

## New research reveals women and under 40s hold key to fighting climate change

As President Trump faces international criticism for his decision to take the US out of the Paris Agreement, new research from Decision Technology (Dectech) reveals that women feel more negatively about climate change than men, while the under 40s are less apathetic than their older counterparts. The firm is calling for environmental campaigners to focus on these more engaged groups of society in their efforts to tackle global warming.

When asked how they feel about the earth's surface increasing 2 to 6 degrees Celsius by the end of the 21st century in order to have continued economic growth, almost three quarters (71%) of women express negative emotions, compared to just over half (59%) of men. The most common emotion expressed by women is worry (20%), while men are most likely to cite apathy (24%).

Dectech's research also reveals a generational gap in attitudes towards climate change. Over 40s are largely apathetic (23%), with this surpassing all other emotions. This compares to just 16% of under 40s feeling apathetic. The most commonly expressed emotions among younger respondents are sadness (18%) and worry (17%).

Overall, the top five most commonly expressed emotions are apathy (20%), worry (20%), sadness (14%), fear (7%) and confusion (7%). Just 0.2% of respondents feel hopeful about the situation.

Nick Chater, Director at Dectech and member of the Committee on Climate Change, comments: "While scientists are trying to convey the need for immediate action against climate change, the sense of urgency does not seem to have reached the general public. The overriding response of apathy may be due to the intangible nature of the problem, the long timescale or simply because people don't want to make the changes required."

Henry Stott, Director at Dectech, says: "Younger people show a stronger negative emotional response to climate change than over 40s, which may be because they recognise that global warming will have a significant impact in their lifetime. While older people are less likely to say they feel confused than their children or grandchildren, this may convey their disengagement from the topic – expressed as apathy – rather than a higher level of understanding. Interestingly, women seem to be more concerned about climate change than men, although further research will be required to understand why this is.

"The scientific evidence is clear that we urgently need to reduce global warming and mitigate against climate change, so environmental campaigners should focus on those people most likely to be responsive and take action. Though business leaders are an important target, adopting a grassroots approach to change may help increase the impact of campaigners' efforts. Millennials may be considered precious snowflakes by some, but the future of the ice caps might be in their hands."

The top five most common responses to the survey question were:

| Emotion         | Overall sample | Male    | Female  | Over 40s | Under 40s |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| <i>Apathy</i>   | 20% (=1)       | 24% (1) | 17% (2) | 23% (1)  | 16% (3)   |
| <i>Worried</i>  | 20% (=1)       | 19% (2) | 20% (1) | 21% (2)  | 17% (2)   |
| <i>Sad</i>      | 14% (3)        | 13% (3) | 14% (3) | 11% (3)  | 18% (1)   |
| <i>Scared</i>   | 7% (=4)        | 6% (4)  | 8% (5)  | 8% (4)   | 7% (5)    |
| <i>Confused</i> | 7% (=4)        | 4% (5)  | 9% (4)  | 5% (5)   | 9% (4)    |

## **ENDS**

### **For more information, or to request an interview, please contact:**

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### **Notes to Editors**

- Research was conducted by Decision Technology online from 20<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> February 2017 among 1,101 UK adults aged 18 years and over. Free text responses were converted into one of the 200 emotions in most common use in the English language.

### **About Decision Technology**

Decision Technology (Dectech) is an innovative research consultancy that specialises in helping businesses and policymakers understand and manage customer decision-making, from acquisition through to retention and all the points in-between. It applies insights and techniques from behavioural science, such as randomised controlled field trials and online behavioural experiments, rather than traditional market research surveys. It is a member of the Market Research Society and the Management Consultancies Association.