

## **Older & Bolder warns of serious consequences for older people if community services suffer further cuts**

There is no doubt this country is experiencing historically difficult financial times but Older & Bolder stress that the response to this crisis must never be one of expediency and those who are most vulnerable must not be made to pay for the country's debts.

**Patricia Conboy** Director of Older & Bolder said today, 'As we await the publication of the HSE Health Service Plan I am deeply disturbed at recent statements by Minister of Health James Reilly's warning of cuts. What does the Minister mean when he speaks about producing a "politically acceptable" form of the HSE Service Plan? Older & Bolder believes that political expediency must never be a rationale for cuts because we are talking about actual and real individuals who will experience the effects of cuts to their lives which can in effect cause huge isolation and suffering and in some cases make older people more vulnerable.

Ms **Conboy** continued: 'We welcome the Minister's support for older people living in their own homes but this must never be seen as an easier option. There must be no opportunistic decisions making. Older people deserve more. A crisis of such proportions as experienced by our health service demands calm, reasoned planning and public discussion. 'Make Home Work – The Right to Age Well at Home' supports older people ageing well and *safely* at home. But I am deeply worried that older people may now be expected to age at home without supports. This is totally unacceptable and could prove disastrous for communities and for individual older people. We call on Minister Reilly to be courageous and I applaud Minister Ruairi Quinn's brave approach where he has admitted that he has made mistakes. He is putting the needs of disadvantaged children first. We ask that Minister Reilly would do the same with vulnerable older people.'