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NHS workers, local authority colleagues and charity representatives will mark World Mental Health Day with a conference examining how to improve health and wellbeing of staff.

The joint event involves Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, together with organisations such as Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind.

Health and Wellbeing At Work 2017 – which is being held on World Mental Health Day on 10 October - will be an opportunity for colleagues from all the organisations to learn more about how to improve their own mental and physical health. Among the speakers will be Dame Carol Black, the country's leading authority on health, work and wellbeing, and a representative from internet giants Google. The event, which is taking place at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, will also include classes on mindfulness, art therapy, foot health and yoga.

Recent NHS figures showed that nearly a third of “fit notes” issued by GPs are for psychiatric problems, and mental ill-health is now the most common reason for people to take time off work, ahead of spinal problems.

A further report released last month revealed the number of NHS mental health staff who have had to take sick leave because of their own mental health issues has risen by 22 per cent in the past five years.

Dr Jorge Zimbron, consultant in adult mental health at CPFT and one of the main organisers of the event, said: “The theme of World Mental Health Day this year is wellbeing at work so we’ve decided to hold this event with our partners because it’s really important we care for our own staff as much as we care for our patients and service-users.

“In the case of CPFT, for instance, just because our frontline NHS staff care for those with long-term medical conditions or mental health issues it doesn’t make them immune from their own mental or physical health struggles.

“It’s the same for the organisations we work most closely with so Health and Wellbeing At Work 2017 will be a really valuable event where we can share our ideas, get some really great tips and advice, and also hear from Dame Carol Black and private sector organisations such as Google about how they look after the wellbeing of their staff.

“Overall, as responsible employers, to have workforces that are healthier and more supported in their daily roles will lead to more motivated staff and reduce absenteeism. That is obviously better both for the coherent care of patients and service-users and also reduces the financial constraints we are all under because it will lead to less reliance on agency workers.”

The event will also be attended by CPFT members, service-users and carers although tickets are no longer available. As part of the conference, a 16-piece orchestra led by Dr Ben Underwood, Clinical Director of the CPFT’s Older People and Adult Community directorate, who is also a keen musician, will perform a rarely heard piece by Edward Elgar. Before he became a renowned composer, Elgar worked at a mental health hospital and the pieces he wrote and performed for patients are now viewed as an early form of music therapy.

Also on the agenda at Health and Wellbeing 2017 will be the launch of CPFT’s new charity Head To Toe, and a performance from Ali Warwood, a community psychiatric nurse with the Trust who has won several comedy awards and runs a regular comedy night in Cambridge.