

OFFCUT 1

Drug consumption rooms are being seen as the next step up in harm reduction to counter overdose, improve infection control, connect heavy-end drug users to treatment, and to reduce the nuisance caused by open drug 'scenes'. Common in parts of mainland Europe, these are just a distant memory in Britain and represent a step too far many UK workers. A new report from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction has surveyed European provision and collated the evidence on its effectiveness ¹. It suggests that all the expected benefits can be realised as long as services have adequate capacity, are easy to access, and are well managed in the context of political support for their role within a wider network of services. In practice, political support is most likely to be forthcoming when the public nuisance is both large and resistant to other options. Then such services start to seem an attractive way to restore local quality of life rather than a threat to it.

¹ Hedrich D. **European report on drug consumption rooms**. EMCDDA, 2004. Copies www.emcdda.eu.int.