

Patient's 'fly' in the eye was a piece of embedded metal

Peter Boath was driving his car when at first what he thought was a fly came through the window and lodged in his eye.

It wasn't until the next day he realised it was something more serious.

He went to his local optician in Alloa, Clackmannanshire, which is one of those taking part in the trial.

After examining his eye, the optometrist had a virtual tele-ophthalmology consultation with an NHS Forth Valley registrar.

Peter had a piece of metal embedded in his cornea, which was removed and the ophthalmologist arranged an appointment for him with a consultant the next day at Falkirk Community Hospital, in June 2019.

Peter, 66, said: "I was driving home from work and a lorry went past and I got what I thought at first was a fly in my eye through the window.

"It wasn't until the next day when it hadn't come out that I realised it was something else.

"I went to the optician and after examining my eye she explained that I needed specialist treatment but that I could be seen straight away in a virtual consultation.

"She linked up with an ophthalmologist and was able to remove what turned out to be a piece of metal from my eye.

"It was amazing the way she and the doctor worked together. My eye was on the screen and the doctor examined it virtually and decided what else needed to be done.

"The optician saw me at around 5pm and after the consultation I was booked in to see an eye specialist the following night, who reviewed my condition.

"It was all so quick and didn't give me time to worry about what was happening."

Peter had a deeply embedded piece of metal and associated inflammation, and needed several treatments, but has since been given a clean bill of health.

The tele-ophthalmology system means an eye specialist is able to review patients like him at the moment advice is needed, offering decision support to the high street optician, and ensuring any follow up treatment is more streamlined.

Peter added: "I am completely fine now and I would recommend a virtual consultation to anybody.

"I'm sure this could mean the difference between losing or keeping your sight for some patients, it was all so quick with somebody at the end of a phone being able to get on a screen.

"It's amazing that a consultant can be in hospital, or even at home, but can still be on hand."