

Key questions answered

• Who needs a regular sight test?

Everybody! Sight tests should be part of everyone's healthcare routine just like going to the dentist. A contact lens check is not the same as a full sight test.

• Where do I go for a sight test?

Contact your local optician to make an appointment. A full sight test will be conducted by a qualified optometrist*.

• Why is a sight test important?

A sight test is not just about checking whether your vision needs correcting. Regular sight tests are important to check for the early signs of eye disease which, if left untreated, could lead to blindness.

• How often should I have a sight test?

Most people should go for a test once every two years.

If you have diabetes or a family history of eye disease, such as glaucoma, you may need a sight test more frequently. Speak to your optometrist* for individual advice.

*Optometrists are trained professionals who examine eyes; test sight; give advice on visual problems; and prescribe and dispense spectacles or contact lenses.

For more information about eye health please visit:
www.eyehalthalliance.co.uk

Where to find out more

For more information on costs or if you have a query on eligibility for NHS services, telephone the NHS health cost advice line: **0845 850 1166**.

For more information about NHS sight tests and eye care services in your area, visit the NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk



EYE HEALTH ALLIANCE



FREE NHS
Eye Care Services

NHS sight test entitlements

In **England, Northern Ireland & Wales** you qualify for a free NHS sight test if you are:

- **Aged under 16**
- **Aged 16, 17 or 18 in full-time education**
- **Aged 60 or over**
- **Diagnosed with diabetes or glaucoma**
- **Considered to be at risk of glaucoma** (as advised by an ophthalmologist)
- **Aged 40 or over and the parent, brother, sister, son or daughter of a person diagnosed with glaucoma**
- **Registered blind or partially sighted**
- **Eligible for an NHS Complex Lens Voucher** (your optician will advise on your entitlement)
- **Claiming Benefit** (i.e. Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit). If you are receiving Tax Credits you may also be entitled to an NHS sight test.
- **On a low income and named on a valid HC2 (full help) or HC3 (partial help) certificate**

In **Scotland** NHS eye examinations are available free to all.

NHS sight tests at home

If you are eligible for a free NHS sight test but are unable to leave home unaccompanied because of physical or mental illness or disability, you may be entitled to an NHS-funded sight test at home (also known as a domiciliary sight test).

To arrange a sight test at home, contact your local NHS Primary Care Trust or Local Health Board for a list of providers offering this service in your area. To find contact details for your local NHS visit the NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk.



Optical voucher entitlements

If you need new glasses or contact lenses, and qualify for help with the cost, you will be given an optical voucher along with your prescription. You are free to use your voucher as full or part payment towards the cost of the glasses or contact lenses of your choice, at an optician of your choice.

In **England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales** you can get help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses if you are:

- **Aged under 16**
- **Aged 16, 17 or 18 in full-time education**
- **Prescribed Complex Lenses** (your optician will advise on your entitlement)
- **Claiming Benefit** (i.e. Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit). If you are receiving Tax Credits you may also be entitled to help on the NHS.
- **On a low income and named on a valid HC2 (full help) or HC3 (partial help) certificate**

To apply for a HC2 or HC3 certificate complete a HC1 form available from a Job Centre Plus office, NHS hospital or by phoning the NHS health cost advice line on 0845 850 1166. Some dentists, opticians and doctor surgeries also have them.