

General Ophthalmic Services Statistics

Statistics as at 31 March 2016

Publication date – 06 September 2016



About this release

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 2015/16.

Main points

- In 2015/16 more than two million eye examinations were performed by optometrists working in Scottish local communities, since recording began in 2006.
- Most eye examinations (95%) are dealt with in a primary care setting and not referred for further investigation.
- Four in five claims were for initial eye examinations (primary examinations). The others were for emergency, additional or follow-up care (supplementary examinations).
- The most common reason for a supplementary examination was 'Sudden vision loss / flashes and floaters or reduced visual acuity or neurological symptoms'.
- Clinical conditions are recorded during the eye examination. Patients are most likely to have cataracts (16%) of all clinical conditions

Background

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. 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 01 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.

Contact

Laura Marchbank

Senior Information Analyst
0141 282 2160

Samantha Whipp

Principal Information Analyst
0131 275 6042

Email: NSS.isd-dental-info@nhs.net

Find out more

Further information can be found in the [Ophthalmic Report](#).

The Information Services Division published a wide range of ophthalmic statistics. You can find all our ophthalmic information at the [ISD Eye-Care website](#).

The next release of this report is expected September 2017 and will present data as at 31 March 2017.

NHS Performs

A selection of information from this publication is included in [NHS Performs](#). NHS Performs is a website that brings together a range of information on how hospitals and NHS Boards within NHSScotland are performing.

ISD and 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. [Find out more about our statistics](#).