Your Website

For Your Osteopathic Practice

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Websites for
Osteopaths.com

CONTENTS

Websites 101

Why a Website

It's rare these days that we question why get a website, but a lot of people will just go for a cheap option and tick 'website' off the list. This is a shame as a good website will work hard for you, converting visitors to customers for many years, while a cheap one will cost you more money by leaking visitors who a better website would have converted. If there's one thing worth getting right, this is it.

A good website should form the core of your digital marketing, making clear your messages and image, and communicating the Big Idea (see guide 1). It will take people from being interested in or curious about what you do, to people who are contacting you as a potential patient, funneling people from landing on the homepage to making contact with us.
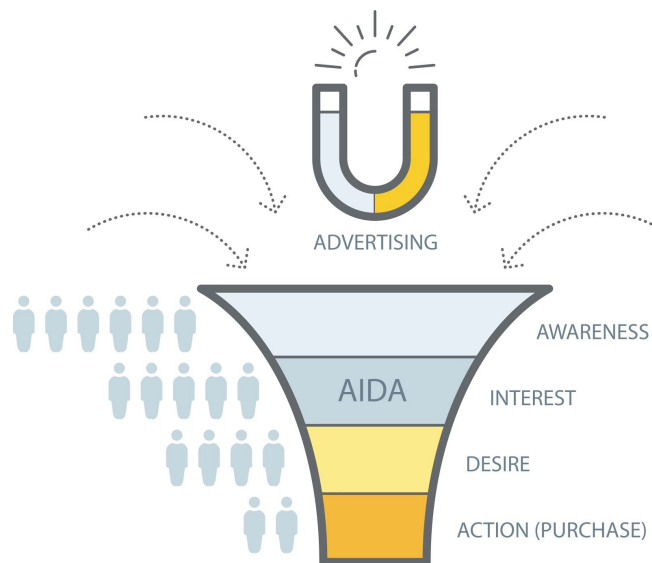
Your website should funnel people from awareness/attention through to action

Your website also allows you to view your business and your brand from the outside, in a way that looking at your leaflet, business card or a magazine advert doesn't. You can scan through your website and see your messages and image and see if you think they're congruent and reflect you and your market at the current time. Building a website is a great way to put your brand together and understand the image that you're creating.

Ways to get your website

These days there are tons of ways to get a website. We won't go into too much detail because obviously the *best* way is to get a professional website from websitesforosteopaths.com.

There are various visual builders like Wix who say you can do it yourself for free. Free often means paying extra for various services and hosting, and obviously with any visual builder you are limited by what it can do. There may also be a steep learning curve to get to use the software, and as with all cheap websites you may find that here and there you just can't quite get it to look how you want as there are things that need to be done with code that can't be done with a visual builder. You might also find that if you want to incorporate any custom features in the future that it's literally impossible, and you'll either have to go without or move to a whole new platform.

A step up (arguably) from using Wix is to get a 'cheap' (£200-£500) website from a web developer who also uses visual drag-and-drop builders. Normally they will use a visual builder plugin for WordPress and won't be a coder themselves but just someone who has learned to use the software. The only real advantage here is that someone else is going to do the site for you, but still with the restriction that they can only do what the visual builder allows, and truth be told most cheap web developers aren't very good graphic designers in the first place.
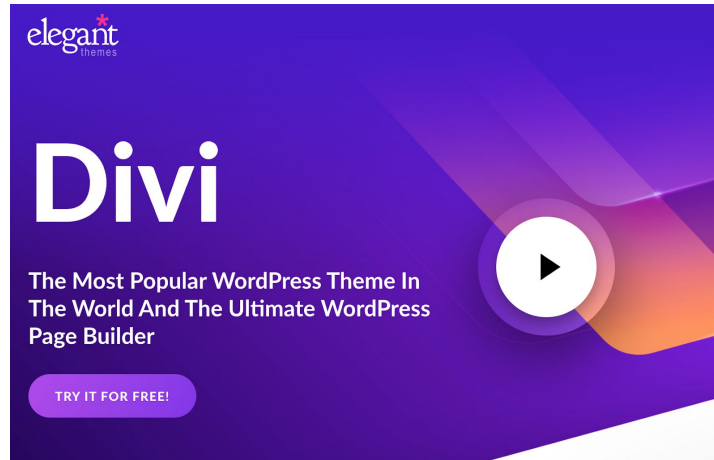
Visual builders like Divi have created many cheap web agencies who can't write code

Next (here comes the plug), you could get an amazing professional website from **websitesforosteopaths.com**. You pay a bit more but get your website coded professionally, rather than just thrown together in software which can be insecure and difficult to edit. You'll also get better design skill, a quality mobile experience, and know that whatever edits need doing, they can be done professionally.

Upwards from there, looking at £2000-£3000+, we're talking about custom designed websites where a graphic designer designs everything from complete scratch, then a coder builds it from complete scratch. It's more an option for bigger and brands with strong images who need a custom solution to fit them perfectly.

Mobile Responsiveness

It's tempting to design websites on our computer screen and not really think about how they might look on mobile devices. Remember that around 50% of your potential patients will be looking at your website on their phone, so a good mobile experience is crucial. Test your website on actual mobile devices and be sure to test on both Android and iOs as you can get different results.
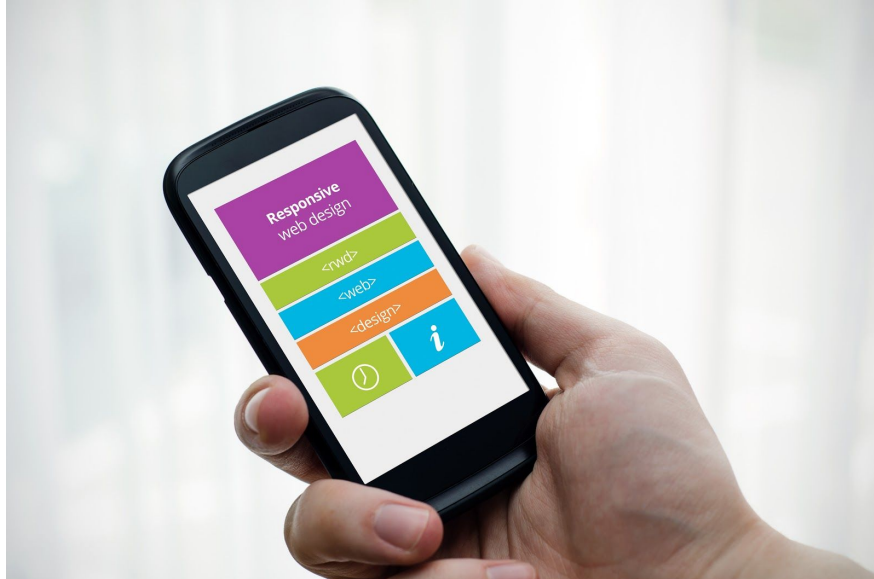
Around 50% of your visitors will be using a mobile device

This is another area where cheaper options frequently fall down as cheaper designers often overlook the importance of mobile responsiveness, or lack the tools to really create a quality mobile experience. Visual builders often optimise for only one mobile size and in real life when the device is a bit bigger or smaller the site doesn't look right. By contrast, a coder will go through a process of testing at every single screen size and on a range of devices to make sure the user experience is good across all screens.

Domain name

Of course you'll need a **domain name**, such as yourname.com or harlowsportsinjuryclinic.com. This is one of the simplest parts of getting a website. .com domain names typically cost around £10 per year and you can register one with dozens of companies online by searching 'register domain name'.

Registering a domain at 123-reg

You can register your own domain name and give the details to your developer or hoster, who will point the **DNS** to your hosting, or you can simply let the developer or hoster sort it all out themselves, which is normally easier.

Hosting and Maintenance

All websites need a **host**, that is a server which keeps the website on its hard drive and serves up the pages to browsers around the world. Hosting services vary in price and quality. Cheap 'shared' hosting can be slow and insecure, and sharing bandwidth and server resources with other websites can cause problems such as your website becoming inaccessible when another one gets busy, or if another website on your shared server is found to be serving up spam or becomes infected, you could be penalised by Google for being in a 'bad neighbourhood'.

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Hosting options at WP Engine, starting at £24/month

If you arrange your own hosting, the hosters will have a tech support but you'll generally be expected to maintain your own website, in terms of updating software when necessary, taking care of your own backups and security and fixing any problems. **Managed Hosting** takes care of all this for you, basically all the technical side is looked after, with a guarantee that should anything go wrong, the hosters will make it good again, taking a weight off your mind and potentially saving lots of time and money if you had to hire a coder to fix something.

Websitesforosteopaths.com offer fully managed hosting plus up to 30 minutes developer time a month for tweaks to your site, for just £20/month or £200/year.

Administration

Depending on the scope of your site it will need some administration from time to time. That could be just updating your text, writing blog articles, replying to comments and generally keeping everything up to date.

Websites these days generally make use of a **Content Management System (CMS)** which allows the administrator to log in and do these things. This allows the admin to carry out general tasks such as publishing blog posts without having to go through a developer.
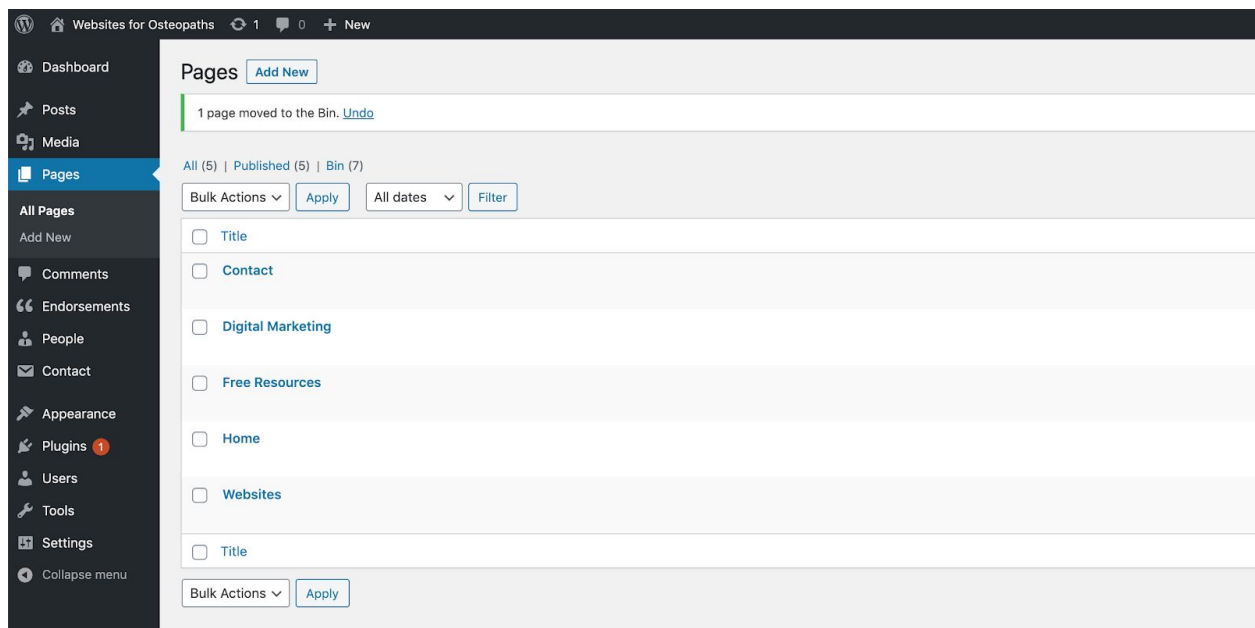
The WordPress Content Management System

What to Put on your Site

We'll go through every page on your site separately and what should feature on them, but let's begin with a few general rules.

Avoid Content Creep

There's a temptation to add more and more information to your website, but you should aim to keep it clear and concise. Remember the Big Idea from guide 1 and AIDA from guide 2. What you're aiming to do is draw the potential patient in, make them want your services and then ask for the sale. There's room for more information on your blog if you want to go into what you do in more detail, but keep your sales copy tight.

Information architecture

Before anything else, think about the path users are taking through your site. First of all their different motivations for visiting the site in the first place and what they're looking for. Will the site make sense? Will they find the information they're looking for quickly or will they struggle to understand? Remember people won't read your website like a book, they're trying to go straight to the information they want and then to contact you if necessary.

Choice architecture

Close to information architecture is **choice architecture**. We want to avoid giving the user too many choices or they'll choose nothing at all. Whenever a choice has to be made, from which page to view to signing up for a service, we want to give 2-4 clear options, not a list of 10 or 20 pages which the visitor might be interested in.

A favourite of choice architects is the 3-option pricing model, like the example below and the WP Engine example in the previous section. The received wisdom is to create three options, the middle one of which is the one you want people to go for, while the other two don't provide

anything like as good value for money. The user is then prompted into picking the middle option, thus making a purchase. This pricing model isn't particularly relevant to osteopathy, but the takeaway is creating a narrow choice architecture for the user in every situation.
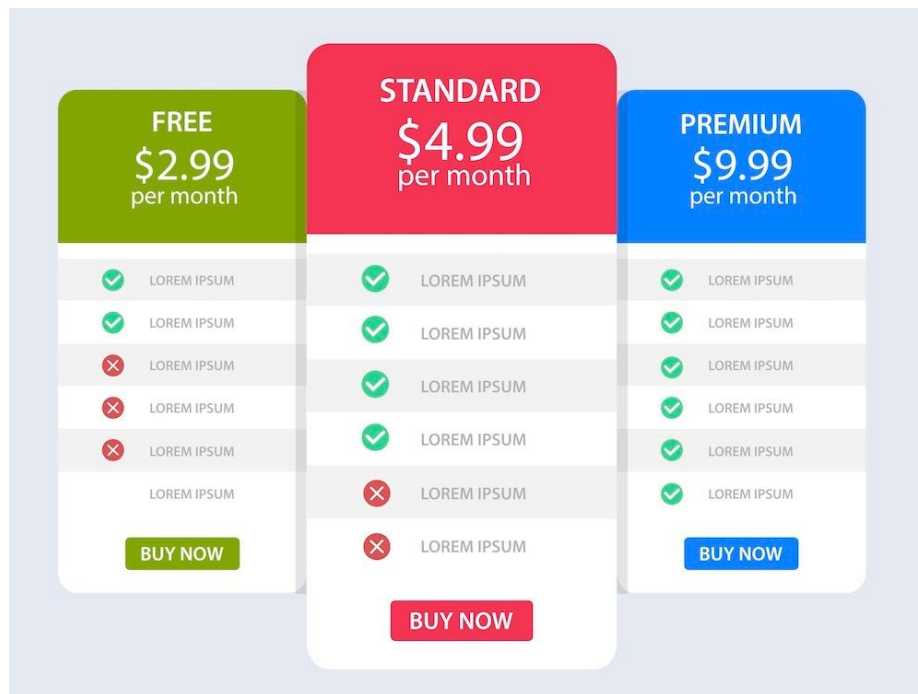
Call to actions everywhere

Remember in guide 2 we talked about **asking for the sale**. Don't be shy to have call to actions all over your site. As the user is browsing the site they will get to a moment where they're ready to hit that contact button and get in touch. That feeling may only last 5-10 seconds, then someone sends them a kitten video on Facebook and they forget all about it. At the moment when the patient is ready to contact, we want a big contact button there ready to make it easy for them.

Homepage

"Your homepage is no place for bullshit"
Tim Cameron-Kitchen

Your homepage is by far the most crucial page on your website, particularly that part of it which comes 'above the fold' i.e. what visitors will see the moment your site loads - what we call the 'splash'. Many weak designers ruin a site by not paying enough attention to the importance of the splash.

Remember the attention bucket from guide 1. The splash is so crucial not because it's the visitor's first impression of us but because it's the impression upon which they decide whether they want to go any further. If it's not right, if it looks low-quality or incongruent, then it doesn't matter how good the rest of the site might be, because they're probably not going to bother looking.

**Big Idea and Call to Action**

When a visitor lands on your homepage the first things they need to see are the Big Idea and your call to action. This shows them immediately what you do, who you do it for, and what the next step in the process is.

Remember again the Big Idea, the more succinctly you can put it across the better. There's no space for lots of text or ideas here, the visitor is landing on your site and saying "is this for me, is this what I'm looking for". If the answer is 'not sure', or even 'too much trouble to find out', they're likely to move on.

A call to action here can seem a bit counterintuitive, people are unlikely to click on the contact button before they've seen a bit more about you and what you offer. What we're aiming for isn't necessarily for people to click on the CTA straight away, but to be aware of what the next stage in the process is if they choose to continue. When I land on a page and there is a big, prominent

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button saying 'get a free quote', then I know that's the next stage in the process should I choose to continue. It gives direction as we go through the site.

Here's Beth's website splash so far, with her Big Idea and CTA.
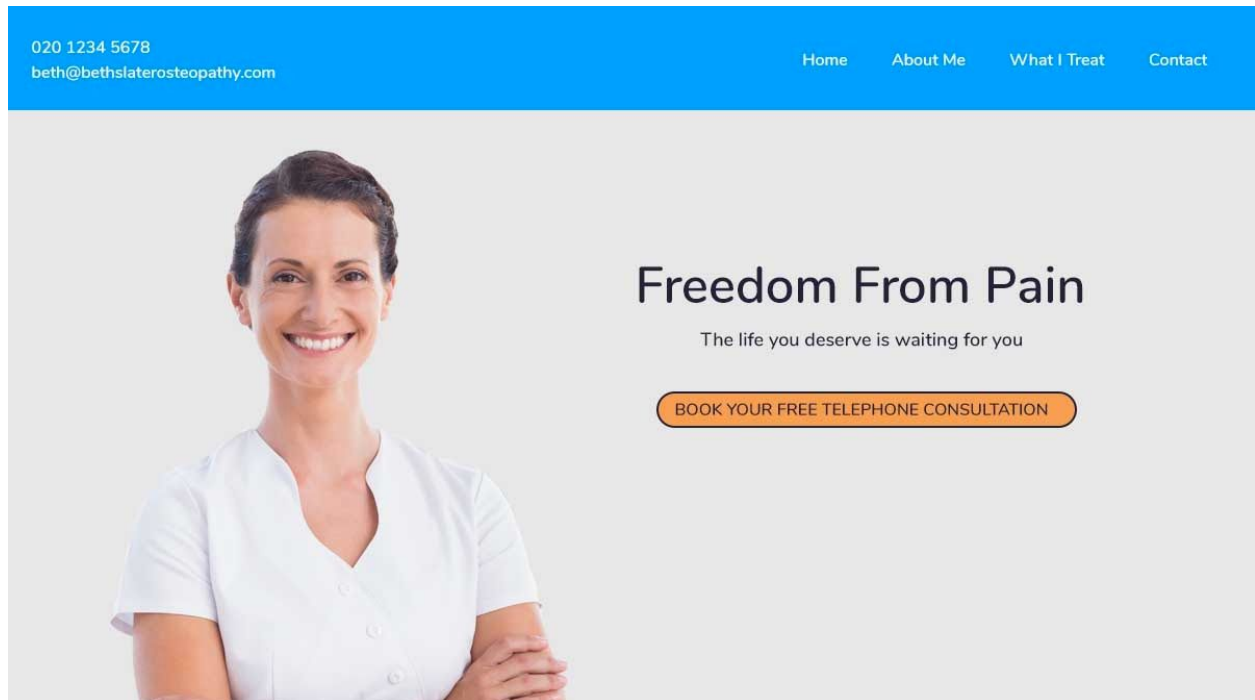
Social Proof

We can say whatever we want about ourselves, but it's not as powerful as what others say about us. Reviews from your customers (preferably on a 3rd party platform like Google or Trustpilot), and/or membership of professional bodies, awards and qualifications, are all important in gaining credibility in the eye of the user.

The absolute best we can do is to have reviews from people which contain their photo and their name for maximum credibility, so below the fold Beth might also have a slider which displays longer quotes from her customers, along with a small portrait photo of each one.

For now, let's show on the splash that Beth has 5* reviews on Google.
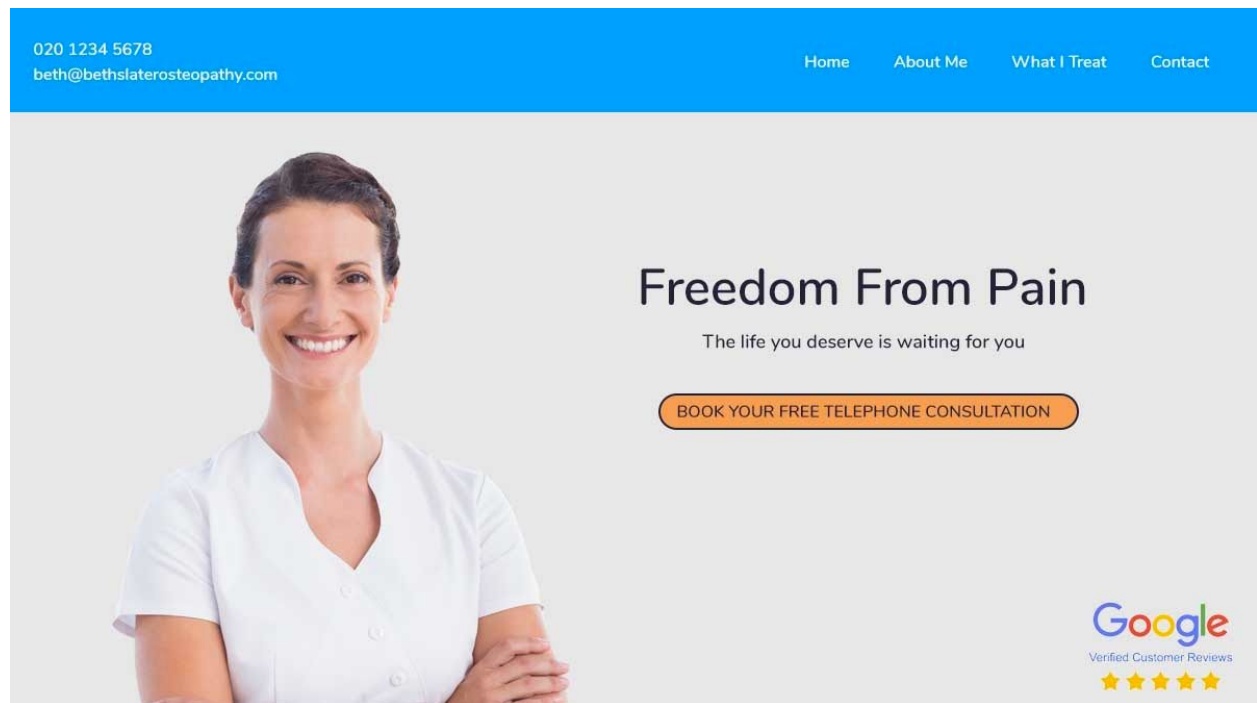
Objection Handling

This can come more in the inner pages where you have more space to deal with people's questions and concerns, but pre-empting a few reservations people might have about contacting you on the homepage might make the difference between someone pursuing it further or not.

For example, you might say in your copy that osteopathy is used in hospitals, or mention your private and comfortable surroundings. You're not answering directly or completely the patient's fears over the legitimacy of osteopathy or whether they'll feel comfortable during treatment, but you're suggesting there's nothing to worry about and you're aware of their concerns, which you can address in more detail later.

Let's say that cost is a common concern for Beth's patients. She might edit her strapline like this:
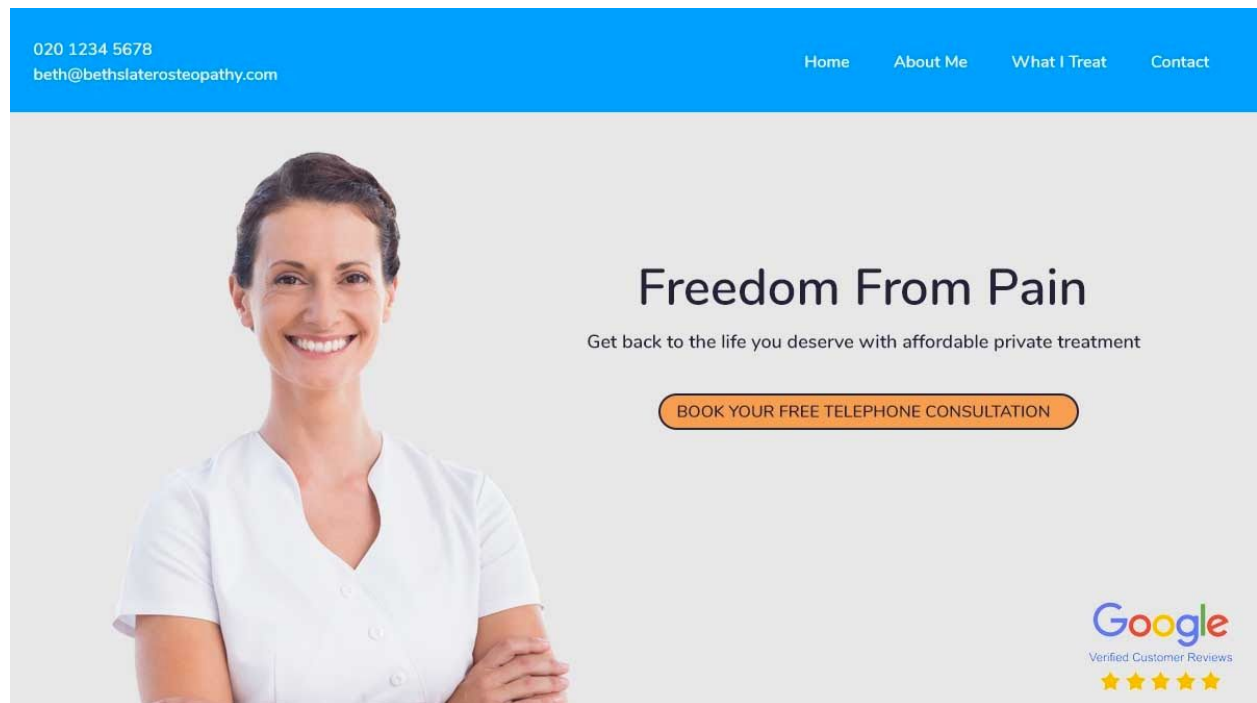
Featureboxes

Featureboxes are a great way of showing the user quickly what your main activities are and pointing them in the direction of what will interest them. By putting 2-4 boxes underneath the main splash these will show users quickly what your main messages and markets are.

Beth specialises in back pain and sports injuries, so let's see what featureboxes we could create for her.
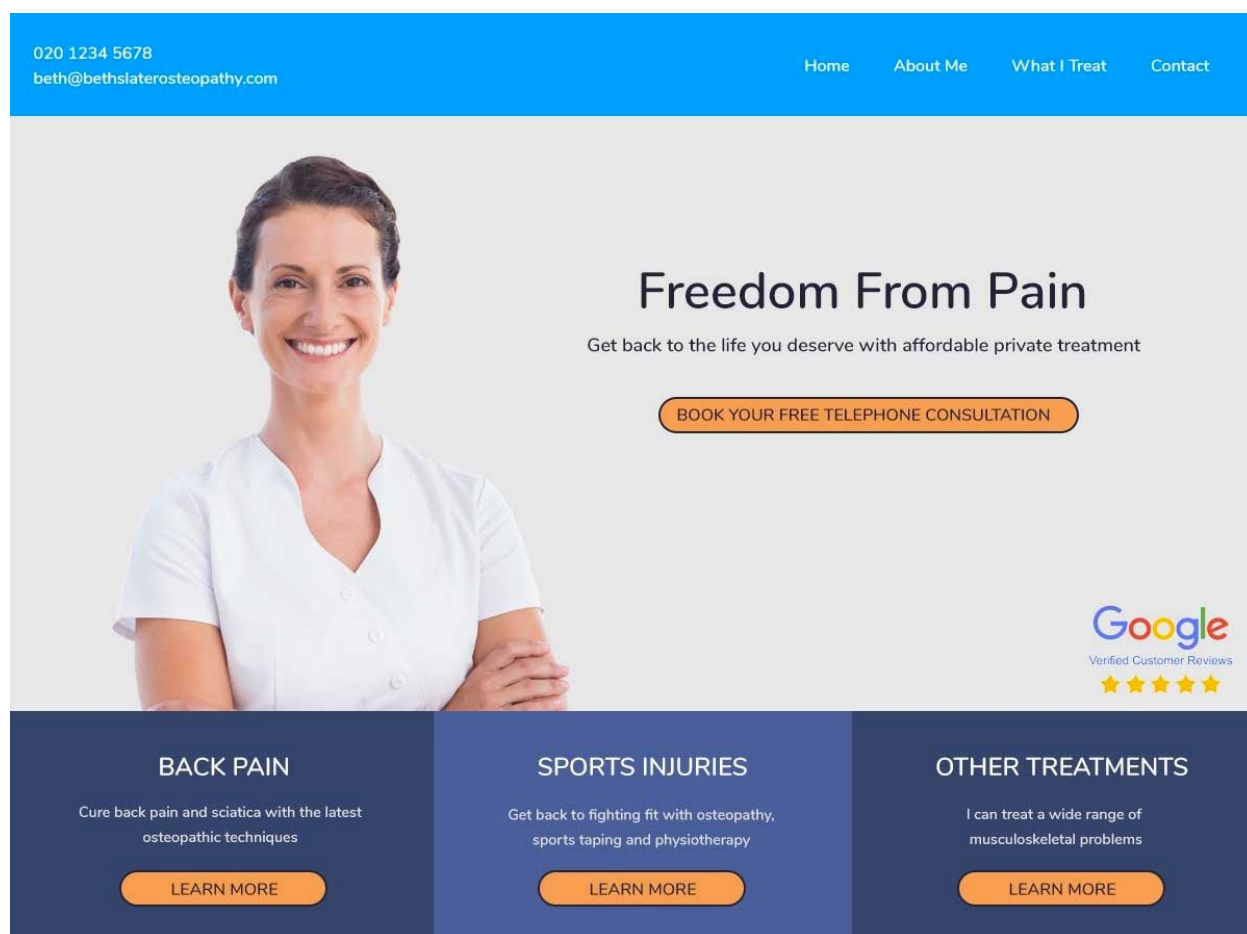
The most important thing with featureboxes is that they provide **choice architecture**. We want to nail down the visitor quickly into picking what they're interested in, rather than wandering around aimlessly. Within a few seconds of landing on Beth's page, we know what the Big Idea is, we know that the next step is to book a free telephone consultation, and we know the 3 'paths' we have to pick from - back pain, sports injuries or other treatments.

Secondary Conversions

Not every potential patient is ready to contact or book an appointment today. Some will be information-gathering and will see if the seed grows in their mind. Ideally we want to be able to make sure we stay in the minds of those users. We can do that by getting them to sign up to our mailing list or social media, so they'll see our updates and remember who we are, so as well as

our main call to action, we'll also have reasonably prominent links to our social media and mailing list.

For visitors who are not going to convert straight away, we want to
sign them up to our mailing list or social media to convert later

Many mailing lists also employ a **lead magnet**, which is something you give for free in return for signing up to a mailing list. Typically this is a pdf or ebook which the site owner has written. So for example if someone signs up to your mailing list they get a free guide to postural health.

It's difficult to do the same for social media. Businesses with low-value physical products can run regular giveaways and competitions on their social media to lure people into joining their group, but you're not going to do a weekly osteopathy giveaway. Still, prompting people to follow your social media can help to give them a better idea of who you are and to keep you in the front of their minds.

About Me Page

An About Me page is a good idea for any private practitioner. Knowing a bit about the background, qualifications and the way they think will go a long way in spurring us on to make contact. A good photo is really important too, as everyone likes to be able to see who they're dealing with.

Once again, just because someone has clicked on the page for information about you doesn't mean this is the point for a life story and to add every piece of information you can possibly think to include. 500 words is plenty, any more and people are unlikely to read it anyway.

Structure your About Me page using AIDA and try to draw the potential patient in as they go, ending with a call to action along the lines of 'I'm always happy to give people advice and offer a free telephone consultation - why not book yours today?'.

A little personal information is excellent as it will humanise you and make others feel they can relate to you. For example, saying you treat people in your home practice is not as powerful as saying you treat people in your home practice, where you live with your wife Barbara and your son Dean and your dog Scruffles. Animals and children are particular trust-builders.

When you write, try to emphasise your values as much as your tangible benefits and qualifications, show your *why* as much as your *how*, it will both humanise you and give you credibility. For example, instead of:

"I attend various courses to ensure I stay up to date with the latest developments in the field of osteopathy"

You could say

"I am constantly fascinated by the human body and in the ever-changing field of osteopathy there is always something new to learn. In the last year I've attended courses on subjects as

diverse as tennis elbow, sports taping and concussion, so that I can constantly bring the best
possible treatment to my patients."

Inner Pages

Inner pages are where we go into detail on the individual services or niches we're trying to hit. So you might have a page on general osteopathy, a page on back pain and a page on sports injuries if they are your three main propositions. If you try digital advertising or boosted posts on social media, these can also function as landing pages for those particular adverts.

Alternatively, you might want to go into details on the various treatments you offer (osteopathy, dry needling etc) explaining a bit about each one, or have a general 'about osteopathy' page. How you structure your site and exactly how you use your inner pages is up to you.

Although the inner pages are there to go into more detail, still keep your copy as tight and succinct as you can, and structure it with AIDA. Remember we're still trying to convert our user into contacting us, not simply to provide them with information or to provide the comprehensive guide to any of the page topics (you can have articles that go into more depth in your blog if you like, and link to these articles from your inner pages for people that want to read more. Of course, every blog post will also have a call to action at the end).

Aim for congruence and continuance with your homepage, don't suddenly switch messages. If you have featureboxes as we looked at earlier, which say general osteopathy, back pain and sports injuries, carry that through to your inner pages. If the featureboxes say general, back pain and sports injuries and your inner menu has 10 different conditions, we lose congruence and our message is diluted.

Finally, don't forget your call to action on every page. When the user gets to the end of your copy there should be a nice big 'book your free consultation' button waiting for them, to grab them at the moment they're ready to contact, before they go back to kitten videos.

Contact Page

Last of all your contact page. What we have to remember here is that when someone clicks on our contact page, the job isn't yet finished. It's easy to just throw up a contact form and a map and assume that anyone motivated enough to click through to the contact page is automatically motivated to contact us, but that's not so. We still have to give them some encouragement and a bit of a nudge.

So add a little bit of text, maybe a photo of you. Reiterate your selling points with your copy, tell people to contact you now and that you're waiting to help them. Maybe add a few of your positive reviews again to remind them they could join this happy group of pain-free individuals.

Contact forms should be kept simple. Name, email or phone number (as the user prefers) and message is fine. Any more is an obstacle. There's no need to add a subject field, but you might like to do so just to make it default to "book a free telephone consultation" or whatever your CTA is, just to smooth the path to contact a little further.

Conclusion

Websites are a huge field and there's much more I could write about, but I hope this guide has given you a basic idea of how to structure your website to make it a useful tool for your practice.

The crucial thing is to always bear in mind what the website is actually there to do - it exists to take potential patients from being interested in what you do and finding out a bit more, to actually contacting you. Anything that detracts from that goal is a hindrance rather than a help. Keep that in mind, keep your messages simple and you shouldn't go too far wrong.

In the next guides we'll look at two more areas related to your website - how to promote your practice using a blog, and how to use Google.