



Growing Minds Therapy Responds to Doubled Childhood Anxiety Rates with Specialized CBT Support

March 19, 2026

CHICHESTER, UK - March 19, 2026 - PRESSADVANTAGE -

Growing Minds Therapy has expanded its cognitive behavioural therapy services to address the alarming rise in childhood mental health conditions, which NHS England data shows have doubled from one in nine children in 2017 to one in five by 2023.

The Chichester-based practice, which serves West Sussex and South Hampshire, reports increased demand for evidence-based interventions as academic pressure emerges as a primary factor in youth anxiety. Recent research indicates that 85 percent of UK students experience exam anxiety, while 77 percent of teachers observe mental health issues related to examination stress among Year 11 pupils.

Melissa Urwin, a Childrens and Young People Psychotherapist at Growing Minds Therapy, has witnessed firsthand the impact of academic stress on young clients. "We're seeing children as young as eight developing anxiety patterns that significantly affect their daily functioning," said Urwin. "The shift to terminal examinations at GCSE level has created concentrated periods of high-stakes testing that can overwhelm young people already predisposed to anxiety. Early intervention through cognitive behavioural therapy helps them develop practical coping strategies before these patterns become entrenched."

The practice specializes in treating anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and school avoidance in children and young people aged 8 to 18. Their approach combines traditional CBT techniques with creative adaptations suited to younger clients, including visual aids, sensory-friendly spaces, and incorporation of special interests into therapy sessions.

NHS Digital analysis reveals that anxiety represents 16 percent of known primary referral reasons to children's mental health services, rising from 15 percent the previous year. With more than a quarter of a million children remaining on waiting lists for mental health support after referral to specialist services, private practitioners like Melissa Urwin are increasingly filling critical gaps in provision.

Growing Minds Therapy offers both face-to-face and online consultations, providing flexibility for families managing school schedules and geographical constraints. The practice follows a structured three-step process beginning with an initial consultation, followed by comprehensive assessment and targeted intervention sessions focused on collaboratively agreed goals.

As a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist with over 20 years of experience working with children and young people in education and NHS settings, Urwin emphasizes the importance of timely support. "When children learn to identify and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns early, they develop resilience that serves them throughout their academic journey and beyond," she noted. "We're not just addressing current symptoms; we're equipping young people with lifelong skills for managing stress and anxiety."

The practice's expansion comes as professional bodies call for schools to prioritize stress management alongside academic achievement, with recent surveys identifying this as the skill most wanted by both parents and teachers.

Growing Minds Therapy is a specialist child and adolescent mental health practice providing evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD, and related conditions. The practice serves families across West Sussex and South Hampshire through in-person and online consultations.

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Growing Minds Therapy

Growing Minds Therapy provides specialist CBT for children and young people with anxiety, depression, OCD and PTSD. Founded by a BABCP-accredited psychotherapist with 20+ years in education and NHS CAMHS. Based in Chichester, West Sussex.

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