



“This is the only place I come where people look at my health as a whole.” This testimonial from an HIV-positive patient for the British School of Osteopathy speaks volumes about the impact the institution is having on the lives of people in the London borough of Southwark.

Through a scheme that has offered thousands of free subsidised treatments in one of the London’s most disadvantaged areas, the staff and students are determined to bring the positive effects of osteopathy to their neighbours, with income no bar to participation.

Word of mouth has led to demand for the school’s services spreading throughout Southwark. From new clinics at Darwin Court, a residential and day complex for the elderly, to 1st Place Children’s Centre, where students can help stressed young families to banish barriers to sleep, the school is helping more and more people.

Reducing the trauma of accidents, relieving osteo-arthritis in the elderly and alleviating the musculoskeletal aches and pains of the homeless is what the institution’s staff do on a daily basis.

The work is far more than a fix for back pain, it’s a general MOT in the battle to stay well. As one patient said: “You don’t get that anywhere else. No one’s got the time.”

Ewart Wooldridge, founding chief executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and a judge for the awards, said of the scheme: “There is almost a familial relationship between users and staff. It offers a great example of achieving the right balance between engaging with and contributing to the local community.”