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As medical cannabis gains traction across the UK, more patients are exploring this option to manage chronic pain, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and other conditions. However, the journey beyond the initial consultation often confuses many. Unlike a standard GP visit on the NHS, using medical cannabis privately involves multiple costs beyond the first appointment, and transparency can be patchy.

## Understanding the difference between legality and real-world access

Medical cannabis became legal in the UK in November 2018, but legal does not mean easily accessible or affordable on the NHS. Prescribing medical cannabis on the NHS remains highly restricted and rare. Most patients seeking these treatments privately face a complex market landscape with variable prices and follow-up requirements.

This gap between legal allowance and real-world accessibility means most people pay out-of-pocket for private consultations, prescriptions, and ongoing care. Awareness of these additional expenses is crucial before signing up with private clinics or specialist prescribers.

## Who can prescribe medical cannabis in the UK?

In the UK, medical cannabis prescriptions are specially regulated. Only doctors on the GMC Specialist Register—that is consultants or specialists with a GMC-recognised specialty—are legally allowed to prescribe this class of controlled medicine. General Practitioners (GPs) cannot prescribe medical cannabis.

This requirement creates a natural bottleneck in access and leads many patients to seek private specialist consultations. These specialists must have relevant expertise and be prepared to navigate the complex patient assessment and prescribing protocols.

## Regulation and oversight: What role does the CQC play?

All providers offering medical cannabis consultations in England—whether face-to-face or via **video consultations**—must be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This includes clinics that offer **remote prescribing**, the practise of prescribing [medical cannabis clinic fees uk](#) medicines after a video or telephone consultation without a physical appointment.

Remote prescribing has grown in popularity due to convenience and the often limited geographical availability of specialists, but it must be declared to and monitored by the CQC. This oversight aims to ensure patient safety amid concerns about the quality of virtual care and the appropriateness of prescriptions.

## The private market reality: Why costs go beyond the first appointment

Patients frequently contact clinics only to find no clear pricing information—particularly about follow-up care or the cost of the actual prescription. This lack of transparency can lead to unexpected bills after the initial consultation.

Below is an outline of the typical costs you should expect if you are considering medical cannabis privately:

### Typical cost components for medical cannabis patients

- **Initial consultation fee:** Generally ranges from £150 to £300 depending on the specialist's experience and location.
- **Follow-up consultations:** Essential for ongoing monitoring, dose adjustments, and managing side effects. These usually cost £75 to £200 per session.
- **Prescription costs:** Medical cannabis products are not NHS-funded. Prices vary widely based on product type (oil, flowers, tablets), strength, and supplier but can be £200–£500 or more per month.
- **Additional assessments or tests:** Some clinics may require blood tests or other diagnostics to monitor response and interactions, potentially adding to costs.

## Key reasons for follow-up consultations and why they cost money

Medical cannabis treatment isn't a one-off fix. It usually requires close monitoring to:



1. Titrate the dose safely, considering individual response and tolerance
2. Manage any adverse effects promptly
3. Assess ongoing efficacy, especially for chronic conditions
4. Ensure compliance with regulations and maintain prescription validity

Because of this, clinics charge separately for follow-ups, which are smaller than the initial appointment but crucial. Patients should budget for several follow-ups each year—without them, safe and effective use is compromised.

## Video consultations and remote prescribing: Convenience with compliance

Many private clinics now offer video consultations as a flexible and sometimes cost-effective way to access specialist advice. This approach reduces travel barriers and makes follow-ups more accessible, especially during the pandemic era.

However, the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** mandates that all such services be registered and comply with the same safeguarding and clinical standards as in-person care. Clinics offering remote prescribing must declare this service to the CQC and uphold strict protocols to verify identity, consent, and clinical appropriateness.

# Why vague consultation or prescription pricing is a red flag

One common mistake patients make is choosing clinics that do *not* provide clear upfront costs for consultations and prescriptions. Often these websites advertise “affordable” or “competitive” rates without full transparency.

Beware of clinics that:

- Omit consultation fees or bury them in fine print
- Fail to mention the likely monthly prescription costs
- Do not clarify the need or cost for follow-up appointments
- Confuse “wellness” products with clinical prescriptions, blurring healthcare and alternative therapies

Since medical cannabis prescriptions are expensive and ongoing, patients should insist on a clear, itemised fee schedule before committing.

## Summary checklist: What to clarify before your first appointment

Cost/Service What to ask/confirm Initial consultation fee Exact cost, what is included (assessment, advice, prescription planning) Follow-up appointments Frequency recommended, cost per session, availability via video or phone Prescription costs Estimated monthly price range, product options, payment terms Remote consultation policy Are video or telephone consultations offered? Is remote prescribing permitted and declared to the CQC? Clinic regulation Is the clinic registered with the CQC? Can they provide proof? Prescriber credentials Is the prescriber on the GMC Specialist Register? What is their clinical specialty?

## Final thoughts

While medical cannabis is legal in the UK, affordability and access remain major practical obstacles—especially outside the NHS. Patients must navigate a private market with varied pricing, specialist-only prescribing, and mandatory follow-up care to ensure treatment safety.

Knowing what costs to expect beyond the initial appointment—consultation fees, prescription prices, and ongoing follow-ups—and confirming the clinic and prescriber’s regulatory status will help avoid surprises and ensure you get quality care compliant with UK law.



Always separate the question of what is legally allowed from what is easily accessible and affordable in practice. If you keep this distinction clear, you will be better prepared to manage the journey towards responsible medical cannabis use.

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