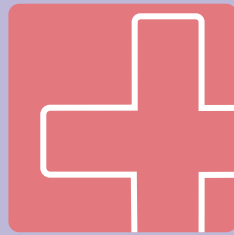


Your guide to free NHS eye examinations in Scotland



What is this leaflet about?

- This leaflet tells you about your free NHS eye examination.
- If you are a UK resident, you can get a free NHS eye examination in Scotland.
- This is not just to test your sight – it's a thorough examination to:
 - check the health of your eyes
 - find any eye problems before they become more serious
 - look for signs of other health problems.

If you are a UK resident who is living abroad part-time or visiting Scotland, the rules are more complicated. You will need to ask an optician's practice whether you can have a free NHS eye examination.

Where do I get my free NHS eye examination?

- You can get your eyes examined free of charge by any optometrist in Scotland who provides NHS services.

An optometrist is a health professional who is trained to examine your eyes to look for signs of eye disease and to check your sight.

- Most opticians' practices have an optometrist who provides NHS services.
- If you have an eye test in England, you may have to pay for it. You cannot then claim a refund in Scotland even if you are a Scottish resident. Free NHS eye examinations for all are only available if they take place in Scotland.

Does my GP need to refer me to an optometrist?

- No. If you have any problems with your eyes, make an appointment with an optometrist of your choice. You can do this without visiting your GP.

What happens during the eye examination?

- Your optometrist will do various tests and procedures, depending on what your needs and symptoms are. A sight test will be included.
- Sometimes, your optometrist may not be able to do all the tests and procedures during one appointment or may need to repeat a procedure. If so, they will ask you to come back for a follow-up appointment. You will not have to pay for this.
- Your optometrist may give you eye drops to see inside your eyes more easily. You should not drive immediately afterwards.
- Ask as many questions as you want about your eye examination. If there are any tests or procedures you don't want, tell your optometrist. You can refuse any part of the examination.
- Allow plenty of time for the examination. The eye test should take about 30 minutes and you may need more time for extra procedures or to choose glasses.
- If you need help to get to your appointment because of an illness or disability, you can ask about a home visit.

What happens after the eye examination?

- At the end of the examination, your optometrist will discuss the results with you. If there's anything you don't understand, ask.
- Your optometrist will give you a copy of your prescription and tell you if you need glasses. You will have to pay for glasses unless you get help with health costs.
- The leaflet 'A quick guide to help with health costs' (HCS2) tells you if you are entitled to help with the cost of glasses or lenses. This is available from the NHS helpline or on the internet (www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts).
- If you need medical treatment for an eye condition, your optometrist may refer you to the eye department at a hospital. Your optometrist will tell you and your GP about this.
- Your optometrist will tell you when you should have your next eye examination.

How often should I have an NHS eye examination?

- You can have a free eye examination **once every two years** if you are between 16 and 59 years old.
- You can have a free eye examination **once a year** if you:
 - are under 16
 - are 60 or over
 - have ocular hypertension or diabetes
 - have glaucoma, or
 - are 40 or over and your mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter has glaucoma.

Your optometrist will tell you if you need a follow-up appointment. If you have problems with your eyes before your next NHS eye examination is due, you can arrange another appointment as soon as you need it.

Do I need to see the same optometrist each time?

- No. You can make an appointment with any optometrist who provides NHS services. But you may prefer to see the same one if you think this will be better for your care.
- Each time you visit a new optometrist, you will be asked to give:
 - your personal details (for example, your name, address, date of birth, and GP's name)
 - details about your own and your family's medical history
 - details of any symptoms you are having, and
 - any other relevant information.

Are any eye tests not included in the free NHS eye examination?

- Yes. The free NHS eye examination only covers certain tests and procedures.
- Ask your optometrist for more about this.

What if I'm unhappy with the service?

- If you're unhappy with the service you receive, first tell your optometrist.
- If you don't want to do this, or you're still unhappy after speaking to the optometrist, you can make a complaint.
- If your complaint is about an NHS eye examination, the leaflet **Making a complaint about the NHS** explains how to do this. You can get the leaflet from most places where you get NHS care, or on the internet (www.hris.org.uk).
- If your complaint is about a private service – for example a private eye examination, or about the supply of glasses or contact lenses even when you got them using an NHS voucher – then phone the Optical Consumer Complaints Service on 0844 800 5071 or email them (postbox@opticalcomplaints.co.uk).

How to find out more

For more information about anything in this leaflet, contact:

- your optometrist
- the Optometry Scotland website (www.optometrystotland.org.uk)
- the NHS helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88), or
- your local citizens advice bureau (find your nearest bureau on the internet at www.cas.org.uk or in your local phone book).

Email ask@hris.org.uk to ask for this information in another language or format.

This information is available on the Scottish Government website (www.scotland.gov.uk) and on the HRIS website (www.hris.org.uk).



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