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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Showtown is looking for a Comedian in Residence for a new co-production project linked to Charlie Cairoli.



Blackpool Council/Photographer: Barnet Saidman

Closing date: Noon Friday 22 May 2026

Interview date (if required): Thursday 28 May – Friday 29 May

Contract Dates: Mid-June – November

Residency fee: £8,000

Showtown is seeking an individual, organisation or collaborative to develop and deliver a co-production group for adults in the Clarendon Community. This project is funded by Arts Council England.

Showtown is Blackpool's first museum, exploring Blackpool's entertainment heritage and its impact on British popular culture. At Showtown we put Blackpool and its people centre stage and reveal the town's lasting influence on the nation's sense of entertainment. Our displays are accessible, immersive, family friendly and, most importantly, fun!

Blackpool's collections are unique and cover Blackpool's role in the history of mass tourism. Its entertainment history, in particular, is without parallel; no other seaside location in the United Kingdom has such a comprehensive archive record of its venues, the acts, or the trends in entertainment from the 19th century to mass popular culture in the 20th century. The museum showcases only a small percentage of the items in Blackpool's collections.

Visit www.showtownblackpool.co.uk for more information.

About the project

Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust is seeking a Comedian in Residence to work with a community group in the Clarendon Community, our Collections team, our and Learning and Engagement team, to creatively interpret the newly acquired Charlie Cairoli collection.

Using comedy, heritage, co-production and storytelling, the successful candidate(s) will work with a newly formed community group. Coming together they will explore histories, share, play and experiment with comedy and storytelling to develop a performance and digital Story Chest inspired by Blackpool's rich entertainment heritage.

The group will provide social connection, promote shared laughter and enable friendships, as well as celebrating the heritage of one the resort's most famous residents.

About Charlie Cairoli

The Charlie Cairoli Collection is a newly acquired body of material relating to one of Europe's most celebrated clowns and one of Blackpool's longest serving resident clowns in the Tower Circus.

Born in 1910 into the renowned Cairoli circus family, Charlie became famous for his warm and friendly Auguste clown performances. His performances included musical renditions, silly antics, sloss and slapstick comedy. He performed for 39 years at the Blackpool Tower Circus – one of the most significant circuses in the world.

The collection includes:

- Costumes (including Charlie's tail suit and 6 heavily sequined Whiteface clown costumes worn)

- Props and performance objects
- Dozens of musical instruments
- Photographs, posters and publicity material
- Personal ephemera connected to his life and career
- Material relating to the Cairoli circus dynasties

What you'll be expected to do

1. Explore the Cairoli Collection
Immerse yourself in Showtown's collections exploring objects, photographs, costumes, props, musical instruments and more. Work with Heritage Assistants to understand the significance of Charlie's legacy and Blackpool's circus heritage.
2. Co-production workshops
Lead co-production workshops across Showtown venues and in the community based on your research into the collection. This will involve 11 two-hour meetings with the newly formed group.
3. Create a digital Story Chest
Together with the co-production group and an appointed creator, you will create a digital Story Chest to sit on Showtown's website including images, voices, and creative pieces.
4. Create a final performance
Alongside the group, you will create a collections-inspired comedy performance and deliver the performance as a celebration of Charlie Cairoli and the collaborative working project.

In addition to this, we will document and evaluate the process.

All elements of the project should be documented for sharing online, at conferences and to promote the work of Showtown. Showtown will provide evaluation frameworks to be shared with the group at the beginning and end of the project, and facilitate feedback sessions with the group.

The appointed party will be expected to ensure time for research, session planning, development and rehearsal into the project to ensure all outcomes are reached.

Who we're looking for

We require an individual, organisation or collaborative who is:

- Good with people and has a proven track record of community engagement
- Skilled at co-creation and collaborative making

- Comfortable working with people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds
- Confident leading accessible and inclusive workshops
- Able to translate archival material into funny and meaningful content
- Understanding of the core principles of co-production
- Excited by heritage, circus and storytelling and committed to positively representing Blackpool

The brief

Working with Showtown, the primary purpose of this contract is to:

- Work collaboratively with members of the community to bring the Charlie Cairoli collection to life through comedy, creative storytelling and interpretation
- Develop session plans and facilitate sessions which will achieve the project objectives including a digital Story Chest and a collections-inspired comedy performance
- Co-produce all outputs with the community ensuring their voices are heard, represented and the creative material is created as equal partners
- Work with digital content creators on the creative oversight of the digital output
- Assist with the gathering of data for evaluation and report writing
- Support Showtown's mission to enable access to the collections and champion Blackpool's entertainment heritage

When developing the sessions, it is key to ensure they include:

- Socialisation, connection, reflection
- Lots of breaks with tea and cake!
- Getting to know each other activities
- Brainstorming ways to co-produce the final outcome
- Links to heritage and Blackpool's entertainment industry
- Built-in evaluation that doesn't feel too arduous

With outcomes for the participants to include:

- Have increased mental resilience
- Feel more confident
- Be more willing to try new things
- Feel more positive about their future
- Feel more confident about asking for help
- Feel they have more supportive relationships around them
- Feel more confident about joining in with activities in their community
- Feel more connected to Blackpool's history
- Be more willing to try out other Showtown activities

Who you'll be working with

The Comedian in Residence will report to Showtown's Learning and Engagement Officer, Kari Singleton with support from Showtown's Learning and Engagement Assistant, Ryan Mulholland.

They will also work with Heritage Assistants based at Showtown's History Centre to access historic collections.

Fee available

This contract is for £8,000. This is the fee (inclusive of expenses, contingencies, and prelims) for the delivery of the sessions.

The total budget also includes an additional £2,000 to create a digital story chest and £1,000 for venue hire, refreshments and materials. The remaining budget will be managed by Showtown.

Payment terms will be staged payments;

July 2026 - £2,400

September 2026- £3,200

November 2026- £2,400

How to apply:

Your submission must include:

- No more than two sides of A4 providing an outline proposal of your approach to delivering the brief, including the skills you would use to deliver the project, and indicating the time allocation and daily rate for each of the required outputs. Please also include evidence of relevant experience of developing successful programmes.
- A budget breakdown to help us understand how the £8,000 would be spent. Your price must be inclusive of ALL disbursements and inclusive of VAT.
- Two referees with whom you have worked on similar projects. CVs may be attached in addition to your proposal.
- Please note that priority will be given to applicants from the local area.

Please send your proposal to: Kari Singleton, kari.singleton@showtownblackpool.co.uk by noon on Friday 22 May. For further information on the project or any enquiries regarding the role please contact Kari Singleton on the email above.

Selection process

Submissions/proposals will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Response to brief 40%
- Previous experience 40%
- Cost 20%

Assessment of the extent to which the response demonstrates and evidences:

- Response to the brief
- Robust delivery proposal
- Previous experience and successful delivery
- Sector-specific knowledge and experience
- Adequate resources / capacity to deliver the brief
- Clear and robust contingency plans to ensure continuity of service and sufficient cover
- Appropriate plans to manage and coordinate activity
- Quality commitment throughout proposal
- Appropriate consideration given to working and communicating effectively
- Cost of commission

Data Privacy

Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust is the data controller for the personal information you have provide in this quotation. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at DPA@blackpool.gov.uk.

For further information about how Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust uses your personal information, including your rights as a Data Subject, please see our website: <https://www.showtownblackpool.co.uk/privacy-policy>

Additional Information

The Trust cannot guarantee the amount of business which will be generated to the successful bidder - any stated volumes, quantities or usages are a guide only.

Please also note that the Trust will not be liable for any costs / prices not identified in your submission. No responsibility will be borne by the Trust for errors in Bidders' pricing submission.

The Trust does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any offer and reserves the right to accept the whole or part of any offer. Each party shall be responsible for its own costs in submitting this offer.