

Publication Report



General Ophthalmic Services Statistics

Updates of existing pages as at 31st March 2013

Publication date – 27th August 2013

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Introduction

NHS General Ophthalmic Services are provided by [eye care professionals](#) who carry out eye examinations and provide eye glasses, repairs or replacements. ISD collects information on NHS General Ophthalmic Service activity in Scotland as performed by eye care professionals. These data are collected on a series of forms referred to as [GOS \(General Ophthalmic Services\) forms](#).

If a patient is entitled to free or subsidised eye care (excluding eye examinations, which are free to all), they must present evidence of this to the optician (see [Exemption categories](#)). The optician submits a claim form for the services provided, which is signed by both the optician and the patient. This form is sent to [Practitioner Services Division \(PSD\)](#) for processing of payments to the optician. The forms are scanned and their information is stored in a database called OPTIX. ISD then collates these data to provide annual tables of GOS activity in this publication.

The data presented here exclude NHS hospital eye services and optical services provided privately.

Note: Due to a minor error in the analysis of data for Table 5 (reason for supplementary referral) for 2010/11 and 2011/12, as presented in the July 2011 and July 2012 General Ophthalmic Services Statistics publications, the 2010-12 data have been revised for this (August 2013) publication. All charts and tables are noted "R" and footnoted where appropriate. This error affects all NHS boards' figures and the national figure for total referral reasons for financial years 2010/11 and 2011/12 (16.3% and 14.5% lower respectively in the July 2012 publication than this updated release); (see relevant tables and charts within Table 5). This analysis has also been updated with 2011 mid-year population estimates, which were unavailable at the time of the last (July 2012) publication. 2011 and 2012 population estimates are from the newly available 2011-based census from National Records Scotland, whereas previous years are based on the 2001-based census, in order to use the most recently available figures. This should be considered when looking at time trend analysis. These changes do not appreciably affect the results, nor would they change the overall interpretation of results by users of the report.

Key points

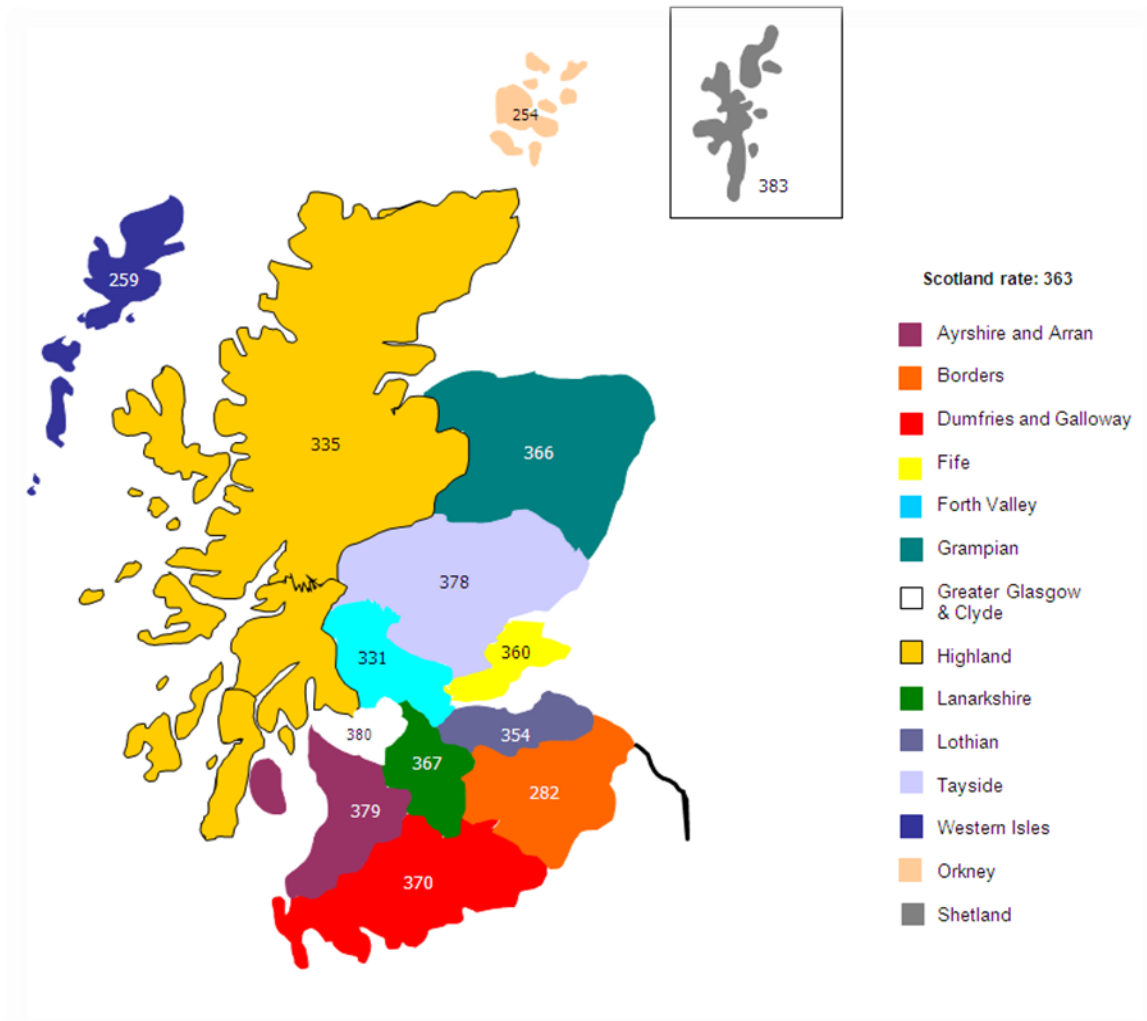
- The total number of NHS eye examinations carried out increased by 0.7% from 1,913,565 in year ending March 2012 to 1,926,616 in year ending March 2013.
- There was a steady increase in the number of people who received an eye examination between years ending March 2007 and March 2013.
- The number of people receiving a primary eye examination decreased by 0.4% from 1,601,729 in year ending March 2012 to 1,594,996 in year ending March 2013. Of the 1,594,996 primary eye examinations carried out 1,587,910 were for ordinary residents, a decrease of 0.4%; and 7,086 were for exempt visitors, an increase of 2.5%.
- The number of patients receiving a supplementary eye examination increased by 6.3% from 311,836 in year ending March 2012 to 331,620 in year ending March 2013. Of these supplementary eye examinations carried out 330,183 were for ordinary residents, an increase of 6.3%; and 1,437 were for exempt visitors, an increase of 9.3%.
- Some patients are entitled to receive help with the cost of optical appliances. The trend in the number of claims made in Scotland shows that the number of optical vouchers claimed for pairs of spectacles, including complex appliances decreased by 4.2% from 489,309 in year ending March 2012 to 468,681 in year ending March 2013.

Results and Commentary

Eye exams

The rate of eye examinations carried out across all NHS boards in Scotland in year ending March 2013 was fairly consistent. The highest rates were recorded in Shetland (383 eye examinations per 1,000 population) and in Greater Glasgow & Clyde (380). The lowest rate recorded was in Orkney (254 per 1,000 population), see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Rate of eye examinations per 1,000 population by NHS board; year ending March 2013



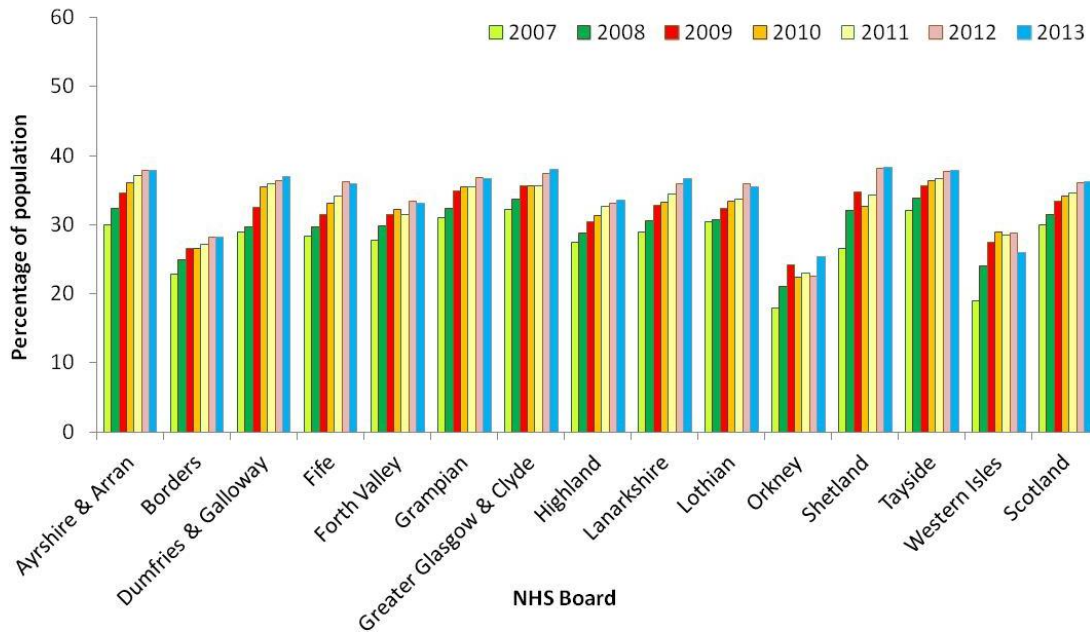
The level of the population who received an NHS eye examination between years ending March 2007 and March 2012 increased steadily, with a further, smaller increase in 2012/13: the total number of eye examinations (primary and supplementary) increased by 0.7% (primary eye examinations decreasing by 0.4% and supplementary eye examinations increasing by 6.3%), see Table 1.1 and Figure 2. Note that a change in policy on the permitted frequency of primary eye examinations accounts for the large increase in the number of supplementary eye examinations carried out between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Table 1.1 Trends in the number of primary and supplementary eye examinations carried out; years ending March 2007 to March 2013

Year ending	Eye exam type		
	Primary	Supplementary	Total
2007	1,480,187	64,515	1,544,702
2008	1,542,566	84,074	1,626,640
2009	1,630,600	97,479	1,728,079
2010	1,655,075	120,381	1,775,456
2011	1,504,230	300,541	1,804,681
2012	1,601,729	311,836	1,913,565
2013	1,594,996	331,620	1,926,616
Change between 2012 and 2013 (+/-)	-6,733 (-0.4%)	+19,784 (6.3%)	+13,051 (0.7%)

Source: ISD, OPTIX

Figure 2 Percentage of population who received an eye examination (primary or supplementary); by NHS board; years ending March 2007 to March 2013



Source: ISD, OPTIX

2011 and 2012 population estimates are from the newly available 2011-based census from National Records Scotland, whereas previous years' estimates are based on the 2001-based census; thus, the most recently available population figures have been used.

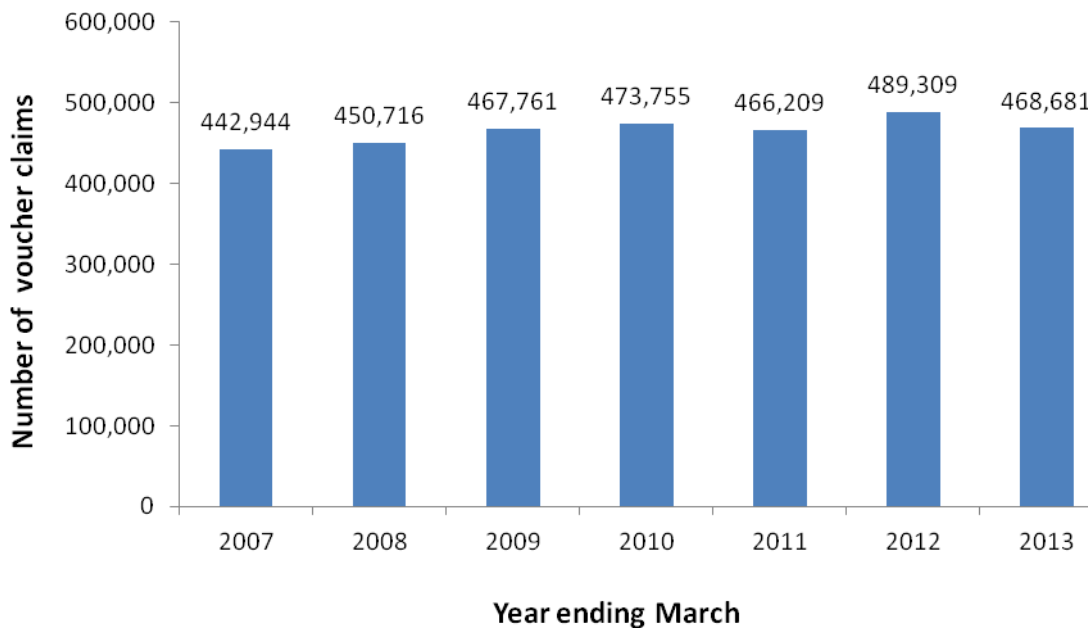
Other detailed findings regarding eye examinations are as follows:

- The percentage of all patients who had an eye examination during 2012/13 and who were then referred either to their GP or to hospital for follow-up care remained constant with that of the previous year at 4.3%.
- The percentage of supplementary eye examinations carried out during 2012/13 to check side vision and pressure in the eye (referral refinement / repeat visual fields and applanation) fell to 17.3% from 18.0% in the previous year.
- The number of supplementary tints supplied during 2012/13 (7,414) decreased by 3.2% on the previous year (7,659). The number of prism lenses supplied during 2012/13 (5,963) also decreased by 2.6% from the previous year (6,124).

Vouchers

Some patients are entitled to receive help with the cost of optical appliances. The trend in the number of GOS(S)3 voucher claims made in Scotland between years ending March 2007 and March 2013 is shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Total number of GOS(S)3 optical voucher claims; years ending March 2007 to March 2013



Source: ISD, OPTIX

These trend data show that the number of GOS(S)3 vouchers claimed by opticians (for pairs of spectacles provided, including complex appliances, and reimbursed by NHS boards) increased between 2007 and 2010 but decreased slightly in 2010/11. In 2012/13, the number of GOS(S)3 vouchers claimed decreased by 4.2% from 489,309 to 468,681. Information is further detailed in Table 4 [by exempt patient category and by voucher type for each NHS board.](#)

Glossary

GOS(S)1	General Ophthalmic Service (application for NHS eye examination)
GOS(S)3	General Ophthalmic Service (NHS optical voucher)
Exempt Visitor	An overseas visitor is an Exempt Visitor, i.e. a person not ordinarily resident in the UK. [NHS (Charges to Overseas) visitors (Scotland) Regulations 1989]
Ordinary Resident	A person living lawfully in the UK for settled purposes, as part of a person's regular order of life

List of Tables

Table No.	Name	Time period	File & size
1	Scotland summary (eye exams vouchers and repairs)	Years ending March 2001 to March 2013	Excel [108KB]
2	Eye exams vouchers lenses and repairs by NHS board	Years ending March 2007 to March 2013	Excel [286KB]
3	Eye exams by patient type and NHS board	Years ending March 2007 to March 2013	Excel [156KB]
4	Vouchers by exempt patient category, voucher type and NHS board	Years ending March 2007 to March 2013	Excel [197KB]
5	Eye exams by referral type and NHS board	Years ending March 2007 to March 2013	Excel [186KB]

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Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

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Appendix

A1 – Background information

On 1st April 2006, a new NHS eye examination was introduced and free NHS eye examinations were extended to all in Scotland. The traditional NHS sight test was replaced with a comprehensive eye examination appropriate to the patient's needs. An initial eye examination is carried out (primary eye examination) and where necessary a second eye examination (supplementary eye examination). An updated patient form (called a GOS(S)1) for eye care professionals was introduced on 1st April 2006 in line with the new NHS eye examination. However, some old forms continued to be submitted and are included in the total eye examinations in the Scotland trend table from years 2006/07 to 2008/09. There was a further update to the form in 2009 to reflect new patient categories. These categories are shown in this release.

On 1st April 2010, the NHS (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2006 were amended to provide that primary eye examinations should only be undertaken in line with set frequencies for different categories of patient, i.e. every 1 or 2 years. Other eye examinations required at shorter intervals are undertaken as supplementary eye examinations. This change in policy accounts for the large increase in the number of supplementary eye examinations carried out between financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11.

A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	General Ophthalmic Services Statistics.
Description	This release provides information on General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) Statistics as at 31 st March 2013. Information on referrals, reasons for primary and supplementary NHS eye examinations and patient type for years ending 31 st March 2007 to 31 st March 2013 can also be found in this release.
Theme	Eye Care.
Topic	General Ophthalmic Services workload.
Format	Excel workbooks and PDF.
Data source(s)	OPTIX.
Date that data are acquired	20 th June 2013.
Release date	27 th August 2013.
Frequency	Annual.
Timeframe of data and timeliness	April 2012 to March 2013. One quarter in arrears.
Continuity of data	Reports annually as at 31 st March.
Revisions statement	These data are not subject to planned major revisions. However, ISD aims to continually improve the interpretation of the data and therefore analysis methods are regularly reviewed and may be updated in future.
Revisions relevant to this publication	<p>Note: Due to a minor error in the analysis of data for Table 5 (reason for supplementary referral) for 2010/11 and 2011/12, as presented in the July 2011 and July 2012 General Ophthalmic Services Statistics publications, the 2010-12 data have been revised for this (August 2013) publication. All charts and tables are noted "R" and footnoted where appropriate. This error affects all NHS boards' figures and the national figure for total referral reasons for financial years 2010/11 (16.3%) and 2011/12 (14.5%); (see relevant tables and charts within Table 5). This analysis has also been updated with 2011 mid-year population estimates, which were unavailable at the time of the last (July 2012) publication. 2011 and 2012 population estimates are from the newly available 2011-based census from National Records Scotland, whereas previous years' estimates are based on the 2001-based census; thus, the most recently available population figures have been used. These changes do not appreciably affect the results, nor would they change the overall interpretation of results by users of the report.</p> <p>The error is due to the expansion of reasons for supplementary examination codes from the OPTIX database in data for 2010 onward. This has a relatively small effect on the total figure for number of supplementary reasons supplied, nationally 16.3% lower (257,751 vs. 299,641) for year ending 31st March 2011 and 14.5% lower</p>

	(268,899 vs. 307,854) for year ending 31 st March 2012 in the July 2012 publication, than this updated release. The effect varies between boards, and do not appreciably affect the results nor the conclusions drawn by users of the data.
Concepts and definitions	See Glossary and footnotes.
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Making information publicly available for planning, provision of services, research, etc.
Accuracy	GOS data, as recorded by eye care professionals for payment, probity and quality purposes, are regarded as highly accurate, but may be revised in a subsequent monthly payment schedule.
Completeness	GOS data, as recorded by eye care professionals for payment, probity and quality purposes, are regarded as complete, but may be revised in a subsequent monthly payment schedule.
Comparability	Comparable over time.
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines .
Coherence and clarity	Tables and charts are accessible via the ISD website at: http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Eye-Care/General-Ophthalmic-Services/ .
Value type and unit of measurement	Number of eye examinations (and percentage of population) carried out by General Ophthalmic Services; number of payment exemption vouchers claimed.
Disclosure	The ISD protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed.
Official Statistics designation	Official Statistics.
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Pending.
Last published	31 st July 2012.
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Help email	NSS.ISD-Dental-Info@nhs.net
Date form completed	08 th August 2013.

A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)

Pre-Release Access

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access:

Scottish Government Health Department
NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Communication leads
Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)

Extended Pre-Release Access

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)
Scottish Government Justice Department (Analytical Services Division)

A4 – ISD and Official Statistics

About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Purpose: To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

Mission: Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

Vision: To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.