This document was translated from English by machine and may contain mistakes. The English original is at https://www.novaracg.com/2026/10/08/silence-speaks-built-for-the-moment-of-access-not-yet-for-the-moment-of-failure/.

Silence Speaks: Diseñado para el momento del acceso, aún no para el momento del fallo

Heather Grizzle · October 8, 2026

El Transit Assist de Silence Speaks hace que los anuncios en lengua de señas sean fáciles de consultar. Sus documentos no dicen casi nada sobre lo que ocurre cuando uno es incorrecto.

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7 October 2026 · Heather M. Grizzle, Novara Consulting Group · Working record, pending Silence Speaks′ response

Un producto de transporte construido con cuidado real para el momento en que un pasajero Deaf lo necesita, y con muy poco para el momento en que algo sale mal

EN RESUMEN

- Silence Speaks′ Transit Assist is designed around the passenger: scan a QR code, no app or account, signed language detected automatically, captions for Deaf people who do not sign, and offline use for tunnels. The company has a Deaf chief operating officer and says it hired Deaf engineers from the start.
- Coverage and the company′s own news page say it is working with Transport for London across more than 250 stations. Its transport page names no network, and NCG located nothing from TfL. Whether anything is in public service is the first open question.
- El único documento publicado que rige el producto es una política de privacidad. No menciona el vídeo, la ubicación, Transit Assist ni el entrenamiento de modelos, y declara que la empresa no recopila datos de categoría especial, incluidos los datos biométricos. No se localizaron condiciones de servicio.
- No se localizó ninguna cifra de precisión, evaluación, revisor, mecanismo de respaldo ni protocolo de incidentes para un avatar ofrecido para anuncios de transporte, sanidad, banca y exámenes.

Cómo se elaboró este expediente

This record rests only on what Silence Speaks and others have published, as retrieved on 7 October 2026: the company′s homepage, solutions, transport, about and news pages and its privacy policy at silencespeaks.io; the Companies House register; and press coverage from Wired, MultiLingual, Positive News and others, some of which the company republishes on its own site. It updates NCG′s public-evidence Snapshot of 1 August 2026. Before publication, NCG put seven questions to the company in writing, and its answers will be published here in full. Where something is described as not located, that means not found in the places searched on that date, not that it does not exist.

Cuatro segundos en un andén

Una mujer Deaf está de pie en un andén de Londres cuando el panel parpadea y la salida que estaba esperando desaparece. Se está reproduciendo un anuncio. Ella no puede oírlo. Junto al letrero del andén hay un código QR, y lo escanea. Se abre una página web sin pedirle que descargue nada ni que cree una cuenta. Ya ha determinado en qué estación se encuentra y que ella signa en lengua de signos británica. Unos segundos después, un intérprete digital en su teléfono le dice que el tren se ha trasladado a otro andén.

She is not a real person. She is a composite, built from how Silence Speaks describes its Transit Assist product, and she is here because the product was clearly designed by people who thought hard about her. What this record asks is the question the product's pages do not answer: what happens to her when the signer gets it wrong.

Una puerta de entrada construida por personas que entendieron el problema

Silence Speaks Ltd is a British company, incorporated in December 2021 as Kinesics Meets Ltd and renamed in February 2025[1]. Its founder and chief executive is Pavan Madduru, a former AI leader at Vodafone[11]. Its product turns text, voice and video into signed language through an avatar, in photorealistic or animated styles, and its homepage offers British, Irish, Polish, American and Indian sign languages, with more to come[2]. It markets the avatar to nine sectors under separate product names, from Transit Assist for transport to Care Connect for healthcare, Secure Sign for banking and Class Connect, which promises to turn "course materials, exams, and key information into sign language"[3].

The transport product is where the design shows most. A passenger scans a QR code "at any station or onboard; no app needed." The web app "opens instantly, auto-detecting your location and preferred sign language," and delivers platform changes, disruption alerts and wayfinding "within seconds of the original announcements." It supports up to three hours of offline use for tunnels and poor coverage[4]. The company says captioning is built in for Deaf people who prefer or rely on text[5].

The people behind it matter too. The company's about page names Robert Tiffert as its Deaf chief operating officer, fluent in six sign languages[6]. The founder told Wired

he hired three full-stack engineers at the outset, all Deaf sign language users[7]. The company describes itself as "built by & for the Deaf Community"[2] and says it is "co-designing algorithms with deaf communities and linguists"[5]. It has also been candid about limits: the current system runs in the cloud and takes time to generate signing, real-time on-device translation is "at least a year away," and the team abandoned its first goal, translating sign language into text, because it "proved trickier than expected." Those are things a company says when it is being straight about what it has built.

¿Dónde está funcionando?

Todo lo que sigue depende de un hecho que NCG no pudo establecer: si Transit Assist está en servicio público en algún lugar, y de ser así, dónde.

Qué se ha dicho sobre Transport for London, y por quién

Fuente	Fecha	Qué dice sobre Transport for London
Wired, republicado en silencespeaks.io	2025	TfL "plans to roll out" the avatar; TfL is responsible for more than 250 stations
MultiLingual	Mayo de 2025	A partnership with Transport for London that will bring signed announcements to over 250 stations
Silence Speaks, "Breaking Barriers" (company's own site)	Sin fecha	Silence Speaks is "collaborating with Transport for London (TfL)"
Nimdzi Language Technology Radar	Sin fecha	Silence Speaks trabaja con TfL para ofrecer información pública accesible
Página de transporte de Silence Speaks	Activa el 7 de octubre de 2026	Early pilots with major networks; no network, operator or station named
Transport for London	Consultado el 7 de octubre de 2026	No se localizó ninguna publicación de TfL sobre Silence Speaks o Transit Assist

Fuente: Fuentes según lo indicado; todas recuperadas el 7 de octubre de 2026

The accounts move between a plan, a partnership and a collaboration, and the company's own current transport page says only "early pilots with major networks," without naming one. TfL is a public body with its own publications and freedom of information obligations, and NCG located nothing from it about the product. If Transit Assist is live on TfL stations, it is national public infrastructure serving people with a statutory right of access, and the questions below become urgent. If it is a plan, the record should say so plainly, and so should the company's marketing. NCG has asked.



Qué cubre la documentación

The only published document governing Silence Speaks' products is its privacy policy[8]. It names Silence Speaks Ltd as data controller, gives its company number and an address at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Harwell, and offers a complaint route to the Information Commissioner's Office. Those are the basics, and they are there. The policy carries no date, and the mirror copy NCG recorded at a second address in August now returns an error.

What the policy does not cover is the product. It does not mention video, signing, location, Transit Assist or QR codes. Its section on what data is collected promises a list and gives none. It says the company may share personal data "in connection with the licensing of our technology" and on a change of control, may store it outside the UK, and keeps it "as long as reasonably necessary." It says nothing about whether anything a user submits trains the company's models. And it states: "We do not collect any Special Categories of Personal Data about you," a category the policy itself defines to include health and biometric data.

Set that sentence beside the transport product. A Deaf passenger who scans the code is identified as someone who needs signed language, at a known station, at a known time. Information that reveals a disability can be health data under UK data protection law. The app detects location automatically. The company's other products take video as input. The policy may be right about what the company stores; it may be describing an older website rather than the product. But as written, it does not describe Transit Assist at all, and no other document does.

No se localizaron términos de servicio. NCG comprobó las rutas habituales en silencespeaks.io y todas devolvieron un error. Sean cuales sean los términos que rigen a un operador de transporte, un hospital o un banco que compre el avatar, o a un pasajero que lo use, ninguno es público.

Con qué fue entrenado

The company describes its training data in one phrase, repeated across its own news page and the coverage it republishes: datasets covering "regional dialects, contextual language, and emotional tone"[5,7]. No corpus is named. Nothing says whether the signing was recorded by the company or drawn from elsewhere, who the signers were, what they agreed to, whether they were paid, or which regional varieties of BSL are co-

vered. This is the same Corpus Question NCG has put to every company on its roster[9], and for an avatar that speaks for public bodies, the answer belongs in writing.

Lo que nadie ha medido

No accuracy figure of any kind was located. The company's own news page describes "remarkable accuracy"; Wired reports that the team has "set high standards for accuracy." Neither is a measurement. No evaluation method, sample or definition of a correct rendering is published, and no evaluation by anyone other than the company was found. The company's site lists membership badges for the National Deaf Children's Society and RNID and support from three universities[2], but none of these is described as having examined the output.

Cuando se equivoca

Volvamos al andén. El intérprete en su teléfono le dice al pasajero que su tren ha cambiado al andén 4. En realidad ha cambiado al andén 14. O el anuncio era una instrucción para abandonar la estación, y el avatar interpretó un retraso.

La interpretación en directo significa que nadie puede verificar esa frase antes de que ella la vea. Eso es un hecho sobre la arquitectura, no un fallo, y es cierto en todo sistema en vivo. Lo que importa es qué sustituye a esa verificación. NCG no localizó nada: ningún revisor, ningún muestreo posterior del resultado en directo, ninguna postura declarada sobre si los anuncios de emergencia o evacuación están incluidos, ninguna previsión para un pasajero sin smartphone, y ninguna vía para que ella informe de que la interpretación fue errónea o para averiguar quién es responsable de ella.

En el punto de acceso	En el punto de fallo
Escanear un código QR en la estación o en el tren	Sin vía hacia una persona cuando la interpretación es errónea
Sin aplicación, sin cuenta, sin configuración	No se localizó ninguna previsión para un pasajero sin smartphone
Ubicación y lengua de signos preferida detectadas automáticamente	El procesamiento de la ubicación no se menciona en la política de privacidad
Interpretación entregada en segundos tras el anuncio	El resultado en directo no puede revisarse antes de que el pasajero lo vea
Subtitulado para personas Deaf que no usan lengua de signos	Ninguna vía publicada para informar de una interpretación errónea
Hasta tres horas de uso sin conexión para túneles	Ninguna postura declarada sobre contenido de emergencia o evacuación

The transport page also tells operators that the European Accessibility Act deadline of 28 June 2025 is approaching and cites fines of up to £425,000, with no source[4]. The site's code declares WCAG 2.1 AA conformance, but no accessibility statement was located, which a UK public-sector deployment would ordinarily require.

Quién decide

Silence Speaks has more Deaf people in senior roles than most companies on NCG's roster: a Deaf chief operating officer and, by its own account, Deaf engineers from the start. That is real, and it is credited. What the public record does not show is whether any Deaf role can stop a release, change what the avatar signs, or refuse a deployment. No advisory body, charter or documented route for the wider Deaf community was located.

Su consejo de administración se describe en términos políticos y médicos. Companies House enumera dos directores: el fundador y Chloe Smith, una ex secretaria de Estado que lideró la legislación de 2022 que reconoció la lengua de signos británica en el derecho del Reino Unido, nombrada en junio de 2025 y descrita por Wired como presidenta[10,7]. Positive News informó en enero de 2026 de que el Dr. John LeeAllen, médico del NHS e inversor tecnológico, forma parte del consejo[12]; no figura en el re-

gistro de directores de Companies House, por lo que su función podría ser consultiva. La trayectoria legislativa constituye una credibilidad genuina. No es gobernanza Deaf, y NCG la registra bajo composición del consejo en lugar de como evidencia de autoridad Deaf.

Lo que un comprador debería preguntar

Para un operador de transporte, las preguntas son concretas. ¿Está incluido el contenido de emergencia y evacuación? ¿Qué latencia deben esperar los pasajeros? ¿Qué ocurre cuando falla una interpretación, la red se cae o el pasajero no tiene teléfono? ¿Quién revisa el resultado en directo, y cómo podría un pasajero Deaf informar de un error? Para un hospital, un banco o un organismo examinador, las preguntas son aún más agudas, porque son entornos donde un signo erróneo tiene consecuencias que nadie puede deshacer.

PREGUNTAS QUE PLANTEAR A CUALQUIER PROVEEDOR DE ANUNCIOS INTERPRETADOS EN DIRECTO

☐ ¿Está el sistema en servicio público hoy, y dónde? Pregúntele al operador, no solo al proveedor.

☐ ¿Se interpreta contenido de emergencia o evacuación, y de ser así, con qué salvaguarda?

☐ ¿Qué control compensatorio sustituye a la revisión previa a la publicación del resultado en directo?

☐ ¿Qué recibe un pasajero sin smartphone?

☐ ¿Qué datos recopila la aplicación sobre dónde se encuentra un pasajero Deaf, y quién los conserva?

☐ ¿Quién entrenó el modelo, con la lengua de signos de quién, y con qué consentimiento?

☐ ¿Quién es responsable de una interpretación errónea, y cómo puede un pasajero reportarla en lengua de signos?

Preguntas planteadas a Silence Speaks

NCG has put the following questions to Silence Speaks in writing, with this record attached. The company's answers, and any corrections to the record above, will be published with it.

1. Is Transit Assist in public service anywhere today? What is the status of the work with Transport for London: live, piloting, contracted or planned, and at which stations or lines? Which "major networks" ran the early pilots, and has any of them published results?

2. ¿Con qué datos se entrenó al avatar? ¿Se grabó la interpretación en lengua de signos por Silence Speaks o se obtuvo de otra fuente, bajo qué licencia, de qué signantes, con qué consentimiento y compensación, y qué variedades regionales de BSL cubre?

3. ¿Se ha evaluado la precisión de la salida signada por alguien ajeno a la empresa, con qué método y con qué resultado? ¿Revisan la salida revisores Deaf, y en el caso de los anuncios de transporte en directo, qué control sustituye a la revisión previa a la publicación?

4. What data does Transit Assist collect when a passenger scans a code, including location, how long is it kept, and is it linked to any identifier? How does the privacy policy's statement that the company collects no special category data apply to a service whose use reveals that the user is Deaf? Is anything a user submits used to train models, and which terms of service govern passengers and customers?

5. ¿Están los anuncios de emergencia, evacuación u otros anuncios críticos para la seguridad dentro del alcance de Transit Assist? ¿Cuál es la latencia típica, qué ocurre cuando falla la generación o la red no está disponible, y qué recibe un pasajero sin smartphone?

6. Beyond employment, can any Deaf role at Silence Speaks halt a release or deployment or change what the avatar signs? Is there a Deaf advisory body or other route for the wider community? What is Dr John LeeAllen's role, given that he does not appear on the Companies House register of directors?

7. ¿Qué vía tiene un usuario Deaf, en lengua de signos, para denunciar una interpretación incorrecta, y quién es responsable de ello, Silence Speaks o el operador que despliega el servicio? ¿Existe una declaración de accesibilidad para la aplicación web Transit Assist?

Silence Speaks′ response

Silence Speaks′ response will appear here in full when it is received.

Aviso legal.
This record states matters of public record as retrieved on the dates given and identifies interpretation as such. The passenger in the opening sections is a composite drawn from Silence Speaks′ published product description and does not describe any real person. This record makes no allegation of misconduct and is not legal advice. Silence Speaks has been invited to correct any statement of fact before publication and to respond to the questions above.

Fuentes

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12. Positive News. (2026, January 15). Three good things: UK projects to improve access for deaf people. https://www.positive.news/society/three-good-things-uk-projects-to-improve-access-for-deaf-people/

TIPS

Know something about a sign language AI system that the public should know? Send it to tips@novaracg.com. Every tip is read by me and kept confidential. If you work in the UK, writing to us is not by itself a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, so before you share employer information, check your options with Protect (protect-advice.org.uk), the free whistleblowing advice line.

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