

Case Study

Australian Occupational Therapist

I first heard about the possibility of working in the UK as an occupational therapist (OT) while at University in Australia. Upon graduating, I was approached by a recruitment agency on LinkedIn, who expressed a desire to support me to find employment in the UK.

The recruitment agency supported me to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). I had the support of the recruiter who provided me with the relevant information and supported me to apply for the relevant visa to work in the UK, as well as with other administrative aspects. The process was very stressful and time consuming, and I was required to provide a wealth of information. It wasn't clear from inception the timeframes involved in completing the HCPC registration nor exactly how the process worked. However, I was able to speaking with someone by phone at HCPC who gave me more information and provided clarity. Even though I had not secured an OT job at that point nor completed my registration with the HCPC, I travelled to the UK.

Once I arrived in the UK, I liaised with the recruitment agency to find work. In the meantime, I worked as an OT Assistant while I awaited my HCPC registration to be completed. I later completed my HCPC registration and obtained a role as an OT in an acute setting.

The recruitment agency helped with pastoral issues on my arrival in the UK. For example, I moved over with my partner and a dog and they helped with providing valuable information that helped me to manage that transition successfully. I was also lucky that I had OT friends that previously moved from Australia to the UK. They provided me with a network of support. This was important in terms of promoting my wellbeing and sense of belonging.

In order to enable me to undertake the job role as an OT, there were a number of things that I needed to learn. In Australia, I previously worked in a community setting but was now employed in the UK in an acute setting. The 'discharge to assess model' was also new to me. In Australia, I was used to delivering rehabilitation in the home. There was also the cultural difference which I had to become familiar with. Understanding the local boroughs and the services that were available to patients was also new to me and presented another challenge. With the right level of support, I was able to successfully navigate these challenges. I now understand how much learning you have to do when you move to a new country to a new job. These are key considerations for anyone from overseas who is planning to seek employment in the UK.

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