General Ophthalmic Services Statistics
Statistics as at year ending 31 March 2019
A National Statistics publication for Scotland
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About this release
This release by Information Services Division provides information on NHS General Ophthalmic Services eye examinations and related findings for 2018/19 with comparisons to previous years. It does not report on General Practitioners and hospital eye examinations activities.

Main Points
- In 2018/19 over 2.3 million NHS funded eye examinations were performed by community optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners in Scotland, the highest level since reporting began.

Number of NHS funded eye examinations, Scotland, by year; 2006/07 - 2018/19

Source: Ophthalmic payment system: 2006/07 to 2016/17 (OPTIX), 2017/18 to 2018/19 (Ophthalmic Data Warehouse).

- Most patients attending for an eye examination were managed within primary care optometry (95.2%) and not referred for further investigation.
- Three in four claims were for initial regular eye examinations (primary eye examinations). The remainder were for emergency, additional or follow-up care (supplementary eye examinations).
- The most common reason for a supplementary eye examination was 'Unscheduled Appointments' (37%).
- Cataracts were the most common of all the conditions recorded (17%) during eye examinations.
Background

**NHS General Ophthalmic Services**

NHS General Ophthalmic Services in Scotland are provided by eye care professionals who use a wide variety of tests and procedures to examine the eyes of a patient during an eye examination. There are a number of possible outcomes following the examination including:

- no medical or corrective action needs to be taken;
- a prescription for spectacles / contact lenses needs to be issued;
- treatment for an ocular condition is prescribed and followed up by the practitioner;
- repeat examinations or procedures are conducted to refine a hospital referral, or to rebook for continual monitoring in the community;
- referral to the patient’s General Practitioner with general health concerns;
- referral for specialist ophthalmic care by a hospital consultant.

In April 2010 and October 2018, changes in legislation reduced the frequency and circumstances under which a primary examination can be undertaken. If these conditions are not met, only a supplementary examination can be claimed for payment.

In October 2018, a new enhanced supplementary eye examination was introduced, for when the review appointment requires the pupils to be dilated. Reason codes have also been revised (see [Ophthalmic Report](#) for further information).

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**Find out more**

Find out more in the [full report](#). The data from this publication is available to download from our [web page](#) along with a background information, glossary and metadata document.

The next release of this report is expected in October 2020 and will present data as at 31 March 2020.

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