

Opticians reopen on Monday

Optometry practices will be able to see patients face-to-face for emergency and essential eye care from today as part of Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's recovery route map.

Many practices continued to provide remote support for patients during lockdown and Phase 1, but will now be able to start seeing patients again in person.

To ensure the safety of patients and staff, all practices have been provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from NHS stocks, and have put in place arrangements to comply with physical distancing and enhance their infection control processes.

Emergency Eyecare Treatment Centres (EETC), which have been providing face-to-face emergency care during lockdown and Phase 1, will close after Sunday 28 June.

EETCs were set up on a temporary basis to reduce the number of open practices and ensure that patients could continue to be seen for essential appointments within a safe environment.

Routine eye care continues to be suspended until it is considered safe to resume.

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said: "The resumption of face-to-face care in optometry practices is an important step in the remobilisation of community eye care services.

"If anyone has concerns about their vision, they should continue to phone their local practice for advice.

“Patients will once again be able to be seen locally if they have a pressing eye care issue: this is good not only for patients, but for optometry practices.

“I wish to thank community optometry practices and staff for all the work they have done during the response to the pandemic, caring for patients remotely and staffing the Emergency Eyecare Treatment Centres.

“They are key to the delivery of eye care in Scotland, and have demonstrated they are a vital and valued part of the wider health service.”

Chair of Optometry Scotland David Quigley said:

“In working closely with and receiving support from the Scottish Government, community opticians and optometrists have continued to deliver vital eye care services across Scotland throughout the pandemic.

“As we move out of lockdown, we look forward to beginning to welcome patients back into a safe and controlled environment.

“We urge all patients to contact their optician by telephone as a first port of call, and a face to face appointment will be made for them if necessary.”