

As cannabis-based medicinal products (CBMPs) become an option for patients in the UK, numerous private clinics have emerged, aiming to meet demand left unaddressed by the NHS. But when choosing a cannabis clinic, what should patients actually look for? Beneath the marketing buzz, there are specific details that genuinely separate one provider from the next—from the identity of the prescribing doctor to the crucial question of follow-up care.

Legality vs Real-World Access: Understanding the Landscape

First, it's vital to separate the legal framework from real-world availability. Cannabis-based products were legalised for medicinal prescription in the UK in November 2018. However, the NHS has maintained a very cautious stance, resulting in very limited NHS funding and prescription availability. This gap has effectively created a private market for cannabis clinics, where patients often pay out of pocket.

So the question is not "is medical cannabis legal?" — it is — but "how easy is it really to get access?" That access hinges on many factors, including who can prescribe, what kind of consultation model is used, and how clinics comply with regulation, especially in England.

Who Can Prescribe Cannabis-Based Medicinal Products?

Having a prescription from any doctor is not sufficient.



Doctors must be on the GMC Specialist Register in the relevant field specific to the patient's condition to prescribe cannabis-based medicines in the UK legally. This requirement aims to ensure expertise and careful clinical governance.

That means:

- Only consultants or specialist doctors with a registered specialty can prescribe CBMPs.
- General Practitioners (GPs) and non-specialist doctors cannot write these prescriptions.
- Clinics should clearly state the prescribing doctor's identity and specialist qualifications.

Why Is This Important?

Choosing a clinic where the prescribing doctor is a genuine specialist listed on the GMC Specialist Register signals compliance with clinical standards and minimises risks of inappropriate prescribing. Beware of clinics that are vague about who prescribes or promote “general doctors” or “healthcare practitioners” to prescribe cannabis medicines.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Review: A Mark of Clinical Robustness

Another differentiating factor is whether the clinic operates a **Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) review** process. MDTs bring together multiple clinical perspectives—neurologists, pain specialists, pharmacists, and other experts—to review a patient’s case before initiating CBMPs.

- An MDT approach helps ensure the prescription is tailored, justifiable, and optimises patient safety.
- Some clinics may highlight MDT review as part of their unique selling point — not just a doctor’s approval but a consensus from a wider expert group.

Patients should ask how their case will be reviewed and if the clinician prescribing has consulted an MDT. This transparency supports better clinical governance.

Video Consultations and Remote Prescribing: Convenience Meets Regulation

Many private cannabis clinics operate using **video consultations**, which can provide easy access for patients spread across the UK. This is particularly useful given the scarcity of local cannabis specialists on the NHS.

However, remote consultation is not just about convenience. In England, clinics that use **remote prescribing** must declare this practice to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which regulates healthcare providers.

What Does CQC Regulation Mean for Patients?

- CQC registration confirms the clinic meets safety, staffing, governance, and clinical standards.
- Patients should verify that the clinic’s CQC registration mentions remote prescribing if consultations and prescriptions happen online.
- Legal compliance does not guarantee quality of treatment, but it provides accountability and oversight.

Clinics in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland fall under different regulators (like Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, or the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority), so patients should check which body oversees the clinic they’re interested in.

Key Details Patients Must Clarify Before Booking

Despite all these regulatory and clinical factors, one of the most common pitfalls in the UK private cannabis clinic market is a lack of transparency around **pricing**.

Many clinics fail to state clear consultation fees upfront, and even fewer provide information on prescription costs or ongoing follow-up charges.

Why Clear Pricing Matters

- Medical cannabis prescriptions often require repeat appointments and ongoing monitoring.
- Patients need to budget not just for the initial consultation and prescription but also for follow-ups and the costs of the medication itself.

- Opaque pricing can mask potentially high ongoing financial commitments, leading to patient dissatisfaction.

So a trustworthy cannabis clinic will provide upfront, itemised pricing information covering:

1. Initial consultation fee, including whether it is in-person or remote.
2. Cost of prescription formulation and dispensing.
3. Follow-up consultation or monitoring fees.

The Follow-Up Model: Patient Care Beyond the First Prescription

Effective cannabis treatment is not a one-off event. It requires ongoing assessment of effectiveness, side effects, and potential dosage adjustments. The **follow-up model** employed by a clinic can be a significant point of differentiation.

Good clinics will offer:

- Scheduled follow-up consultations included in the treatment plan.
- Accessible channels of communication for patient questions or concerns between visits.
- Clear policies on how medication reviews are handled and how long treatment courses last.

Conversely, clinics with a “prescribe and goodbye” approach may save costs but compromise patient safety and <https://todaynews.co.uk/2026/08/10/inside-the-uks-private-medical-cannabis-clinics-how-the-sector-actually-works/> outcomes.

Summary Checklist: How to Evaluate a UK Cannabis Clinic

Factor	What to Look For	Why It Matters
Prescribing Doctor	Identity Specialist on GMC Specialist Register, named doctor	Ensures authorised, safe prescribing
MDT Review	Involvement of multidisciplinary clinical team	Enhances clinical judgement and safety
Consultation Format	Video consultations with CQC-declared remote prescribing (England)	Convenience combined with regulatory oversight
Pricing Transparency	Clear upfront consultation, prescription, follow-up costs	Prevents unexpected expenses
Follow-Up Model	Scheduled reviews, ongoing support, communication	Supports safety and treatment optimisation

Closing Thoughts: Look for Clinical Clarity, Not Just Convenience

The UK cannabis clinic market is still developing, and patients should approach it with informed caution. Legal permission does not mean universal availability, and private clinics vary widely in their service quality, clinical governance, and pricing transparency.



By focusing on concrete, verifiable details—like the prescribing doctor’s specialist credentials, MDT involvement, transparent pricing, CQC-regulated remote prescribing, and clear follow-up models—patients can better navigate the complex landscape and truly differentiate reputable clinics from those relying on hype.

When it comes to medical cannabis, informed choice isn’t just about access. It’s about safety, support, and quality of care.