Addressing Mental Health Issues in the Workplace - Can It Increase Productivity Asks Pictons?

The World Health Organisation's recent 'World Mental Health Day' aimed to bring mental health issues "out of the shadows" with a day of education and awareness.

The recognition of mental health being as important as one's physical health is an important development in the understanding and healing process of our health and wellbeing. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are committed to highlighting mental health issues in young people and giving their support to related charities.

Helen Taylor, the Head of the Employment Law Dept at leading and award winning regional law firm Pictons says "Apparently one in six workers are dealing with some form of mental health problem and this type of illness often remains a taboo subject in the workplace. Staff – including senior executives and bosses - are reluctant to ask for help, fearful of being discriminated against, ostracised, prevented from developing their careers or at worst losing their jobs. Many employers are equally reluctant to raise the issue as it feels too personal, even if it could be costly for the business.

"It doesn't have to be this way. Employers who introduce initiatives that start by acknowledging and talking about the subject have already recognised that a healthy workforce is a productive one. Ignoring the issue is likely to be costly due to high absence levels and potentially the loss of valued and experienced members of staff.

"More importantly, employers who acknowledge mental health issues are also likely to be complying with their obligations under the health and safety legislation and the Equality Act 2010, which provides protection from discrimination in the workplace for those with a disability, as well as triggering the duty to make reasonable adjustments."