and compliant with the CQC.
- **Does the clinic have a current CQC registration certificate?** You can check this on the CQC website.

## Pricing Transparency – Avoiding the Common Mistake

A frequent complaint from patients is encountering clinics that do not clearly list consultation fees, prescription costs, or ongoing service charges. Often, hidden fees or vague statements like “prices vary” cause confusion and surprise later.



Before booking, it is essential to have a clear and written understanding of all costs involved, including but not limited to:

- Initial consultation fee (in-person or video)
- Follow-up consultation costs
- Prescription fees—both consultation-related and medicine supply costs
- Potential costs for additional monitoring or tests
- Annual service costs if the clinic offers ongoing care packages

Request a full annual cost breakdown, not just the cost of one consultation or prescription. This will help you realistically budget for the treatment journey and avoid surprises.

## Sample Questions on Pricing

- What is the full price for the initial consultation, and does it include all assessments?
- What is the cost of a prescription for medical cannabis products? Are prices disclosed upfront or do they vary?
- Are follow-up consultations chargeable, and what are those fees?
- Is there an annual package or membership fee for ongoing care and monitoring?
- Are the costs exclusive of any dispensing or delivery fees for the cannabis products?

## Checklist: Essential Questions to Ask Your Medical Cannabis Clinic

**Category Question** Why it Matters **Prescribing Doctor Identity** Who is the prescribing doctor and are they on the GMC Specialist Register? Ensures legal and specialist oversight of your prescription. **MDT Review** Is your case reviewed by a multidisciplinary team? Ensures comprehensive assessment and safer prescribing decisions.

**Regulation & CQC** Is the clinic registered with CQC and compliant with remote consultation rules? Confirms clinic safety standards and regulatory compliance. **Video Consultation** Do you offer video consultations and how is patient identity verified? Ensures remote consultations are safe and valid. **Pricing Transparency** What are all consultation, prescription, and ongoing costs? Can you have a full annual cost breakdown? Prevents unexpected financial burden and allows informed decision-making.

# Conclusion

Booking with a medical cannabis clinic is a significant decision that demands careful scrutiny and due diligence. While medical cannabis is legally prescribable in the UK, practical access depends heavily on private providers, who operate under varying standards. Understanding who prescribes your medication, how they are regulated, what processes they use—including video or remote consultations—and having full pricing transparency are essential steps to protecting yourself as a patient.

Before booking, use the questions and checklist we've outlined to cut through marketing jargon and ambiguous claims. Doing this not only improves your chances of getting safe and appropriate care but also gives you clarity and confidence on your treatment journey.

*Remember, always separate legality from availability: a treatment may be lawful but remain hard to access or afford through NHS or private routes. Confirm all details directly with clinics and regulatory bodies for accuracy.*