

## Social work around the world: Australia

- Sharmeen Ziauddin: You're listening to The Social Work Community podcast. I'm Sharmeen Ziauddin, careers editor here at Community Care. Welcome to another episode of our new mini-series, *Social Work Around the World*. Today we're focusing on Australia – yes, the land of koalas and kangaroos. Sorry, I don't know why I said that!
- Anyway, we have two Australian social workers here, both with different experiences. Firstly we have Kristin, who's been in social work for over nineteen years, twelve of those in England. And we have Tina, who is currently in Australia but used to work in England. Welcome to the podcast, Kristin and Tina. [0:00:44.6]
- Kristin: Thank you.
- Tina: Thanks for having us.
- Sharmeen Ziauddin: Great. Do you want to just introduce yourselves? So Kristin, do you want to start? [0:00:51.0]
- Kristin: I'm Kristin, obviously. As you mentioned, I've been a social worker for quite a long time now and actually have now spent more time working in the UK than Australia, which wasn't the plan. So I moved over in 2012, planned to be here for two years, but I'm still here.
- So, I've worked across youth justice, child protection and within the family court, and also done some adoption social work. So always in the children and families area but in lots of different contexts.
- Sharmeen Ziauddin: Great. And what about you, Tina? [0:01:23.3]
- Tina: I'm Tina. I'm Australian and did my social work degree here, completed in 2009. I moved to the UK in 2012 and worked there for seven years, mostly in children's services in London. And then it was time to come back to Australia and I did that at the end of 2019. Covid scuppered my next plans and I got stranded in Western Australia and realised I needed to find some work. And after the cold of London I was looking for somewhere hot, so I moved to the north of Western Australia, where I currently still am. I stuck in child protection and then I made the switch to child and adolescent mental health three years ago, and still here and loving it. Might return to the UK later this year. Haven't decided yet.
- Sharmeen Ziauddin: Fantastic. Well, thanks so much for joining us from sunny Australia. Although it might not be sunny this time of year. Is it? [0:02:23.7]
- Tina: It's our wet season up here in the top end, and it is actually living up to that name at the moment, and it was quite grey and drizzly today.

Which is great – it means waterfalls and it means, yeah, fun hiking on the weekends.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Well, London is full of sunshine so that's quite nice for us. Okay. So, you've both worked in both countries for a long time. What would you say are the main differences you've found in the way social work is practised here and in Australia? [0:02:56.3]

Kristin:

Yeah. I think...I mean, social work is very broad in Australia and it is a very big country that each state functions slightly differently. So I guess we can only speak to our own experiences. But the biggest difference is for me that, as I said, social work is so much more broad in Australia. So when you tell someone that you're a social worker, they don't really have any idea what that means. So it's anything from child protection to counselling to community development, school wellbeing officer. So it's very, very much more broad than it is in the UK.

So I think that kind of sometimes has a bit of a different impact on how social workers are viewed because I guess the social work profession doesn't actually mean as much in Australia in terms of the public's perception and what they understand to be social work.

The other thing is that you don't have to be a social worker to work in a statutory role, as you do in the UK. So you could work, for example, in child protection and have a relevant degree, so something that is similar to social work but isn't social work. So, sometimes when Australians move over they've been working in the equivalent of children's services doing a statutory role, but then they're not able to do that when they move to the UK because they don't have that qualification. So they're kind of having to do unqualified roles.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

That means that obviously, like you said, social worker encompasses many more roles in Australia than it does here. And we can talk about that later in terms of, you know, you help social workers from Australia and that seems like one of the challenges that they might come across.

Tina, what about you? What do you think is one of the biggest differences? [0:04:33.7]

Tina:

Yeah. When you introduce yourself to new people, over here you don't say you're a social worker 'cause it doesn't mean anything. You'd tend to say your kind of job title. Because I remember when I was in London I would say, 'I'm a social worker' and people would automatically assume I worked for children's services, which was accurate, whereas here in Australia I use my job title. So when I was in child protection I would say, 'I work for child protection,' but now I say, 'I work in mental health with kids.' Saying 'social worker' could mean so many different things.

I have reclaimed my title of social work a little bit and I've popped it in my email signature at work, 'cause I'm like, 'No, dammit, I'm a social worker!' And so I popped it there in my signature.

But broadly, I think a lot of the values as a social worker here in Australia are very similar to that of the UK. So really kind of looking

towards social justice, human rights, advocacy. A lot of that is very similar. It's not quite clinical where I think it can be a more clinical thing in the States, for example. Most just kind of do your Bachelor of Social Work. Although I am noticing that doing your Master's here in Australia is becoming more common where it wasn't before when I left to go to the UK. You sort of just did your straight Bachelor. But now, upon my return in the last five years in Australia, a lot of people doing their Master's of Social Work, usually as kind of like a transition from if they've done some other study, if they've had some career progression but now they want to switch and do social work. So Master's is becoming a bit more common. And I can't remember if that was the case in the UK when I was there or not.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: I think it's definitely becoming more common to do Master's now than it was before here as well. It's a very...

Kristin: I think it's still similar in that...

Sharmeen Ziauddin: ...common pathway.

Kristin: ...yeah, sorry. I think it's still similar, in that people...you would only do a Master's, I think, if you wanted to qualify, so if you'd done a Bachelor in something else. So rather than like in the US, I think, where they would do a Bachelor and Master's in Social Work, I think Australia and the UK is a bit more...you kind of do one or the other.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: You mentioned perceptions, Kristin, of social work there and here. So, does that mean that tag of social work doesn't carry the same...you know, sometimes there's hostility in England and the rest of the UK about when somebody says the word 'social work'. Do you have that negativity connected with those words said in Australia?  
[0:06:57.7]

Tina: It's more that people just...it's like you say you're a social worker and it's not it's a negative thing, it's just like, 'Yeah, and...? But what does that mean?' So...whereas social worker is so closely attached to children's services in the UK, and I think in Australia child protection has a very bad rap, but that's not directly associated with social work. So saying you're a social worker and then expanding on that and saying, 'Oh, I work in mental health,' or, 'I work for a homeless organisation,' or whatever it is that you do is then more often met with quite positive comments of, 'Oh, that must be really rewarding work,' or, 'That's quite tough,' or, 'I'm glad that there's someone doing that.' So social work, yeah, it's not a negative view like it might be in the UK.

Kristin: Just to expand on that, I guess, if you work for the child protection agency, the equivalent of children's services, then you would have the same negative perception. It's just that it's not linked directly to being a social worker. It's more about the job role than the job title.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: And you spoke about how people who've worked in Australia in social services or statutory work don't need those same qualifications that we need here in England and the rest of the UK, and they come over here and they will need a qualification. So you run a blog where you help Australian social workers make that transition and emigrate to

the UK. So, is that one of the challenges that you've found?  
[0:08:31.5]

Tina: Yeah. I guess kind of two parts...it's trying to help them understand what their experience equates to in the UK. So, if they've been working, for example, as kind of a wellbeing support person in a school then that doesn't directly equate to a social work job in the UK. So trying to find where their skills would be matched, I guess. And then, yeah, I think also helping them to understand that social work is a protected title in the UK, and that you need to specifically be registered to be a social worker to do that as well.

So that is another big difference, is that you don't have to be registered to be a social worker in Australia. So if you moved to Australia as an overseas qualified social worker, you would go through a process to get your qualification recognised but you don't need to be registered as you do in the UK.

So that's another, I guess, big difference for people to understand and, I guess, you know, what they often need support with is going through the process of registering with Social Work England or whichever part of the UK it is that they're moving to.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: And what are the other kind of main problems that Australians encounter that are either thinking of moving over here or have moved over here, that you kind of assist them with or...there's so many things – culture change as well as legislation and things we've mentioned. [0:09:46.9]

Tina: Yeah. I guess kind of finding a job can be a little bit different so there's not so many kind of locum roles in Australia. That wasn't something I'd ever experienced before I moved over. So I'd never dealt with a recruitment agency, didn't understand how that worked and what role they play. So I think supporting them, I guess, to find the right fit, you know, whether it's locum or permanent, and how they can kind of go about finding those jobs.

'Cause I think the other thing is, because in Australia each state – which is obviously a really large geographical area – is kind of responsible for the same services as each local council is here. So if you wanted to work in Queensland, for example, there would be a particular website you could go to and find all of the jobs for the whole state, you know, the government jobs for the whole state. So it can be difficult for people to find...you know, when each local authority has their own platform for advertising roles it can be difficult to kind of find where the jobs are to apply for.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: And there's how many states in Australia? There's five, are there?  
[0:10:47.2]

Kristin: So there's six states and two territories, yeah.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Okay. So that is...I mean, that's vastly different. I mean, London alone has 32 boroughs, local authorities that have their own jobs. So yeah, I could understand why that makes a massive difference.

Tina: Just thinking of the vastness of our states, and even there's, like, our service and the geographical area that we cover...so as much as, yep, you would just look at the government website for all of the government jobs in that one state. But the slight difference is each state has their own legislation for children's services, mental health acts, and that would cover just that state. But whereas obviously in the UK you'll have an English act, a Scottish, Welsh, whereas each local authority won't have their own legislation. Each local authority will have their own process but the legislation is broader, whereas for us it's each state will have their own legislation for most things that you would work in. There is national legislation but probably not on the level that we work with.

So, like, I had an interesting case recently where...I work in Western Australia and a child from Queensland had moved over, and I am not going to be able to translate this into UK terminology, but she was on a mental health treatment authority, which for us is a community treatment order. And the two things do not talk to each other. 'Cause it's separate mental health acts. It means different things. So that can be quite interesting sometimes to be like, 'Okay, well what do we do with your treatment authority and how does that become a community treatment order here?'

Sharmeen Ziauddin: So even when you moved here, that terminology must have been quite tricky. And I guess for anybody moving to England, the professional language is quite a big learning curve, isn't it? [0:12:49.0]

Tina: I found it...yeah, you kind of get there and they're using different words, but then you find what that meant for where I was working before, and so then that's how I picked up my UK terminology. I would just kind of reference it and land it with what I already knew. And then the UK terminology became my norm and then I just knew what I was talking about and knew how to speak it. And so then when I came back to Australia and to Western Australia, which I'd not lived in or worked in before, I was doing it in reverse. I was then...all the new Western Australian words and terminology I was using, I was translating it back to what I knew in the UK, so I could get my knowledge and my understanding clear. And so now I just know my Western Australian terminology and lingo. And so if I do go back to the UK it'll be same process again. I'll learn new words and I'll ground it in what I already know in WA until the UK becomes my new norm again. It's just, yeah, grounding it in...it's like a translation when you're going from French to English. It's just, 'This words means that.' It's the same with the social work lingo that we have to use, and then it just becomes second nature. And I sometimes find myself thinking about something at work and I'm like, 'Is this an Australian thing or is this a UK thing?' And so I'll ask my colleagues and they'll just look at me blank and I'll go, 'Okay, never mind. It's a UK thing. It's fine.'

Sharmeen Ziauddin: It's funny because, you know, they're both English-speaking countries so you wouldn't think there'd be so much, but there is. I mean, let's talk about cultural differences because it is so interesting. Was there much of a culture shock? Kristin, you came to England for the first time, didn't you, when you moved? So that's quite a big move in itself. What were the kind of things you found that were really different or that you didn't understand? [0:14:31.9]

- Kristin: Two kind of things come to mind when I first started working, and one was the greeting that UK or British people use, you know, when they say, 'Are you alright?' And I kept thinking people were saying to me, 'Are you okay?' because I was new and I didn't look like I was okay. And I didn't understand that it was just a greeting, the same as we'd kind of say, like, 'How are you?'
- But also, I think, Australians, I think, are a lot more direct than British people, and the first time I really realised that was when one of my very first managers said to me, 'I just love how Australian you are.' And I was like, 'What does that mean?' And he said, 'You just say it how it is. You know, there's no second-guessing what you mean.' And I was like, 'I don't know if that's a good thing or not. And I'm now not sure whether you actually think that's a good thing.'
- But I think, you know, when I work with young people I think they really appreciate that, and I think it's really helpful in terms of engagement. So when I'm really direct with them and they know exactly where they stand, I think they see that as me kind of treating them more like an equal and as a sign of respect. So I think young people appreciate it but maybe my colleagues don't always.
- Sharmeen Ziauddin: Yohai mentioned that – so our first episode of this mini-series. He mentioned some of the research he's doing as part of Brunel University on the migration of social workers, and that was a lot of the feedback and responses he got from Australian social workers was in the attitude and how Australians are seen as being quite upfront and can be taken as being rude, but they're just saying what they mean, which in England we don't always do. [0:16:08.2]
- Kristin: I don't ever remember anyone kind of calling me out on it but yeah, I think we do have a more direct nature in kind of just saying things how it is. And that, 'Are you alright?' greeting is like, 'What? Yes. Is my hair out of place? Like, what's the matter?' So yeah, that was always quite interesting, coming across that.
- Sharmeen Ziauddin: I mean, emigrating to another country is always really difficult. What were some of the hardest things that you both found moving, work-wise and otherwise? [0:16:41.7]
- Tina: I think for me, the main...well, two big things, I guess, is just how geographically far you are from everybody. So the time difference is really tricky to navigate. But there is like a sense...you know, I think when you're having a hard time and you're feeling maybe a bit homesick, knowing that it will take you over a day to get back to your family can be a bit of an overwhelming feeling.
- The other one...I mean, the weather is kind of an obvious one, I think. You know, I knew, I guess, it was going to be rainier and colder. But something that I wasn't prepared for is just how dark it is in winter. So, I'm from Queensland where we don't even have daylight savings, so there's very little variation – you know, maybe an hour or so variation – between summer and winter daylight hours. So my first winter in the UK was a real eye-opener. And I've been here thirteen years now and I still struggle with the winter darkness. You know, I



can put on a good coat and be warm but, yeah, it's the lack of daylight hours.

But also, I'm not used to having long summer days. So when I first moved over I didn't realise that I associated eating my dinner with it being dark until it was kind of 9pm and I hadn't eaten yet because the sun was still up. So I think...I guess there's pros and cons. But it definitely...that has been a bit of a learning.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

I can tell you that I've lived here all my life. I was born here and I still can't get used to the winters. They are depressing. That's just a fact!

Tina:

Yeah. Depressing is exactly the word. I just remember everyone just say, 'Just get through your first winter and you'll know you'll be okay.' So I did that. And then March rocked up. And that March happened to be colder and snowier than the whole entire winter months that had just preceded it. And I'm like, 'I can't do this. It's just too tough.' But you kind of found fun. I went snowboarding my first Christmas there, and that was my newfound winter passion. So you kind of...you find the bad things and you kind of find some fun out of it as well. But yeah, the weather was definitely miserable. But I think at the time there would have been other anxieties and worries about moving over. I seem to remember I was very organised, I was very much looking forward to it, and it wasn't until my housemates at the time were driving me to the airport from...I lived in Townsville at the time in Queensland, and when they were driving me to the airport I then all of a sudden freaked out, 'What am I doing? I don't know if I can do this,' and had that one moment. But of course it's too late. The flights are booked, the bags are packed, you're going. I was very lucky that I had extended family in the UK that I sort of landed with first, so I had a little bit of that kind of welcome and stable ground to kind of help me through that. So very, very grateful to them. 'Cause it at least gave me a base while I sorted stuff out, like getting a bank account and a CV and stuff.

But professionally, my biggest challenge when I landed – and it was maybe partly due to poor organisation on my part – but yes, you have to be registered as a social worker in England. And so back then it was GSCC, General Social Care Council or something. And it was transitioning to HCPC, Health Care Professional Council or whatever it was. But there was a gap. So I sent my application off to GSCC and they sent it back saying, 'No, sorry, we're not taking any more applications.' But at that point HCPC weren't accepting any applications to register as a social worker. I'm like, 'Oh. Oops.' So I actually found work initially as a...not a social worker because I didn't have my social work registration, and then I kind of got stuck in that role for a bit 'cause I was enjoying it. And then I eventually did my HCPC reg. But yeah, that was my biggest challenge as a...when I moved, just because I landed in this gap. But I eventually sorted it out and then obviously it rolled over to Social Work England and then I still keep my registration current in the UK in case I ever want to come back.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

And did you, both of you, have any support, work-wise, when you started your roles in children's services? Did you need support? Did you get that support? [0:21:04.9]

Tina: So I started off in youth justice as an agency worker, and I kind of landed in the office and was kind of handed a handful of cases – they were still paper files then – and was kind of told to just get on with it. And I was like, 'I don't even know what these words mean. Like, you know, I know youth justice in Australia but there's different legislation, there's different court orders.' I, thankfully, was sat next to another Australian who'd been there for a few years before me, so she almost, like, could help me translate. And she was both personally and professionally a really, really strong support. So I think I was really lucky. Because I think it was such a busy office with quite a high staff turnover that there maybe wasn't the support from the team that I probably needed. Yeah. So I think having that one person was definitely helpful.

My first role was permanent, and I don't know if that made a difference, but I think I was very lucky that my direct team leader was very supportive, gave me a lot of time. I had a lot of strong senior social workers in the team as well. I didn't hesitate to kind of ask the questions, any help. I was later introduced to another team leader who was also Australian, so that kind of helped. But again, she was from New South Wales, where I'd been from Queensland, so again stuff just didn't quite translate. But it was kind of comforting having another Australian in the office, almost kind of...not intentionally but role-modelling that you can do this, Australians work here, we're very well valued and well respected as workers. But yeah, you could...and I later worked in local authorities once I had found my feet, I later worked in local authorities where I had no support from team leaders, no support from colleagues. And I think if I had landed in that as my first role, I wouldn't have stayed seven years.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Wow. Can I ask what made you move over in the first place, if you don't mind sharing that? [0:23:03.3]

Tina: I was told when I was studying my social work degree at uni that the Australian social work degree was very well respected in the UK. So I kind of had that in the back of my mind. And then I was invited to a friend's wedding in Canada after I graduated, and that was my first big trip overseas. I'd been to New Zealand before. That doesn't really count as an Australian. But Canada was my first big trip overseas and I loved it. I went for the wedding, did a whole bunch of travelling, and just the whole idea of travelling in a different country, I was like, 'This is it. I love it.' Six months later I'd moved to the UK 'cause I was like, 'London's right there and I can just travel Europe.' Which is what I did, essentially, for seven years. But it was knowing that my social work degree was going to be well respected and recognised in the UK. And I just kind of held onto that nugget and thought, 'I'll give it a crack.' Yeah, same thing. Thought I'd stay two years. Stayed seven.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Kristin, you also came ideally to travel? Was that the reason? [0:24:07.9]

Kristin: Yeah, definitely. So I think, similar to Tina, I can remember being spoken to about essentially moving to the UK when I was at uni but then life happened and it didn't, you know, I didn't move straight away. But definitely travel. Travel was the biggest motivator. I had this



completely unrealistic expectation that I would come for two years and see all of Europe. Which obviously didn't happen. Yeah.

And also just, I think, employment opportunities. So I was working as a team leader in my home town and there wasn't really anywhere for me to go professionally. The next closest office I could have worked in was a four-hour drive away. So there wasn't the same opportunities as there are in the UK. Obviously working in London means there's kind of 32 different employers that you can have. So I really wanted to do something different, I guess, put myself out of my comfort zones, which it definitely did. And just kind of stretch myself as a social worker and develop my kind of skills and knowledge.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Tina, you work in Western Australia and you work with remote communities. What is that like? [0:25:13.9]

Tina:

Humbling. Very fortunate to be allowed into such places. So a lot of these really, really small communities are Aboriginal communities, so they're the lands of Aboriginal people run by Aboriginal families and community organisations. They'll have a school that'll kind of do all year levels or up to kind of the primary levels or maybe Year 10, and they'll have maybe a little clinic and maybe a little shop and that's kind of it. And so services like myself, we fly in or we drive in and we offer the support of what our service normally would, but obviously in a more limited capacity 'cause we're not there all the time. But then sometimes in a very flexible capacity because we're not there all the time. So we might do a little bit more extra work. We partner with the school a lot.

But it's just a completely unique way of working because you are so alone but so connected at the same time. And it's just such a vast space that we cover up here. So our two main offices are 1200km apart. We cover everything in between plus some. And it's just, yeah, it's a really unique experience.

And it takes a lot of time to build up trust and connect with Aboriginal families. I read this book recently and I really want to try and get it right in my head that you respect first, you then connect, you then reflect, and then you direct. White ways of working usually goes the opposite. You direct and then you reflect, 'Why didn't that work?', and then you try and connect with people, and then you go with respect. That has really stuck with me because that is absolutely how we work and connect with our Aboriginal families, is you start with that respect and that connection is all based on relationships. The work that you do and the support that you're trying to offer will go nowhere quickly unless you spend that time just respecting and trying to connect and build that relationship. I don't want to call it a privilege. It's just a very humble experience to be allowed into such places and to meet with these people and hear their stories.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

It sounds wonderful. And what are the kind of issues you come...you know, in other work in Australia and compared to the remote communities? Are they sort of different things you see? [0:27:36.5]

Tina:

It's all very similar issues. So, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health concerns obviously predominantly is what I see.

I think being in a remote community everything's just compounded by its remoteness. So you can't just...you know, 'I just need to get out of town for a bit.' That's going to be a four-hour drive until you get anywhere. And also if it's now, if it's wet season, you're driving nowhere. The roads are shut. It's flooded. You can't get out.

There's also not the services there to choose from. So you might want to go and access support but that's your family member and that might be shaming to speak with them. Everyone knows everyone. So the cops, the police, they're a part of community. You're going to know who they are. You know who the teacher is, you know who the shop owner is. So I think sometimes that makes it really difficult and there is sometimes a big sense of shame that people know business, but at the same time then everyone does know everyone so then you kind of know who's safe, who's not, where can I go to for help.

But it's the isolation that compounds all of that stuff in the really, really remote communities. And even where I'm based we're called 'remote regional', so we're a slightly bigger hub. But still, if you want to get to your next big place, I'm an eight-hour drive to Darwin. That's my closest major centre. There's stuff along the way but you're still remote. There's more choice than those really remote communities but we're still quite far from everywhere.

And the biggest thing is your choice in services. We want to be able to help someone, it doesn't quite fit your service but there's no one else. There's not the choice. So you've got to be flexible.

Sharmeen Ziauddin:

Sounds incredible. And difficult. But rewarding, I'm sure. Kristin, when you came to England, did you find much difference in the kind of things you were seeing? Like you said you worked in youth justice and that's what you spent a lot of time in. Compared to in Australia, is it quite similar? [0:29:46.4]

Kristin:

I think it was incomparable in that I worked in a large town, I guess, rather than a large city. So there were...you know, in terms of diversity I had not experienced, you know, much diversity other than working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. I had never worked with, you know, a child whose English was not their first language, for example. So I think that was a really big difference.

Also when I started working in London I had never worked with gangs or kind of criminal network groups. So that was a really big eye-opener as well, so something that I just had not had any experience of. And I kind of would use it my advantage. So when I was kind of trying to build relationships with young people I'd be saying, 'Oh, you know, I didn't grow up here so I don't understand how it works. Can you tell me more about this?' and then they would be like, 'Right, so what happens is...and then this postcode...and this...'. So yeah, I tried to use my inexperience and naivety to my advantage, which was often helpful.

So yeah, I think, you know, a lot of similarities in terms of the reasons that young people offend and whether there's difficulties in their backgrounds or their current situations. But yeah, I think the presenting issues were quite different just because it's such a big city.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: I think that's really clever using your...you know, you not being from here to an advantage. And, you know, young people, I think, usually are quite happy to explain things if you just say, 'I don't know.'  
[0:31:14.3]

Kristin: Yeah, absolutely. And I think, you know, we're never the expert in their lives anyway and it just was an additional factor, I think, for me to be, you know, I guess mindful of it. And yeah, I think you've got to use what you can to your advantage.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: So now you know all the street lingo that young people use!  
[0:31:32.3]

Kristin: I mean, so when I first moved here I remember just being like, 'I have no idea what these young people are saying.' Like, I just did not know any of the words. Like whole sentences. I was like, 'I don't know any of those words.' I then left youth justice for about four and a half years and have recently returned so I am again trying to get my head around what's new because obviously this stuff evolves all of the time.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: It does. You're not alone in that, I don't think. Even people from here struggle with some of the words that, like you said, it's evolving and every week there's a new word for something, so yeah. That's quite a common issue, I think.

Is there anything you miss about Australia? And Tina, I'm going to ask you, is there anything you miss about England? Or London?  
[0:32:19.3]

Kristin: I mean, obviously I miss my family and friends. I miss the weather. I think I miss the way of life of much of Australia. So it is generally a slower pace, you know, particularly compared to London. There's just more space. Things are typically more modern.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: They're more modern? [0:32:41.1]

Kristin: Well, I guess just in terms of when I first moved to the UK I was really surprised about, you know, living in some of these shared houses and I was like, 'Oh, they're really old and the windows don't seal properly,' or I think just those kind of things weren't as...you know, buildings and things just are not as old as they are in the UK. Yeah. So I think that's kind of the main things.

Tina: I do not miss the weather in the UK. But I miss the travelling lifestyle. I loved maybe taking Friday off, catching a plane, going to Europe, doing some exploring, coming back late Sunday night and still being at work on Monday. Absolutely. For me to get to an international airport now it would take me an eight-hour drive or a two-and-a-half hour flight for me to fly internationally. So I definitely miss the travel.

I miss Kristin. I miss...I want to say I miss the child protection work there, 'cause I didn't enjoy the child protection work so I'm going to say child protection, I mean children's services. Didn't enjoy that work here in Western Australia. I did find some enjoyment with it over in the UK.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: And why's that? [0:33:54.6]

Tina: I think it was just the system here in Western Australia did not align with my values. So I really struggled with how I like to support families, help them drive their own change. That fit within the UK system, and families in the UK understand the expectations of children's services and what is expected of them. Most families got that, whereas in Western Australia, again a new system to me. I hadn't worked in it before. But how I was trying to support families, I couldn't get that to fit with all the checkboxes that I needed to do and my statutory obligations. And family...I didn't get the system, families didn't get the system. It just wasn't for me in the end, and that's why I made the switch to mental health over here. Love it, really enjoy this role. I think 'cause it's new and it's a new challenge to me as well. But probably try CAMS in the UK just to see that sort of translation and that difference, see if it's similar or not. But that's probably what I miss about the UK then is like, yeah, a new opportunity. What's something else I can do over there?

Sharmeen Ziauddin: Brilliant. It's been so lovely speaking to you both and hearing about your experiences. And I've never been to Australia so it's really nice to learn a bit more about how things go on over there.

Kristin: Thank you for having us.

Tina: Thanks for having us.

Sharmeen Ziauddin: That was Kristin and Tina, sharing their experiences of working in England versus Australia. If you want to hear our other episodes, do give us a follow wherever you're listening to this, so on Spotify, Apple, Spreaker etc., wherever you listen to podcasts. That way, every time we drop a new episode you'll be notified.

And if you don't know, we have one other podcast by Community Care Inform, called *Learn on the Go*, where experts and academics in the social care sector discuss research, theories and practice issues, so do go and check that podcast out as well. That's all for now. See you next time.