



**Army LGBT Forum**  
**Diverse Families Lead**



**BLOGSPOT Jul 2020**

**“Mum, does that promise to slap me in to next year still stand?”**

We are back!! Its been a roller coaster few months! I've struggled in parts, coped in others and slept through most of it!

For those of you with young children, I commend your spirit and ability, you've made it this far... now just the school holidays to go and we hope the schools will reopen?!?! Its been a long time since my tribe were young and full of energy and bounce at stupid o'clock in the morning, teenagers on the other hand bring a new raft of challenges when cooped up indoors all day! I know it was different for myself as at 18 I was in phase one training and was on a different path in life, however, I'm sure I was pretty good at showering! Ignoring the indicators that he is up by the banging and slamming of doors and what sounds like a tapdancing elephant above the kitchen, the smell would precede his arrival! I did consider whether I should publicly embarrass my son like this, but after months, if not years of sounding like a broken record, what else am I to do? I think the constant exposure lockdown and working from home provided made me realise how much it annoyed me.

Even the teenagers who didn't live with me still found ways to drain the energy levels. My daughters live with their mother in Kent and had been in lockdown from the start as their younger sister is in a high-risk category. We would normally see each other at least once a month prior to this. As we couldn't travel, we kept in touch via a weekly Sunday night family quiz over video chat services. It pains me that my daughters don't have much faith in their own abilities and my middle daughter constantly tells herself that she is dumb and stupid. We all know this isn't the case and reflects back to my school reports "could have applied himself more". All she needs to do is think through the problem rather than revert back to "I'm thick" when she can't quite get the answer. I love her dearly and want to all I can to help her find her worth, but it is tiring constantly motivating. I won't stop till she is confident!

Some good news came out of the rest of world chaos... Esmae Leigh O'Doherty arrived on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 weighing in at a whopping 9lbs 10oz!! Mother and daughter doing fine, father is still trying to understand where all his sleep time has gone. My daughter is smitten with her little bundle of joy, so am I to be honest. I know what is to come, so for now I will enjoy the small human who can't yet answer back (evil laugh).

As we get back into the "New Normal" moving forward, I will try to bring back all the regular features of this blog and have some interesting individuals lined up for conversation corner. If you have any questions you like to include in the q&a or any people you would like to hear from in the interviews, get in touch.

As we are now slowly allowing children back to school (right before they go on summer holidays) if you have any ideas for keeping them occupied that you have picked up over lockdown, feel free to send them in and I will have a section on keeping children busy.

I can be reached at [Alistair.smith-weston854@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Alistair.smith-weston854@mod.gov.uk)

(Insert generic COVID safe message here) (facepalm)

See you all soon.

**Q&A**

If you have any questions you would like to pose to myself about policy, experience or anything to do with diverse families, send it to [Alistair.smith-weston854@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Alistair.smith-weston854@mod.gov.uk).

The question can be anonymous if you wish.



## INTERVIEW CORNER

If you would like to hear from anyone in particular, or anyone with a specific background, get in touch and I'll line them up for an interview.

[Alistair.smith-weston854@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Alistair.smith-weston854@mod.gov.uk)

### About the Author

Sergeant Alastair Smith-Weston (Smudge) has served with the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment for 21 years and with the Army LGBT Forum in varying roles since 2013. Smudge has been married to both a woman and a man and was the first Soldier to have a same sex "marriage" on a Military base, officiated over by a member of the Armed Forces. Smudge has four children, Jasmin and Bethanie who are 15 and 16 and live with their mother. Kieran who is 18 and lives with Smudge and Shannon who is 24 and lives with her partner Nick. Shannon and Nick are new parents to Esmae and Smudge is both extremely happy for them and also relieved he wasn't a grandfather before he turned 40!