

# Hardship (Essential Non-GMS) Scheme



**The hardship scheme is used by families who have a medical card, to access dressings and other medical supplies that are not available directly through the medical card.**

We are aware that many families living with EB are experiencing confusion and difficulties around the Hardship Scheme so we have prepared this document in order to shed some light on the area. The scheme is very difficult to obtain information on but this document reflects our best understanding of it.

*If you can add anything from your own experiences of the Hardship Scheme, we would be delighted to hear from you, in order to help all families navigate the difficult, and sometimes frustrating, processes involved.*

## **What is it?**

The Hardship Scheme is designed to cover medical card holders for items, such as dressings, which are prescribed by a doctor but not available through the medical card. If you have a medical card and the need for dressings and bandages, it is your right to access these through the Hardship Scheme.

## **How to access this scheme?**

How you access this scheme varies depending on what part of the country you live in.

- If you live in **Dublin, Wicklow** or **Kildare** you can access your dressings via your Local Health Office. You will need to fill in a form which will be stamped by your doctor and by your Public Health Nurse.
- If you live elsewhere in the country, your first point of call will be your local pharmacy. Your pharmacist will make an application on your behalf to seek approval from the HSE to dispense your items. Your doctor will also need to stamp this form.

## **How is the application assessed?**

An application is assessed both on the patient's financial circumstances and on how important the items requested are to the patient's treatment. For EB patients, dressings are vital so they should be granted quite easily. Please bear in mind however, that the paperwork may take some time to go through.

## **Does this service need to be reassessed every so often?**

No. Once you continue to have a medical card and are receiving your dressings, you should not have to reapply.

## **Am I eligible for this scheme?**

If you have a medical card and a need for dressings you are entitled to this scheme. We want to stress that it is not a privilege, or a favour, it is your right to access your dressings in this way.