



Highland Museum of Childhood

Wellbeing on Track: A Highland and Islands Digital Heritage Network Digital Commission

Digital Commission Summary:

HMOC is seeking a creative partner to create a story map experience that visitors can engage with remotely and on-site exploring themes of wellbeing, journeys and mental health. The aim of the project is to engage digital audiences at home and visitors who can explore the history of the Old Victorian station and spa out of season when the museum is closed. The experience will be informed by archive photos and heritage stories about the Strathpeffer Spa and the old railway site which will be sourced and researched by HMOC's curator.

Link to folder of archive images and content: [📁 Archive Material for Story Trail Experience](#)

Contract Duration: Estimated start is June with the project launching in October 2026. The story trail experience needs to be available for a minimum of 5 years online with site maintenance costs included in the budget.

Budget: £12 000 + VAT

Location: Production will be a combination of on-site research and workshops at HMOC plus remote digital production.

Deadline for responses: Friday 15th May at 5pm

1. About Highland Museum of Childhood

The Highland Museum of Childhood (HMOC) is an independent museum located in the spa village of Strathpeffer in the Scottish Highlands. Established in 1993, the museum is operated by the Old Strathpeffer Railway Station Trust, with support from a paid part-time curator/manager and a small group of volunteers. The museum is located in the historic Old Station - Strathpeffer's now disused Victorian railway station - alongside a range of community

and commercial spaces, supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for learning, creativity and engagement. Through exhibitions, events, and accessible public spaces, thousands of visitors are welcomed each year and strong connections are fostered within the local community, contributing to its social and economic resilience.

2. The Station & Its Heritage

The Old Station is a distinctive Grade B listed Victorian building that reflects the village's development as a popular spa destination in the late nineteenth century. Originally built to serve visitors travelling to Strathpeffer's renowned spa, the station played a key role in the area's growth as a centre for health, tourism and innovation. Following the decline of rail travel, the building fell out of use before being carefully restored and repurposed as a vibrant community hub. Today, its original platform and glass canopy, and surrounding gardens provide the setting for the Highland Museum of Childhood, a café, a community shop and community spaces - bringing new life to a historic site while preserving its heritage for future generations.

3. The Commission

We are seeking a creative studio or artist-led team to create a story trail experience that draws on the archive photographs, newspaper cuttings and rich heritage of the Old Station site, while exploring themes of journeys, mental health and wellbeing. The curator at HMOC will lead sourcing of archive materials for development of stories and content.

Link to initial archive images and content: [📁 Archive Material for Story Trail Experience](#)

The primary output is a digital story trail experience - an accessible, (bi-lingual English & Gaelic) exploratory digital experience that can be navigated remotely by anyone online, and also encountered physically on site at HMOC through QR codes placed at relevant locations around the grounds. We want to include a youth voice into this project and are recruiting a group of young people (16-24 years old) who can engage with the creative process in a meaningful way.

4. Themes & Areas of Exploration

[📁 Archive Material for Story Trail Experience](#)

Drawing on the archive materials and stories of Strathpeffer Spa as the anchor to this piece, the story trail could explore the site from a wellbeing, health or journeys perspective. The link to the archive folder is a collection of images and a current permanent exhibition that is installed and is a starting point for creative exploration. The curator will source further archive images and stories once the project is underway.

The following themes are therefore offered as creative springboards. Applicants may engage with one, several, or all of these in the brief:

- **Journeys & Experience**

Artists may explore the idea of journeys in both physical and intangible forms, including travel for health, leisure, or personal change. This could include consideration of historical journeys to Strathpeffer Spa, as well as contemporary experiences of movement, curiosity, escape, and transformation. Proposals may also reflect on the emotional or psychological dimensions of travel, and what individuals bring with them or leave behind.

- **Wellbeing & Health**

Artists may investigate changing attitudes to health and wellbeing, drawing comparisons between Victorian approaches to rest, routine, and recovery, and contemporary understandings of physical and mental health. This theme may also consider the role of landscape, nature, and movement in supporting wellbeing.

- **Transformation of Place**

Artists may respond to the changing character of the site, from a busy Victorian spa terminus to a quieter contemporary greenspace. This could include exploration of how places evolve over time, how natural environments interact with built heritage, and what physical or intangible traces of the past remain visible. Proposals may also consider future interpretations of the site.

Artists are encouraged to develop a cohesive response that connects with the site, its history, and its current use. Proposals should consider how audiences might engage with these themes through a digital, location-based experience, accessed both on-site and remotely.

5. Digital Output: The Story Trail

The commissioned applicant will produce a digital story trail experience that can be explored both online and on site. The site needs to be available online for 5 years so please include any hosting/maintenance costs in your budget breakdown.

Online (remote access)

- Have a minimum of 6 activation points on the map to explore
- Accessible to anyone with an internet connection, no specialist software or hardware required.
- Navigable in a non-linear, exploratory way, so visitors choose their own route through the content.

- Could incorporate archive photographs, commissioned soundscapes, text, animation, or other media.
- Should be accessible and usable on both desktop and mobile devices.

On site at HMOC

- Have a minimum of 6 activation points on-site to explore
- Visitors to the Old Station can access elements of the story map via QR codes placed at relevant locations on the platform, building and surrounding greenspace.
- The on-site experience should feel meaningfully different to the online version, responding to physical location and context.
- Consider how the site itself becomes part of the navigation: the platform, the canopy, the goods shed, the open-air greenspace.

We are open to the inclusion of additional digital or physical elements that enhance these two core modes, provided they are achievable within the budget and timeline

Possible components may include:

- Archive photographs interpreted or animated
- Interactive digital storytelling
- Soundscapes or audio storytelling
- Illustrated or animated sequences
- Gamified approach to each activation point on the map

On-site engagement may include:

- QR codes linking to digital content on trail markers around station grounds
- Location-based storytelling around the museum grounds
- Sound or visual elements connected to specific locations

Applicants are welcome to propose alternative or expanded creative approaches that meet the overall project aims.

6. Youth Voice & the HMOC Youth Board

The project will engage with a group of young people once they are established.

We welcome creative proposals that thoughtfully integrate young people's voices, skills and perspectives into the work at an appropriate stage.

This might include:

- Co-creation or co-design workshops at a point during the development phase.
- Young people contributing their own responses to the themes of journeys and wellbeing.
- The Youth group acting as a test audience and providing feedback before launch.

Proposals should indicate how and at what stage a group of young people could engage with the project while being realistic about time and resources.

7. Target Audience

The majority of visitors who currently engage with HMOC are tourists (80%) and schools (20%), with our annual visitor footfall being on average 4000 per season.

This project aims to bring new visitors to the railway site that HMOC is located on to engage with a story map experience/trail out of season as well as in season, who will be interested in the railway sites heritage stories around journeys as well as the spa influencing stories around health and wellbeing.

We hope that the story map experience will engage:

- Digital audiences who want to experience the heritage of the site at home.
- Local residents who visit the grounds regularly as there are local services on site, but have not yet had the chance to feel ownership of the site's heritage and stories.
- Have appeal to a younger digitally savvy audience who will engage with the project through workshops and who become a Youth Board as a legacy to the project

8. Budget & Timeline

The total commission budget is: **£12 000 + VAT**

From this £1225 + VAT is ring fenced for community/youth engagement element

This should include:

- Artist/Creative team fees
- Project management
- Research and development

- Workshops or engagement activity with Youth Group at HMOC
- Digital production
- Any travel or production costs
- Hosting & maintenance of online site for a minimum of 5 years
- Installation and fabrication of on-site elements ie posts and QR codes
- Gaelic translation
- Any rights clearances (including those of any 3rd parties including archive, music etc).

Applicants should provide a budget breakdown within their proposal.

Timeline

May 2026: Applicant appointed and project begins

June - July 2026: Research, archive exploration and ideation with Curator

July - September 2026: Production and digital build

Autumn 2026: Installation and testing of on-site elements

October 2026: Public launch of the digital exhibition

9. What We Are Looking For

Applicants must be able to complete all elements of the brief in its entirety.

This includes creative production, community engagement, digital/technical build, Gaelic translation, on-site fabrication and online site maintenance & hosting.

We are interested in applicants whose work engages with place, memory, heritage and/or wellbeing both remotely and on site.

We will prioritise applications from organisations based in Scotland, and particularly those who have connections to the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Applicants should also have experience engaging with communities and young people.

9. How to Apply

Applicants should submit a short proposal (3-4 pages max) and a budget breakdown. Submissions should be sent to curator@highlandmuseumofchildhood.org.uk by 17:00 on Friday 15th May.

Your Proposal should include:

1. Creative Approach

- Your concept or response to the brief
- How you might interpret the themes of journeys, heritage and wellbeing and the archive content

2. Digital Format

- How your work would function as a digital story trail or interactive experience
- How audiences might engage with the work both remotely and on site
- Where the site will be hosted

3. Relevant Experience

- A brief overview of your relevant practice and experience, including links to previous work where available.
- Details of any collaborators or additional team members you plan to work with.

4. Engagement Approach

- How you plan to engage with the Youth Group and at what stage.

5. Project Delivery

- Outline timeline
- Approach to project management and collaboration

6. Budget Breakdown

- Estimated allocation of the budget

11. Accessibility

The digital story map must be accessible to a wide range of users. We ask all applicants to consider and outline their approach to:

- Usability on mobile devices and with limited internet bandwidth (important for on-site QR code access at Strathpeffer).
- Accessible design for users with visual, auditory or cognitive access needs
- Web Accessibility compliant

- Bi-lingual and also available in Gaelic

12. Intellectual property and use of assets

Duration: Any rights associated with the project should be in perpetuity

Creative Commons: As this project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund we need to ensure all suppliers comply with section 3.5 of their Terms and Conditions:

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-heritage-grants-10k250k/terms-conditions-0#heading-3>.

This means that anything created for this project must be able to be shared under a Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 licence or equivalent. It will be the responsibility of the supplier to secure Creative Commons rights clearance with individual contributors and for anything they create for this project.

13. Selection Criteria

- Creative response to the brief - 25 %
- Feasibility of digital elements - 25 %
- Experience in rural community engagement - 20 %
- Previous Experience - 15%
- Value for money - 15 %

14. How to Respond

Please send your proposal to curator@highlandmuseumofchildhood.org.uk with the subject line 'HMOC: Wellbeing on Track Proposal' by Friday 15th May at 5pm.

15. Any Questions?

If you have any queries about the opportunity or the brief, please email curator@highlandmuseumofchildhood.org.uk with the subject line 'HMOC: Wellbeing on Track'