



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Eye care statistics: April 2021 to March 2023

Statistics on primary and secondary eye care services provided in Wales for April 2021 to March 2023.

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Introduction

This new annual report replaces the eye care part of the previous biennial [sensory health statistical release](#).

The report summarises statistics on primary care eye services including the General Ophthalmic Service (GOS) and targeted Welsh eye care services such as the Eye Health Examination Wales (EHEW). Summary statistics are also included on some secondary eye care services including outpatient appointments and hospital admissions, as well as statistics on both the primary and secondary care workforce.

These statistics help to monitor the delivery of eye care services and provide evidence for eye care policy development and evaluation.

New statistics presented in the release are based on the latest available data, which may be 2021-22 or 2022-23 depending on the source.

Background information is available in the [quality report](#) and all data are published on [StatsWales](#).

Main points

Following a sharp decrease in activity during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21, primary care eye care services recovered in 2021-22 and broadly, activity returned to the pre-pandemic level in 2022-23.

The number of primary care optometrists continues to increase and is at a record high level.

The pandemic has had a longer-lasting impact on secondary care eye services.

While services were forced to reduce in 2020-21, a larger-than-usual number of patient pathways remained open which has therefore resulted in more patients waiting longer for treatments.

The number of referrals for ophthalmology outpatient appointments has returned to a similar level as before the pandemic, while the number of patient pathways closed in the year has increased but remains below the pre-pandemic level.

The number of secondary care ophthalmology doctors increased marginally in 2022-23 but remains at a similar level to the previous five years.

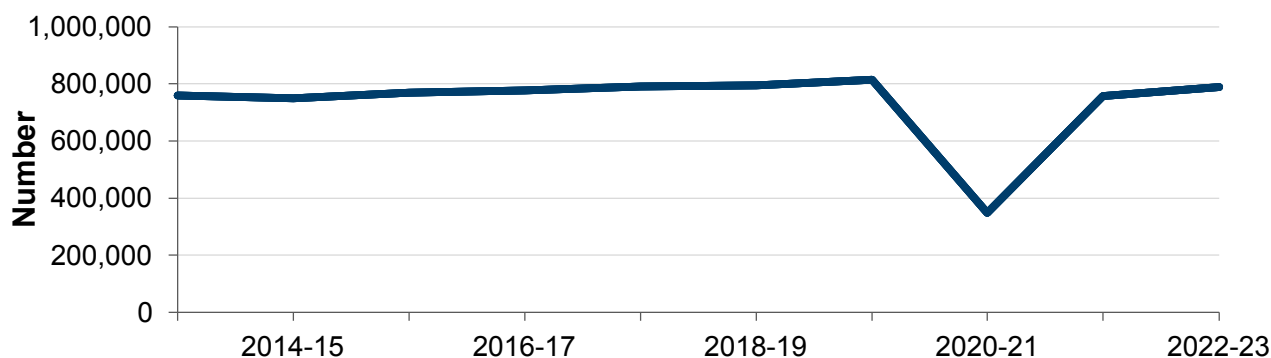
Primary eye care services

General ophthalmic service: sight tests and optical vouchers

The NHS recommends everyone has a sight test with an optometrist at least once every two years as this may reduce preventable sight loss. Many people qualify for a free NHS **General Ophthalmic Service (GOS) sight test** paid for by the NHS.

As of 31 March 2023, 321 optometry practices were providing general ophthalmic services.

Figure 1: Number of sight test paid for by the NHS, 2013-14 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 1: Line chart showing the number of sight tests had been on a slight upward trend until 2019-20 where it fell due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the most recent two years, the number of sight tests has returned to broadly the pre-pandemic number.

Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

Number of sight tests paid for by the NHS (StatsWales)

In 2022-23 the number of sight tests paid for by the NHS increased to just under 790,000 (789,252), an increase of 4.2% compared to 2021-22. Note that for clinical reasons, people may have more than one sight test a year. [Sight tests data by patient eligibility is available on StatsWales.](#)

Domiciliary sight tests

The majority of sight tests paid for by the NHS take place at primary care practices, although a small proportion take place at other locations such as people's homes and residential homes.

In 2022-23, just over 23,000 (23,424) domiciliary sight tests were paid for by the NHS. Of these 83.2% were paid at the higher rate (where the patient is the first or second to be seen at an address) and 16.8% at the lower rate (third and subsequent patients visited at the same address).

The number of domiciliary sight tests increased by 11.2% compared to 2021-22, where just over 21,000 (21,057) tests were paid for by the NHS. However, the number is 17.6% lower than in the last year largely unaffected by the pandemic (2019-20).

Time series data for domiciliary sight tests are available on StatsWales.

NHS optical vouchers processed

In 2022-23, just fewer than 270,000 (269,940) optical vouchers were processed, 9.7% more than 2021-22, when just fewer than 250,000 (246,043) optical vouchers were processed. The number is 5.4% lower than in the last year largely unaffected by the pandemic (2019-20).

Time series data for NHS optical vouchers are available on StatsWales.

Claims for repair or replacement to spectacles

There were just over 35,000 (35,231) claims for repair or replacement in 2022-23, an increase of 10.1% from 2021-22, when just fewer than 32,000 (31,989) claims for repair or replacement were made. The number is 3.6% lower than in the last year largely unaffected by the pandemic (2019-20).

Time series data for repairs and replacements are available on StatsWales.

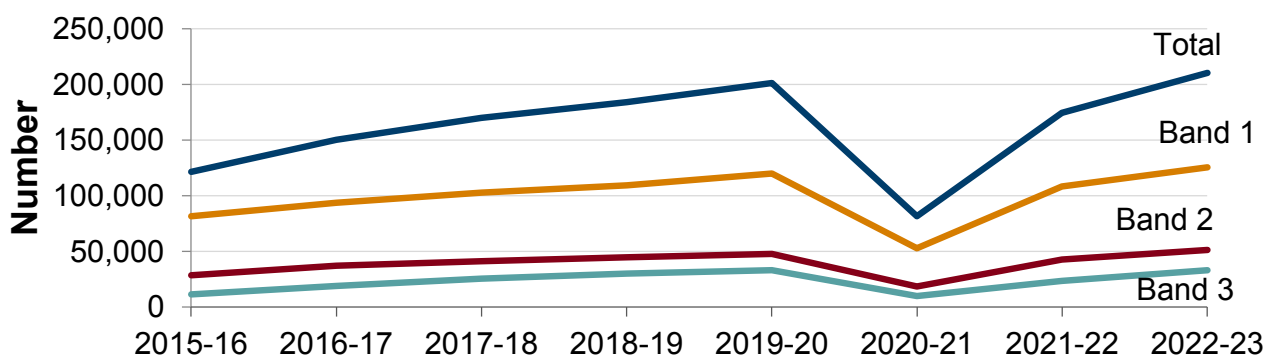
Eye Health Examination Wales

The **Eye Health Examination Wales (EHEW) scheme** offers extended free eye examinations to groups of the population that are at greater risk of certain eye diseases and to those that may find losing their sight particularly disabling.

There were 304 optometry practices in Wales where practitioners are accredited to provide the service (on 31 March 2023).

For more detail about the EHEW, including the banding structure, see the [quality report](#).

Figure 2: Number of examinations claimed for under the Eye Health Examination Wales scheme by band, 2015-16 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 2: Line chart showing that since services were affected by the pandemic in 2020-21, the number of examinations for all bands under EHEW have returned to or exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

Number of examinations claimed for under the Eye Health Examination Wales scheme (StatsWales)

There were just over 210,000 (210,175) total examinations claimed for under the EHEW in 2022-23, an increase of 20.4% since 2021-22 and the highest number on record.

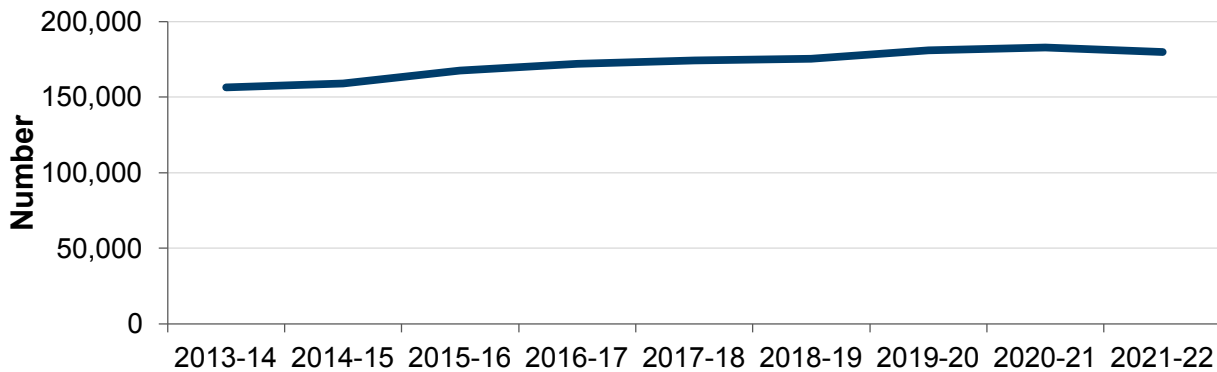
Six out of ten (59.8%) examinations were for band 1 (initial examination) appointments; a quarter (24.4%) were for band 2 (additional investigations) appointments; and 15.7% were for band 3 (follow up) appointments.

Further breakdowns including age band and selected symptom are available on StatsWales.

Diabetic Eye Screening Wales

Diabetic Eye Screening Wales is provided for every eligible person aged 12 years and over with diabetes who is registered with a GP in Wales. The service makes use of mobile screening units, which visit the various health board areas.

Figure 3: Number of eligible active patients in Wales, 2013-14 to 2021-22



Description of Figure 3: Line chart showing the number of eligible active patients in Wales has been on a longer-term upward trend but has remained steady in recent years.

Source: Diabetic Eye Screening Wales

Summary of key statistics for Diabetic Eye Screening Wales (StatsWales)

The latest available data is for 2021-22 and shows that just under 180,000 (179,804) patients were eligible for the service, a small decrease of 1.6% from 2020-21.

Of the 179,804 eligible patients in 2021-22, just over 12,500 (7.0%) were new registrations.

Of the 47,410 results reported from screenings during the year, 38.5% were found to have some degree of diabetic retinopathy. This includes 9.6% of patients who had potentially sight threatening retinopathy and 1.1% of patients who had severe retinopathy.

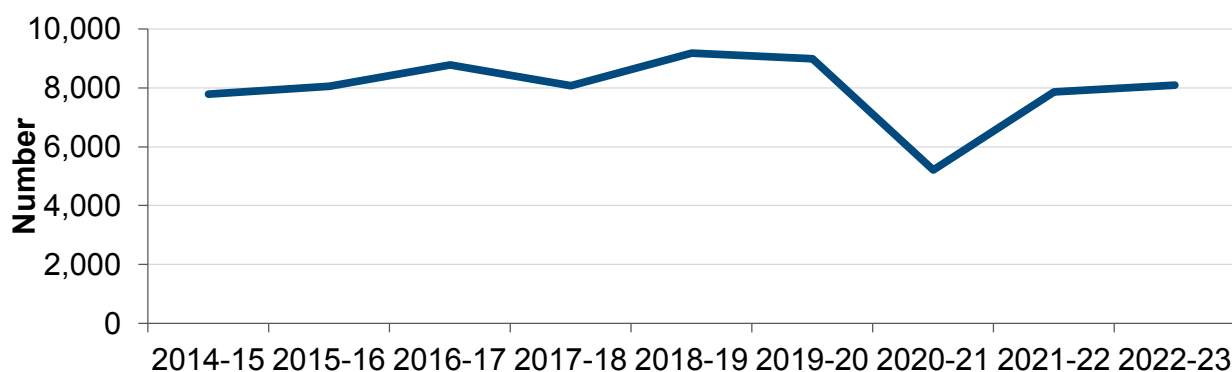
Further breakdowns including age band and gender are available on [StatsWales](#).

Low Vision Service Wales

The Low Vision Service Wales aims to help people with visual impairment to remain independent by providing low vision aids such as magnifiers, as well as education, onward referrals, and rehabilitation training.

‘Low vision’ is a term used to describe a sight problem that cannot be corrected by glasses, contact lenses, or medical treatment. Referrals can be made by various health practitioners as well as from individuals themselves.

Figure 4: Number of Low Vision Service Wales Assessments, 2014-15 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 4: Line chart showing the number of low vision service assessments has fluctuated over time but has increased since 2020-21.

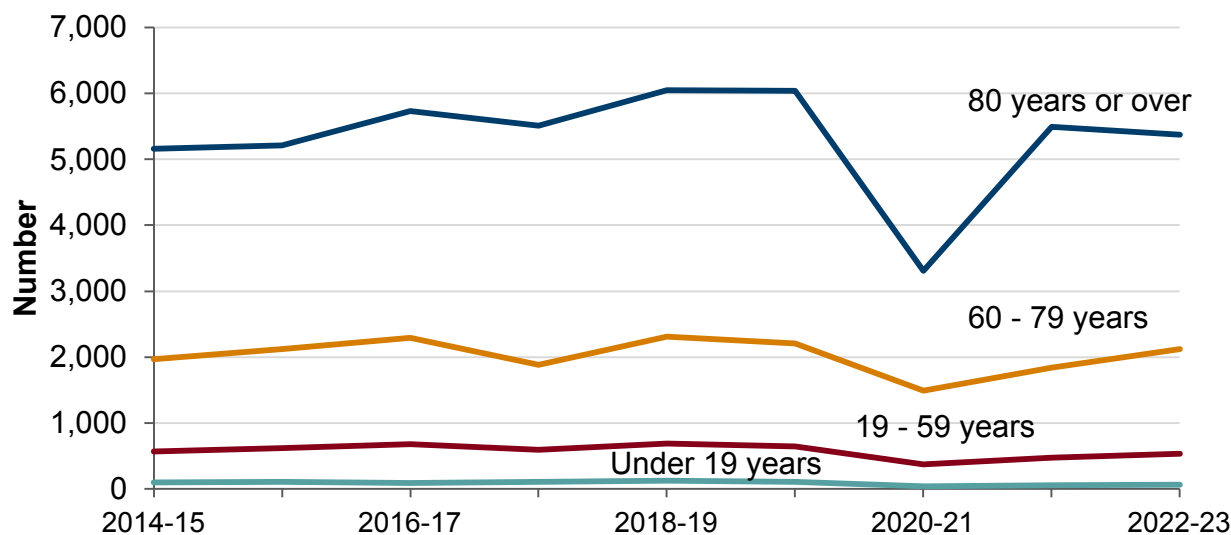
Source: Low Vision Service Wales

Low Vision Service Wales assessments (StatsWales)

A little more than 8,000 (8,096) Low Vision Service assessments were carried out in 2022-23, an increase of 2.9% since 2021-22.

Statistics on assessments by age group, conditions reported, ethnicity and other characteristics are available on StatsWales, in addition to statistics on visual acuity recorded at assessments and referrals.

Figure 5: Number of Low Vision Service Wales Assessments by age group of patients 2014-15 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 5: Line chart showing that the largest proportion of Low Vision Service Wales assessments were for patients aged 80 or over, which was more than double the 60-79 age group.

Source: Low Vision Service Wales

Low Vision Service Wales assessments by year and age group

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(StatsWales)

In 2022-23, two thirds (66.4%) of all Low Vision Service assessments were for patients aged 80 years or older; a little over a quarter (26.2%) were for patients aged between 60 and 79; one out of fifteen (6.6%) were for patients aged between 19 and 59; and fewer than one out of a hundred (0.8%) of patients were aged 18 or younger.

In 2022-23, more assessments were made for patients in every age group, apart from those aged 80 or older, compared to 2021-22.

Additional data on StatsWales shows that a little more than four out of ten (42.5%) assessments were for patients who lived alone, while just over a third (37.8%) were for patients living in domiciliary care.

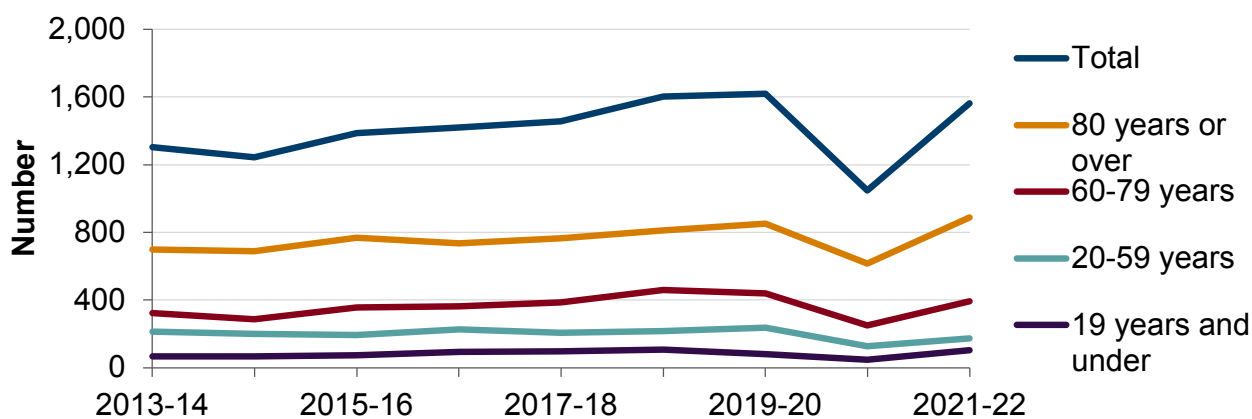
Two thirds (66.2%) of assessments were for female patients.

Sight impairment

Certificates of Vision Impairment (CVI)

The Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) is used to record patients 'severely sight impaired' or 'sight impaired'. With patient consent and when signed by a consultant ophthalmologist, the CVI is the formal notification to local authorities to assess the needs of the individual for services and register them as sight impaired or severely sight impaired.

Figure 6: Number of Certificates of Vision Impairment (CVI) given across Wales by age band, 2013-14 to 2021-22



Description of Figure 6: Line chart showing a longer-term upward trend in the number of CVIs given across Wales. The pandemic caused a large decrease in 2020-21, but the number increased sharply in 2021-22 to a similar number as before the pandemic.

Source: Moorfields Eye Hospital

Number of Certificates of Vision Impairment given across Wales by age band and financial year (StatsWales)

In 2021-22, 1,563 new CVIs were issued. Of these, nearly six out of ten (57.0%) were for patients aged 80 years and older; a quarter (25.2%) were for patients aged between 60 and 79; one in ten (11.2%) were for patients aged between 20 and 59 and one in fifteen (6.6%) were for patients aged 19 or younger.

In 2021-22, the total number of CVIs increased by nearly half (49.1%) compared to the previous year (which was affected by the pandemic). The number of certificates issued increased for all age groups, most notably in the 19 or

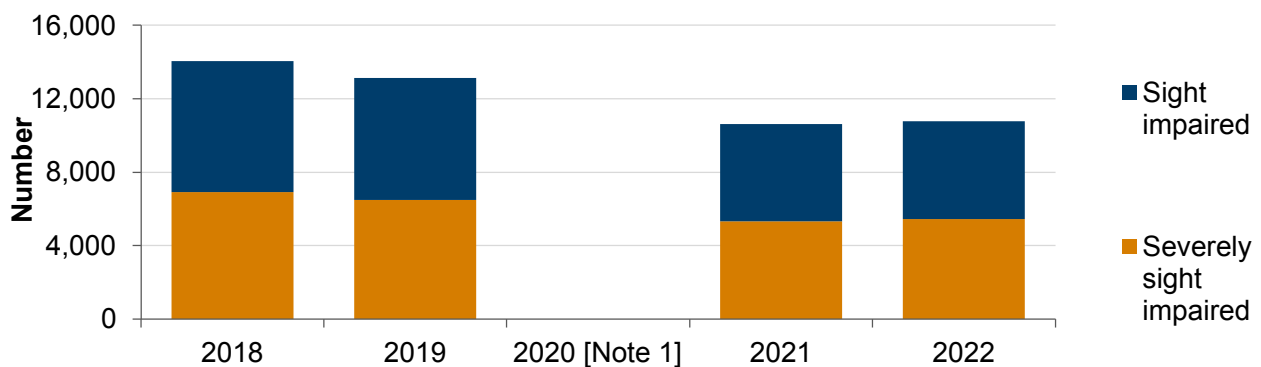
younger age group, where the number of certificates more than doubled (119.1% increase).

[Additional data including the cause of sight impairment and ethnic groups is published on StatsWales.](#)

Registers of severely sight impaired and sight impaired people

Until 2022, local authorities have maintained voluntary registers of people living in the authority area with sight impairment, following certification of their sight impairment by a consultant ophthalmologist. This data collection has now stopped and alternative options for collecting this data are being considered.

Figure 7: Registered number of sight impaired people in Wales on 31 March, 2018 to 2022



Description of Figure 7: Bar chart showing a downward trend in the number of sight impaired people registered by local authorities in Wales. Close to half of people on the register were registered as 'severely sight impaired' in all years.

Source: Local authorities disability registers

[Note 1] No data was collected in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sensory disabled persons by local authority, disability and age range (StatsWales)

Statistics in this section are based on the **Local authority registers of disabled people** statistical release, which provides additional quality information.

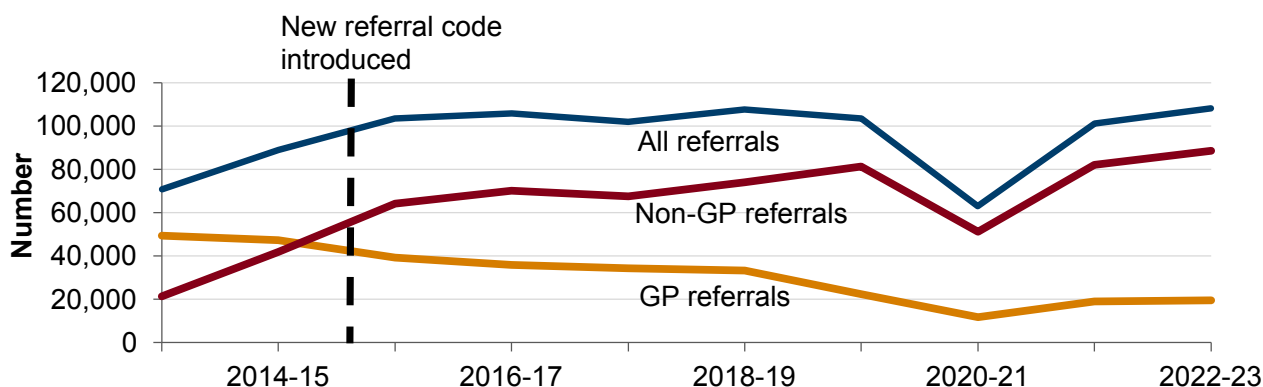
On 31 March 2022, a little fewer than 11,000 (10,763) people were registered with a sight impairment. Of these 49.5% were registered as sight impaired and 50.5% were registered as severely sight impaired.

Hospital Eye Service

Referrals

Referrals statistics count the number of referrals received by Welsh local health boards for a first outpatient consultant appointment (regardless of the patient's area of residence).

Figure 8: Number of referrals for first outpatient appointment for ophthalmology, 2013-14 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 8: Line chart showing a broadly steady trend in the total number of referrals from 2015-16 until a sharp decrease in 2020-21 caused by the pandemic. Referrals have since increased to their pre-pandemic levels and the large majority of referrals are now from non-GP practitioners.

Source: Outpatient Referral Dataset, Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)

Referrals by local health board and month (StatsWales)

Figure 8 is based on referrals data published on 22 June 2023 on StatsWales. This dataset is subject to monthly revisions so therefore the data in this stats release may not exactly match data on StatsWales in future months.

In 2022-23, there were just fewer than 110,000 (108,322) referrals for first outpatient appointments for ophthalmology, a 7.1% increase from 2021-22 and a return to pre-pandemic levels.

More than eight out of ten (81.9%) of referrals were made by non-GPs in 2022-23. This percentage has increased every year since data was first

collected on this basis in 2012-13.

A new source of referral code was introduced in October 2014 to capture ophthalmology referrals directly from primary care optometrists. The large increase in non-GP ophthalmology referrals shortly after this date is likely to be due to this. This needs to be noted when comparing ophthalmology referrals prior to this date.

Waiting times (referral to treatment)

The referral to treatment (RTT) pathway is the period of time a patient waits from a referral from a GP or other medical practitioner until treatment starts.

Open pathways refer to the patient pathways where the patient has yet to start treatment and they are actively on the waiting list for treatment.

Closed pathways refer to patient pathways where the patient has received treatment or has been deemed by a healthcare professional that they no longer require treatment and are removed from the waiting list.

The statistics in this section are based on patient pathways and not patients. These numbers do not approximate to each other as the same patient could have multiple pathways for different conditions. This is particularly important to note in relation to eye care, as there will be a referral for each condition, in each eye. For example, if a single patient had two conditions affecting both eyes, four different pathways would be opened.

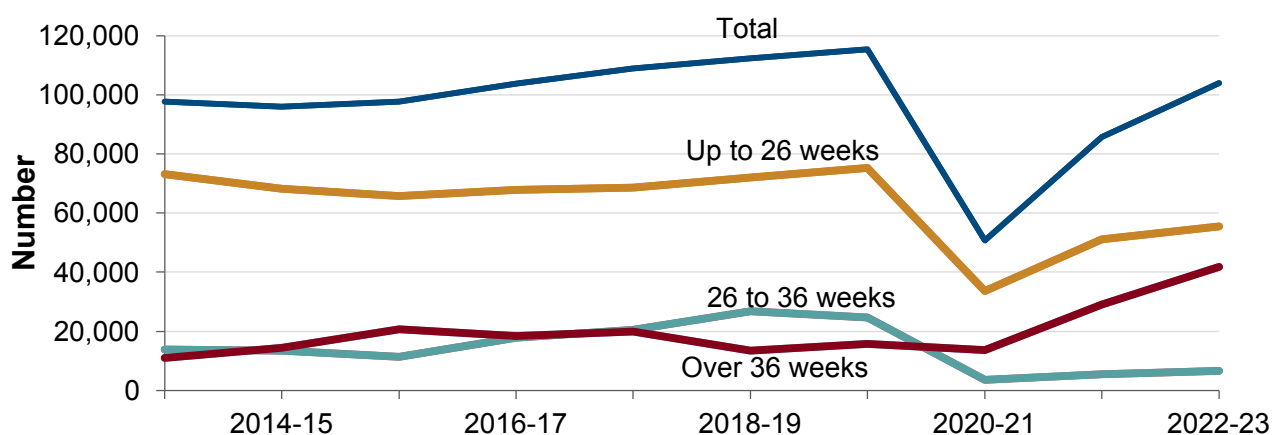
A full definition is available in the [quality and methodology information section](#).

There are two Welsh Government targets associated with RTT, these are: 95% of patients should wait less than 26 weeks from referral; and no patients should

wait more than 36 weeks for treatment from referral.

Figure 9 shows the number of closed patient pathways for ophthalmology in the last ten financial years, grouped by the length of time the patient waited from referral to treatment.

Figure 9: Closed patient pathways for ophthalmology by grouped weeks wait, 2013-14 to 2022-23 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 9: Line chart showing that activity had been increasing in ophthalmology services with the number of closed patient pathways on an upward trend prior to the pandemic. The pandemic caused a large decrease in pathway closures in 2020-21. While activity has since increased sharply, it remains below the pre-pandemic level.

Source: Referral to treatment times (RTT), Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)

Closed patient pathways by month, local health board and weeks waiting (StatsWales)

[Note 1] While closed pathway waiting times data are of sufficient quality to be published, they are not subject to the same level of validation as open pathways. As a result, closed pathway data shows an indication of how long patients waited before having their pathway closed, while open pathway data provides a more definitive overview of waiting times in the reference period.

Figure 9 is based on the RTT data published on 22 June 2023 on StatsWales. This dataset is subject to monthly revisions, therefore the data in this stats release may not exactly match data on StatsWales in future months.

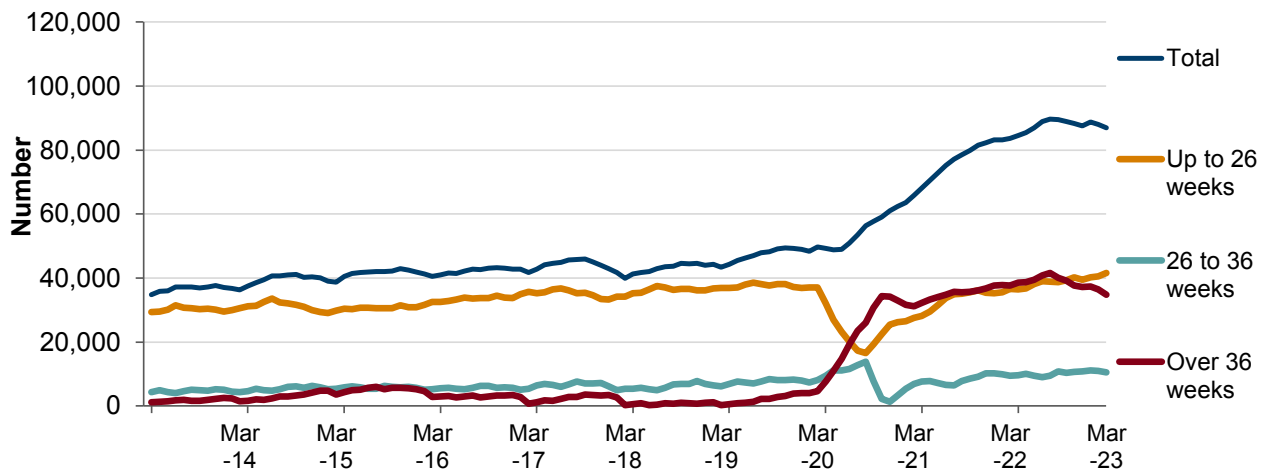
Just over 100,000 (104,031) ophthalmology patient pathways closed in 2022-23. This is an increase of 21.3% from 2021-22, but remains 10.0% lower than in 2019-20, the last year largely unaffected by the pandemic.

The majority of patient pathways (53.4%) waited fewer than 26 weeks for their pathway to be closed in 2022-23. However, the number and percentage of patient pathways closed after more than 36 weeks has increased markedly since the pandemic, with four in ten (40.3%) pathways closing after 36 weeks in 2022-23.

Performance against the 26 week target was broadly stable in the five years prior to the pandemic, where close to two thirds of pathways were closed before 26 weeks. Since the pandemic performance has deteriorated and the percentage of patient pathways closed before 26 weeks was 11.6 percentage points lower in 2022-23 compared to 2019-20.

Performance against the 36 week target had been broadly improving in the years prior to the pandemic, with just fewer than 16,000 (15,708) patient pathways closed after 36 weeks in 2019-20. Since the pandemic performance against the 36 week target has also deteriorated and there were just fewer than 42,000 (41,892) pathways closed after 36 weeks in 2022-23.

Figure 10: Number of open patient pathways for ophthalmology by grouped weeks wait, April 2013 to March 2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 10: Line chart showing the number of open pathways for ophthalmology has increased since April 2013, with a marked increase after the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the large majority of open pathways had been open for fewer than 26 weeks, but since the pandemic more pathways have been open for longer than 26 weeks.

Source: Referral to treatments times (RTT), Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)

Patient pathways waiting to start treatment by month, grouped weeks and treatment function (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Open pathway data is collected at a single point in time each month.

In 2022-23 the number of open ophthalmology patient pathways varied between 84,600 and 89,700 per month.

At the end of the financial year in March 2023, there were just under 87,000 (86,910) open ophthalmology patient pathways. This is an increase of 3.9% from March 2022, and an increase of 74.8% since the last comparable month largely unaffected by the pandemic (March 2020).

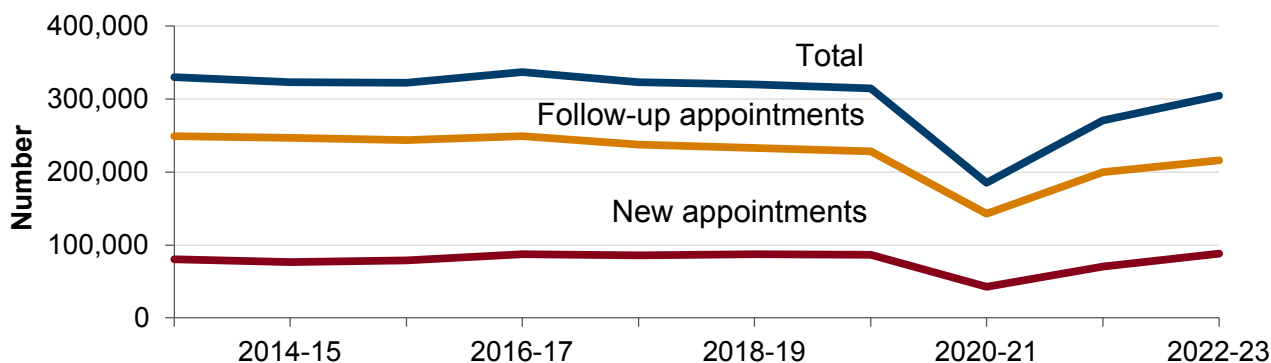
The proportion of patient pathways where patients were waiting longer for treatment has increased markedly since the pandemic. In March 2023, 40.0% of pathways had patients waiting over 36 weeks compared to 9.2% in March 2020.

The number of pathways where the patient was waiting fewer than 26 weeks was higher in March 2023 compared to March 2020. However, as the overall number of pathways has increased, the percentage of pathways where the patient has waited fewer than 26 weeks has decreased from 74.5% in March 2020 to 47.9% in March 2023.

Outpatients

An outpatient attendance is defined as a patient who attends a hospital for treatment or a consultation with either a consultant or a specialist nurse, without staying there overnight. Appointments with other health professionals and telemedicine are not captured.

Figure 11: Number of outpatient attendances (new and follow-up) for ophthalmology, 2013-14 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 11: Line chart showing the number of follow-up appointments is more than double the number of new appointments over the time series. Prior to the pandemic follow-up appointments had been on a slight downward trend while new appointments remained broadly similar.

Source: Outpatient dataset, Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)

Number of outpatient appointments for ophthalmology (StatsWales)

In 2022-23, there were more than 300,000 (304,206) attendances to ophthalmology outpatient appointments in Welsh hospitals, an increase of 12.5% since the previous year. Outpatient activity has nearly returned to its pre-pandemic level, with the number of appointments 3.2% lower than in 2019-20.

Just fewer than 90,000 (88,156) appointments were for new appointments and while just fewer than 220,000 (216,050) were follow-up appointments.

The outpatient statistics in this release do not match data published on StatsWales, as the data presented here is produced on a Welsh GP registration

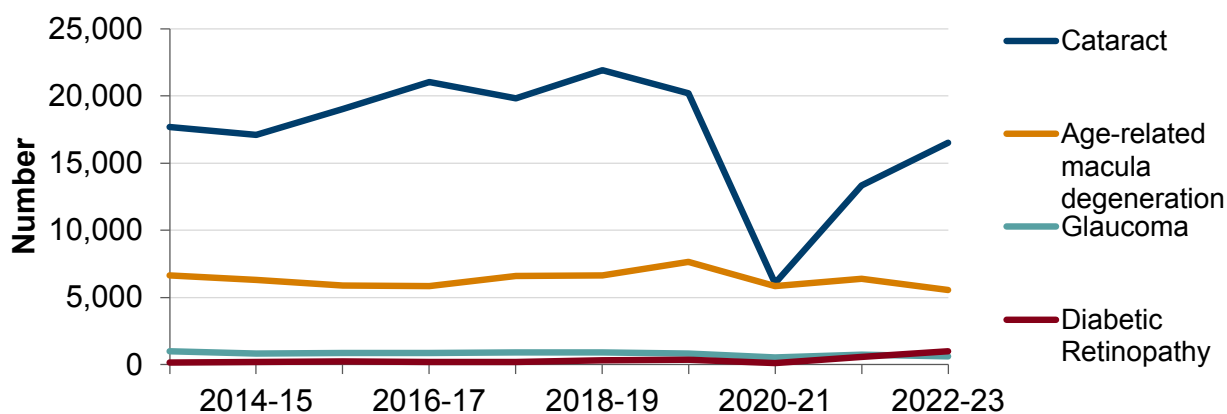
basis, while the StatsWales data is based on a Welsh hospital provider basis. The data in this release includes appointments for all patients who are registered with a Welsh GP, of which some will live in England and have secondary care appointments in England. The StatsWales data is based on appointments which happened at hospital sites in Wales, regardless of where the patient lives or where their GP is located. It excludes appointments for Welsh residents who had appointments in English hospitals.

Hospital admissions

Patients are defined as being admitted to hospital if they stay at least one night (inpatients), or if they are admitted electively for treatment or care that does not require an overnight stay in hospital (day cases).

More information is available on the [Patient Episode Database for Wales \(PEDW\) website](#).

Figure 12: Number of admissions (inpatient and day case) for hospital eye care in Wales by principal diagnosis, 2013-14 to 2022-23



Description of Figure 12: Line chart showing that the most common principal diagnosis for eye care admissions was for cataracts over the last 10 years. Admissions for age-related macula degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy decreased during the pandemic but by a much lower proportion than cataract admissions. Cataract admissions have since increased but remain below their pre-pandemic level.

Source: Patient Episode Database for Wales (PEDW), Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)

Number of admissions for hospital eye care in Wales (StatsWales)

There were just over 16,500 (16,510) cataract admissions in 2022-23, an increase of 23.7% from the previous year, but a decrease of 18.3% from the pre-pandemic level (2019-20).

Diabetic retinopathy admissions had been on a slight upward trend in the two years prior to the pandemic, but increased sharply in 2022-23 to the highest number on record. There were just fewer than 1,000 (987) admissions, an 80.8% increase since the previous year and nearly three times as many as there were in 2019-20.

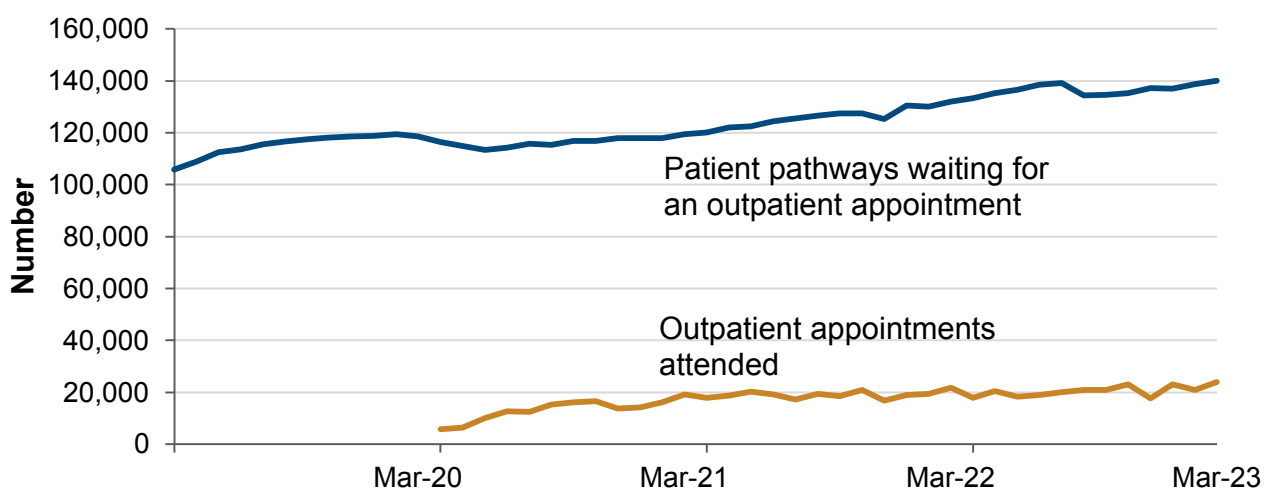
Admissions for the other principal diagnoses both decreased in 2022-23 compared to the previous year. Age-related macula degeneration admissions decreased by 13.4% and glaucoma admissions decreased by 15.1%.

Eye care measures

Monthly data on open and closed pathways for eye care measures has been published on StatsWales since April 2019. Data includes the number of patients waiting for an outpatient appointment and different measures for how long the patient waited or has been waiting.

A patient can be categorised as Health Risk Factor R1 if they are at risk of irreversible harm or significant adverse outcome if their target date is missed.

Figure 13: Number of ophthalmology patients' pathways, assessed as Health Risk Factor R1, waiting for an outpatient appointment and appointments attended, April 2019 to March 2023 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 13: Time series line chart showing increases for both the number of open patient pathways for ophthalmology and the number of outpatients appointments attended since April 2020.

Source: Eye care Outcome Measures – Monthly Submission Proforma, Welsh Government

Patients waiting for an ophthalmology outpatient appointment (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Open pathway data is collected at a single point in time each month.

[Note 2] Appointments data available from April 2020.

There was an upward trend in the number of open pathways where the patient was assessed as Health Risk Factor R1 in 2022-23, peaking at just over 140,000 (140,110) in March 2023, an increase of 6.2% since March 2022.

Nearly all (99.9%) of these patient pathways had a target date allocated.

Nearly half (49.1%) of patient pathways, where the patient had been assessed as Health Risk Factor R1, were waiting within their target date or within 25% beyond their target date in March 2023.

In March 2023, there were nearly 24,000 (23,933) appointments attended where the patient had been assessed as Health Risk Factor R1, an increase of 10.2% since March 2022. The large majority (84.3%) of these had a target date allocated.

In more than six out of ten (61.4%) appointments attended, where the patient had been assessed as R1, the patient had waited within their target date or within 25% beyond their target date in March 2023.

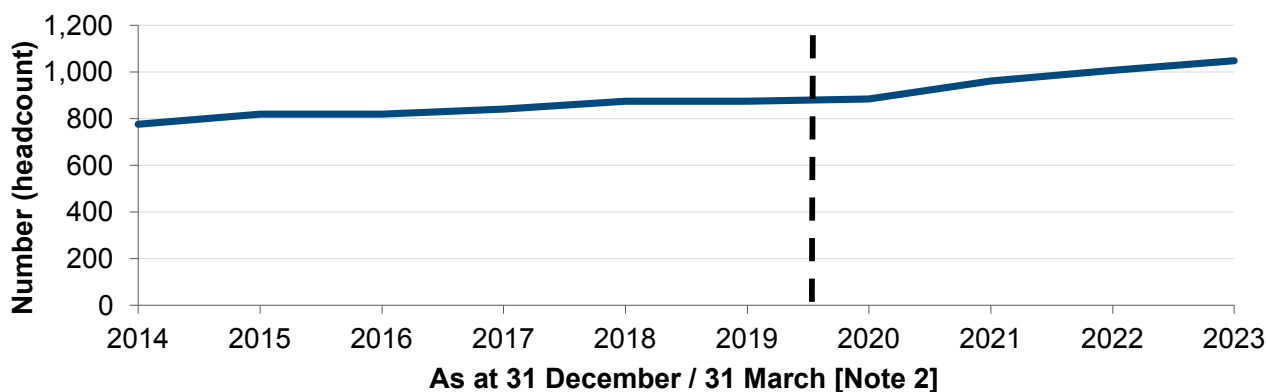
Further information is available through the [eye care measures](#) publication.

Workforce

The majority of eye care practitioners work in primary care, in opticians' practices and are counted using the performers list. Ophthalmic practitioners can also be directly employed by the NHS, typically working in hospital settings and these data are sourced from the [Electronic Staff Record \(ESR\)](#).

Figure 14: Number (headcount) of ophthalmic practitioners in primary care workforce, 2014 to 2023

[Note 1]



Description of Figure 14: Line chart showing the number of ophthalmic practitioners increased every year between 2014 and 2019. The data collection method changed in 2020 so data after this point is not directly comparable, however the upward trend each year has continued.

Source: NHS England, Central Ophthalmic Payments system, and NHS Shared Services Partnership, Ophthalmic List and Ophthalmic Supplementary List

[Note 1] Whole time equivalent data not available.

[Note 2] Data for 2014 to 2019 refers to 31 December in each year and were extracted from the contractor payment system by NHS England. Data from 2020 onwards refer to 31 March and are collected from the performers list by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership. Data from the two sources are collected differently and are not exactly comparable, see [quality and methodology information](#).

Number of ophthalmic practitioners (StatsWales)

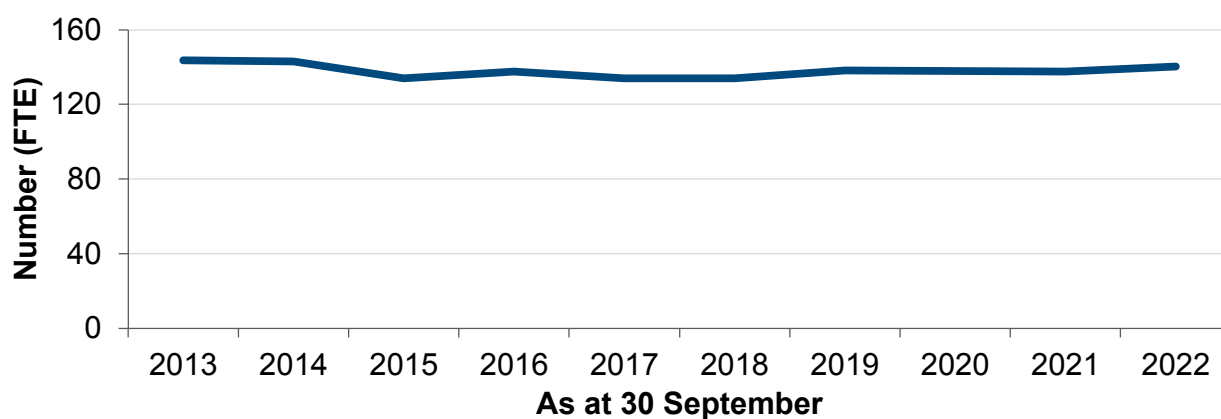
There were 1,049 ophthalmic practitioners on the performers list on 31 March 2023, an increase of 4.3% since the previous year and the highest number on

record.

Nearly all practitioners were optometrists (1,045), with 4 ophthalmic medical practitioners recorded in 2023.

Time series data broken down by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners is available on StatsWales.

Figure 15: Ophthalmology doctors directly employed by the NHS, full time equivalent (FTE) numbers, 2013 to 2022



Description of Figure 15: Line chart showing the number of FTE ophthalmology doctors directly employed by the NHS has remained broadly consistent since 2013 at close to 140 FTE.

Source: NHS Electronic Staff Record

Ophthalmology staff directly employed by the NHS (full time equivalent numbers) (StatsWales)

On 30 September 2022, there were 140 FTE ophthalmology doctors directly employed by the NHS in Wales. This is a slight increase (1.9%) from the previous year.

National Survey for Wales

As part of the survey that was undertaken during the period April 2021 to March 2022, three questions were asked on eye care. The results are summarised as follows:

1. How often your eyes are tested?

33% of people reported that they have their eyes tested at least once a year, 34% every two years, 15% less than every two years, and 9% say they have never had their eyes tested.

2. Who you would ask for help with eye pain / redness?

49% of people say that they would ask an optometrist/optician, 39% said that they would ask a GP, 8% said that they would ask a pharmacist, 3% said that they would ask friends/family/colleagues, 2% said that they would ask a hospital and 2% would ask NHS Direct.

3. Why don't have eyes tested more often?

80% of people say they have not had eye problems, 8% said they have not thought about it or have not had a reminder, 4% said they were too busy, 3% said appointments were not available and 2% said they do not feel safe to go.

More information can be found in the [National Survey for Wales publication](#).

Quality and methodology information

General Ophthalmic Service (GOS)

Many people qualify for a free NHS General Ophthalmic Service (GOS) sight test paid for by the NHS, including:

- people aged 60 and over
- children under 16 (or under 19 and in full-time education)
- people with diabetes
- people aged 40 and older who have an immediate family member with glaucoma
- people eligible for certain benefits

Eye Health Examination Wales

The Eye Health Examination Wales (EHEW) scheme offers extended free eye examinations to groups of the population that are at greater risk of certain eye diseases and to those that may find losing their sight particularly disabling, including people who:

- have sight in one eye only (uniocular)
- have a hearing impairment or are profoundly deaf or blind
- have retinitis pigmentosa
- are from an ethnic group that is Black (which includes African/Caribbean/Black British or other Black) or Asian (which includes Indian/Pakistani/Chinese/Bangladeshi/Asian British or other Asian)
- are at risk of eye disease because of a family history
- are experiencing eye problems that need urgent attention.

Referral to Treatment definition

The referral to treatment times statistics in this release show data on the waiting time from referral by a GP or other medical practitioner to hospital for treatment in the NHS in Wales. Data on Welsh residents treated or waiting for treatment outside of Wales is not included in the release.

A patient is defined to have been treated, or their pathway closed if either, following consultation with a hospital specialist, no hospital treatment is necessary or if treatment begins. This could include:

- being admitted to hospital for an operation or treatment
- starting treatment that does not require a stay in hospital (for example, medication)
- beginning the fitting of a medical device
- starting an agreed period of time to monitor the patient's condition to see if further treatment is needed
- it is determined that the patient does not need treatment or has died

'Patient pathways' are counted, rather than patients, as the same patient can have more than one referral for treatment.

Optometry workforce

Figures for optometry workforce refer to the position at 31 December each year for 2019 and all years prior, and refer to the position at 31 March for 2020 and all subsequent years. This is because they are sourced from different systems.

For the period up to 2019, figures are sourced from [NHS Digital's publication](#) (now NHS England) and reflects practitioners who were authorised by local health boards (LHBs) to carry out NHS funded sight tests, based on data derived

from the Central Ophthalmic Payments system.

Data collection from that source ceased, so for 2020 onwards, data has been sourced from the performers list (Ophthalmic List and Ophthalmic Supplementary List), a register of all ophthalmic practitioners able to practise in Wales, maintained by NHS Shared Services Partnership.

Due to the change in data source and reference period for 2020 onwards, data for 2020 onwards are not directly comparable with previous years.

National Statistics status

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 Statistics**.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in June 2012 following a full **assessment** against the Code of Practice by the Office for Statistics Regulation.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ('national indicators') that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the **Wellbeing of Wales report**.

Further information on the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**.

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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