

Ten IT checks for a private clinic

Physiotherapy, podiatry, osteopathy, chiropractic, aesthetics and private GP

A short, plain English list. Nothing here needs a technical background, and several items cost nothing to fix beyond the time to do them properly.

1 Your booking system is not a backup

Cliniko, Jane, Nookal and similar hold your clinical notes and back those up properly. That part is genuinely fine. What they do not cover is your laptop, your phone, your email, and anything saved outside the system.

How to check: think about the last document you saved that was not a patient note. An invoice, a letter, a scan. Where did it go, and what backs that up?

2 What happens if you lose access to your account?

Your notes can be perfectly safe and completely out of reach. If you lose the phone your two factor code goes to, you are locked out of your own business.

How to check: do you have recovery codes written down somewhere that is not your laptop? If not, that is a fifteen minute job worth doing today.

3 Are client photographs stored properly?

Clinical photographs are patient records, and they are usually the most sensitive thing a clinic holds.

How to check: where are they now? If the answer is your phone's camera roll or a personal Google or Apple account, that is a real problem rather than an untidy one.

4 Are consent forms where you could actually find them?

If a client asked you today for a copy of everything you hold about them, or asked you to delete it, could you do it properly and completely?

How to check: pick a client from six months ago and try it. Time yourself.

5 Is your laptop encrypted?

If an encrypted laptop is stolen it is an inconvenience. If an unencrypted one is stolen it is a reportable data breach with all the work that follows.

How to check: on Windows search for BitLocker, on a Mac look for FileVault. Both are built in and free. Note that BitLocker needs Windows Pro rather than Home.

6 Is two factor authentication switched on?

On your booking system, your email, and anywhere client data lives. It is free, takes ten minutes, and it stops the most common way small clinics lose control of their data.

How to check: log in from a device you have never used before. If a password alone gets you in, it is off.

7 Are you running the clinic on a personal email account?

A Gmail or Hotmail address cannot be handed over, cannot be properly backed up, and belongs to a person rather than the business. It also fills up, and a full inbox silently rejects new enquiries.

How to check: look at the address on your website. If it does not end in your own domain, this applies to you.

8 What travels with you?

Home visits, second sites, working from a gym or a leisure centre. Every one of those means client data leaving the building, usually on a phone or a laptop.

How to check: what is on the device you take out, and what would happen if you left it on a train?

9 Do you have a written record of what data you hold?

The ICO expects you to know what personal data you hold, why, where it is and how long you keep it. It is a page of plain writing, not a technical document.

How to check: does it exist? If nobody can produce it in five minutes, it does not.

10 Who do you ring when it breaks mid clinic?

Not who you think you ring. Who actually answers, how quickly, and what it costs.

How to check: ring them on a normal Tuesday and see how long it takes to reach a person.

If several of these made you uncomfortable, that is normal, and it says nothing about how well you run your clinic. IT is the one part of running a healthcare business that nobody trains you for. I am happy to walk through any of it with you, free and with no obligation.



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