

Publication Summary



General Ophthalmic Services Statistics

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About this Release

Eye examinations are very important because everyone benefits from having clear vision. Other than the maintenance of eye health an eye examination can pick up early signs of diseases such as diabetes. This release by Information Services Division provides statistics for Scotland on NHS General Ophthalmic Services eye examinations and related findings, for financial years from 2006/07 to 2014/15.

Key Points

- In 2014/15 more than two million eye examinations were performed by optometrists working in Scottish local communities, the highest number ever.
- Of these, 81% were primary eye examinations. The others were supplementary eye examinations.
- The most common reason for a supplementary examination was 'sudden vision loss/flashes'.
- Clinical conditions are recorded by an optometrist or ophthalmic medical practitioner during the eye examination. Of all conditions recorded, the most common (29%) was cataracts.
- Most patients were not referred for any further investigation following their eye examination (1.9 million), illustrating that 93% of all referrals in 2014/15 were dealt with in a primary care setting.
- The number of claimants of optical vouchers used to provide eye glasses/ contact lenses in 2014/15 continued to decrease from the peak in 2011/12.

Background

There have been significant legislative changes that have affected NHS General Ophthalmic Services during the period that this publication covers.

The NHS (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations were established in 2006. The traditional NHS "sight test" was replaced by a comprehensive eye examination appropriate to the needs of the patient. An initial eye examination was carried out focused on eye health ([primary eye examination](#)) and where necessary was followed up by a second eye examination ([supplementary eye examination](#)). Everyone in Scotland became eligible for a fully funded NHS primary eye examination. The recommendation was that a primary eye examination would be carried out **at least** every two years for all patients. However, there were certain groups who were eligible for an annual primary eye examination (further details on the eligible groups are given in the publication).

The NHS (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2006 were amended on 1st April 2010. Primary eye examinations could now **only** be undertaken in line with the set frequencies for different categories of patients outlined above, that is, at intervals of one or two years respectively, and not any shorter than these intervals. Other eye examinations required at shorter intervals than these frequencies could be undertaken as supplementary eye examinations. As a result of this change in the legislation, there was also a change in the use of services.

The report structure and content has been updated in response to user feedback.

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Further Information

Further information can be found in the [General Ophthalmic Services Statistics Report](#)

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