

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

An Occupational Therapy Fitness Initiative to use Physical Activity as a Therapeutic Occupation

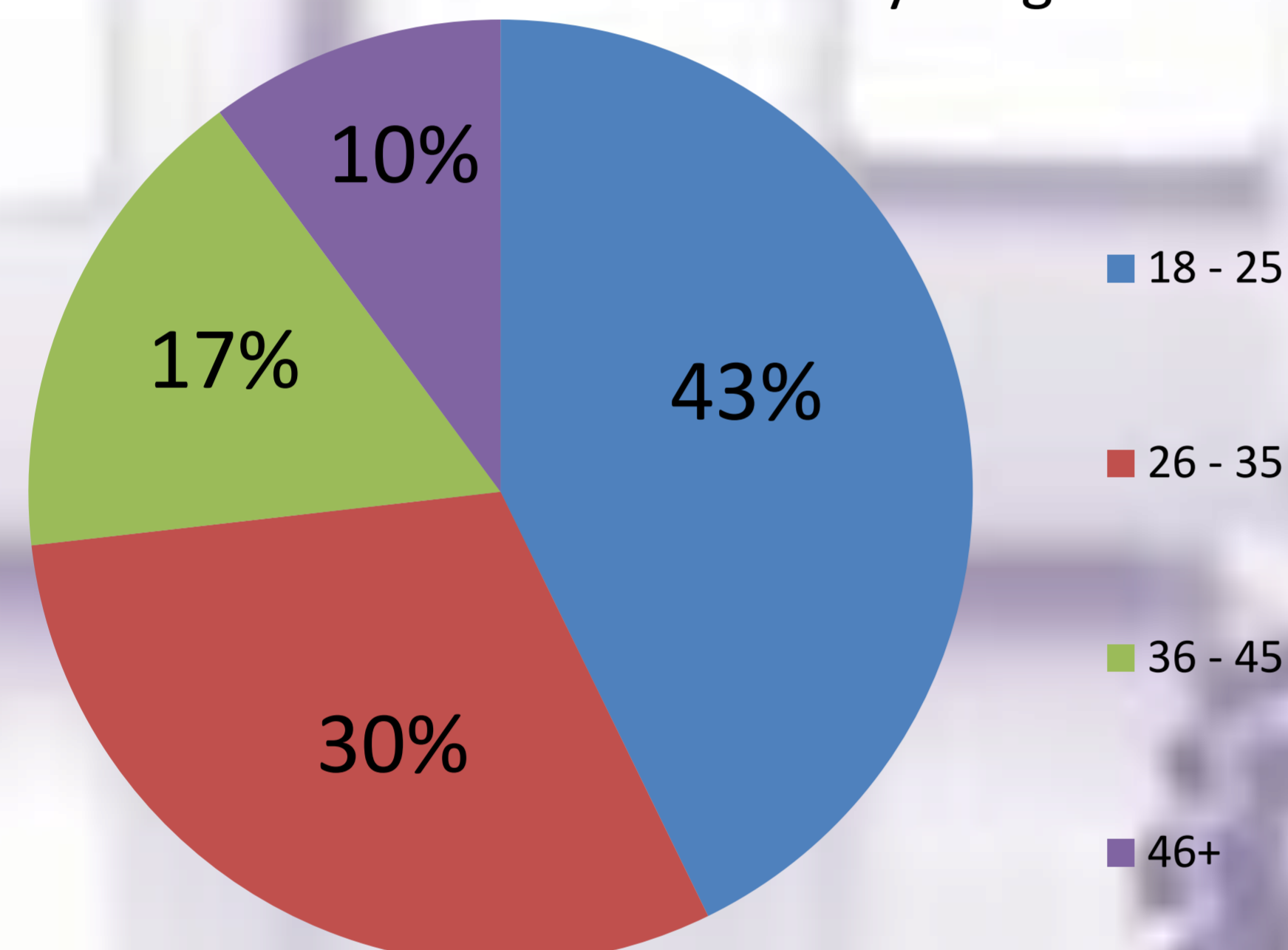
Leanne Duggan, Senior Occupational Therapist,
Early Intervention for Psychosis Team; Personal Trainer

Rationale for developing a Fitness Initiative:

- Adults with psychosis or schizophrenia may have cardiovascular, metabolic or respiratory issues, in addition to weight gain, which can be exacerbated by the use of antipsychotic medication (NICE, 2015)
- Life expectancy of individuals experiencing psychosis can be 15 – 20 years less than the general population, possibly due to poor physical health
- Individuals experiencing psychosis often disengage from previously valued occupations, including leisure occupations (Brown, 2011)
- Using the philosophy of Early Intervention, remediation of physical health difficulties will lead to improved longer term outcomes
- Additionally, physical activity will help to prevent the physical decline associated with isolation, poor diet and unhelpful lifestyle choices

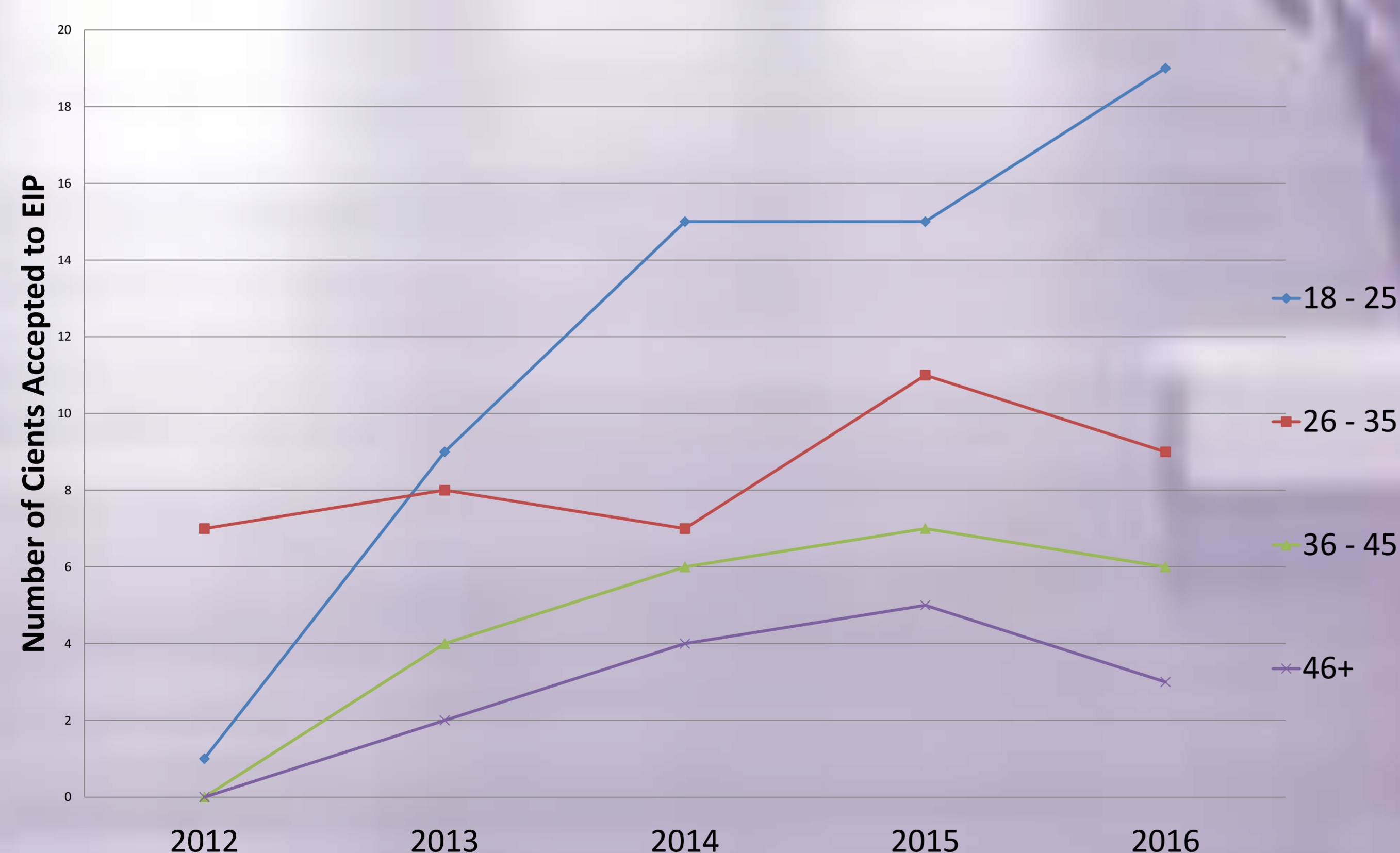
Client Demographics:

The age profile of clients **accepted** to work with North Lee EIP Team between 2012 and 2016 is indicative of a young client demographic:



Additionally, there has been a steady upward trend of referrals of the youngest client demographic (18-25), with other age demographics remaining relatively consistent:

- This indicates the need for a preventative rather than remediation approach
- Prevention of physical health decline will lead to improved physical health outcomes later in life
- Promotion of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle, as opposed to an isolated activity will increase engagement throughout the lifespan



References:

- Brown, J. (2011). Talking about life after early psychosis: The impact on occupational performance. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 78, 156 – 163.
- NICE (2015). Nice Quality Statements. Retrieved from <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs80/chapter/quality-statement-6-assessing-physical-health> on 11/4/17

Aims of the Fitness Initiative:

- To provide clients with access to appropriate, evidence-based exercise programming and groups based exercise
- To promote physical activity as a therapeutic medium
- To re-engage clients in local communities through the use of exercise
- To provide clients with an opportunity to promote their own physical health
- To actively target and remediate physical health difficulties experienced as a result of a sedentary lifestyle
- To empower clients to re-engage with previously valued occupations after a period of illness
- To provide psychoeducation on the benefits of different forms of physical activity
- To normalise the challenges faced by clients when dealing with physical ill health (Eg. Obesity, diabetes, asthma), and to provide active strategies to help alleviate the symptoms of these challenges
- To provide a graded approach to engaging with exercise initiatives in their local community
- To use physical activity as a therapeutic tool for the remediation of sensory difficulties
- To provide psychoeducation on the benefits and methods used for physical health monitoring
- To promote the practise of fitness monitoring to encourage clients to take ownership of their fitness goals

Services Currently Offered

1:1 Personal Training Sessions:

- These sessions are aimed at clients who wish to engage with their local gym
- A training program will be developed with the client in a gym setting, focusing on one training system
- Clients will be supported to engage with their program independently (eg. Meeting prior to or after a workout session, joint workout sessions)
- A mixture of cardiovascular and resistance training will be used – this is dependent on client choice, their fitness goals and the chosen training system

FitCamp:

- A mixed ability group-based exercise program, which will be co-facilitated with another Occupational Therapist
- Sessions will focus on a mixture of cardiovascular and resistance training
- Resistance Training will primarily be bodyweight exercises until appropriate equipment can be sourced
- The group will run for 6 weeks and will be open to clients attending the EIP Team, Aisling Nua Day Hospital and the Home Based Crisis Team

Social Group Exercise Sessions:

- Group exercise sessions provided on request to the NLMHS OT Social Group

All clients must complete a PAR-Q and must have medical clearance prior to attending the exercise group. These will be kept on file. Clients who are not medically cleared cannot attend the group until their GP signs off on their participation.

