

In recent years, medical cannabis has emerged as a topic of growing interest and controversy within UK healthcare. For many patients, navigating access routes—especially amidst complex regulations and limited NHS availability—can feel bewildering. A common question is whether UK medical cannabis clinics offer video consultations, allowing remote assessment and prescribing.

This blog post unpacks that question in detail, clarifying the legal framework versus real-world access, shining a light on who can prescribe medical cannabis, and explaining how regulations shape remote consultations. We will also tackle a frequent frustration for patients: the lack of transparent pricing for consultations and prescriptions in this rapidly evolving private market.

Understanding Medical Cannabis Legality and Access in the UK

I'll be honest with you: first and foremost, it's critical to separate legality from availability. Since November 2018, specialist doctors in the UK have been legally permitted to prescribe cannabis-based products for medicinal use—subject to specific criteria and clinical judgement.

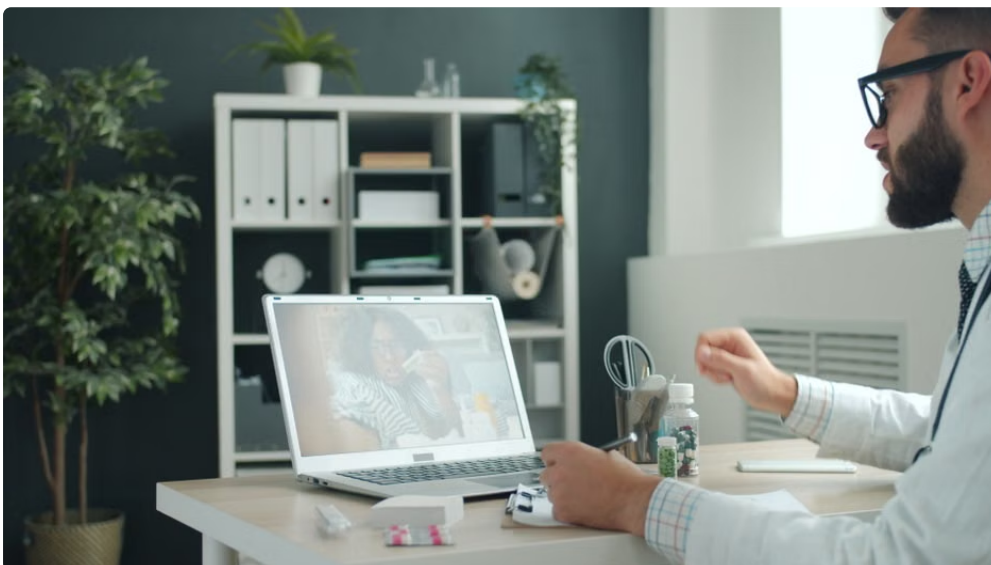
However, despite legalisation, accessibility remains highly limited. NHS funding for medical cannabis is extremely rare, with very few prescriptions issued via the public system. Exactly.. This funding gap propels many patients to explore the private sector, including clinics offering video consultations and online appointments.

Key Facts on Medical Cannabis Legality and NHS Access

- Legal to prescribe cannabis-based medicinal products (CBMPs) by qualified specialists on the GMC Specialist Register.
- Not authorised for general prescribing by GPs or non-specialist doctors.
- NHS prescriptions are rare due to cost, evidence limitations, and prescribing policies.
- Most patients seeking CBMPs turn to private clinics.

Do UK Medical Cannabis Clinics Offer Video Consultations?

Yes, many UK private medical cannabis clinics do provide video consultations or online appointments. These remote consultations allow patients to consult with qualified specialists without needing to travel to a physical clinic.



Video consultations have become more mainstream in UK healthcare, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a push for digital services. This approach fits well with medical cannabis clinics todaynews.co.uk catering to geographically dispersed patients or those with mobility challenges.

Advantages of Video Consultations for Medical Cannabis Patients

- Convenience: Access specialists from home, avoiding travel and waiting rooms.
- Speed: Shorter waiting times for appointments.
- Continuity: Enables easier follow-ups and monitoring after prescription.
- Access: Broader reach for clinics to serve patients across the UK.

Remote Prescribing and Its Regulatory Context

Remote prescribing—issuing prescriptions after a video or online consultation—is legally permissible but tightly regulated, especially since it involves controlled substances like some cannabis-based products.

In England, clinics offering remote prescribing services **must declare these activities to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the health and social care regulator**. This ensures compliance with safety standards, patient confidentiality, and proper clinical governance.

Clinics registered with the CQC for remote prescribing undergo regular inspection and must demonstrate robust clinical protocols.

Note for patients outside England: The CQC regulates services in England only. Healthcare providers in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are subject to their respective regulatory bodies, which may have differing rules regarding remote consultations and prescribing.

Who Can Legally Prescribe Medical Cannabis?

Only doctors on the **GMC Specialist Register** are permitted to prescribe cannabis-based medicinal products for patients in the UK.



This requirement is designed to ensure that cannabis prescriptions are managed by specialists with relevant expertise—often in neurology, pain management, or palliative care—reflecting the complexity and evolving evidence around CBMPs.

General practitioners (GPs) cannot initiate medical cannabis prescriptions but can continue prescribing if a patient has a specialist's recommendation, subject to NHS policies.

Why Does Specialist Status Matter?

Medical cannabis is not a first-line treatment and requires careful patient selection, monitoring, and follow-up. Specialists on the register have the necessary competency and experience to manage these risks, monitor efficacy, and advise on any complications.

The Reality: NHS Funding Gap and Private Market Response

Despite the legal framework, very few NHS-funded prescriptions exist due to:

- Limited high-quality clinical evidence for routine use in most conditions.
- High cost of CBMPs compared to usual therapies.
- Conservative NHS prescribing guidelines.

This has created a growing private market where clinics offer consultations—often as video consultations—and medical cannabis prescriptions for £200+ per appointment, with medication costs extra.

Patients should note:

- **Private clinics vary enormously** in service quality, consultation duration, and transparency.
- **Consultation prices often aren't clearly stated upfront**, leaving patients uncertain about total costs until after initial contact.
- **Prescriptions for medical cannabis products can be costly, with significant variation** depending on product type and dosage.

What to Check Before Booking Video Consultations for Medical Cannabis

If you're considering a video consultation to discuss medical cannabis, use this checklist to navigate providers carefully and avoid hidden pitfalls:

1. **Is the doctor on the GMC Specialist Register?** Confirm the prescribing clinician's credentials.
2. **Does the clinic declare remote prescribing to the CQC?** Particularly in England, this ensures regulated oversight.
3. **Are consultation prices clearly stated upfront?** Check for costs of initial and follow-up appointments.
4. **Are prescription costs transparently shared?** Many CBMPs are expensive and ongoing costs can be substantial.
5. **Does the clinic clearly differentiate medical cannabis treatment from wellness or non-medical cannabis?** Avoid clinics blending healthcare and commercial wellness language.
6. **What is the follow-up plan?** Ongoing monitoring is essential with medical cannabis.

Summary Table: Key Points on Medical Cannabis Video Consultations in the UK

Aspect Key Details Video Consultations Commonly offered by private clinics, convenient for patients across the UK. Remote Prescribing Allowed for specialist doctors; must be declared to CQC in England. Prescriber Qualification Only GMC Specialist Register doctors can prescribe medical cannabis. NHS Funding Very limited; most patients access CBMPs privately. Pricing Transparency Often poor; consultation and prescription prices frequently undisclosed upfront. Regulation Oversight CQC in England regulates clinics offering remote prescribing; other UK nations have separate regulators.

Final Thoughts

Yes, UK medical cannabis clinics commonly offer video consultations and remote prescribing to improve patient access. However, patients must remain vigilant—ensuring doctors are appropriately qualified, clinics are regulated, and costs are clear before committing to appointments.

The separation between legal allowance and real-world access means many patients will navigate a complex private market, where transparency and quality vary widely. Armed with a clear checklist and an understanding of regulations, patients can make more informed choices around video consultations and medical cannabis treatment.

Always consult healthcare professionals and check specific regional regulations, as the regulatory landscape can evolve.