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Signapse: nella roadmap, non ancora rilasciato

Heather Grizzle · September 26, 2026

Signapse sign language AI review: what its governance documents show, seven dated commitments, how its answers changed, and what buyers should ask for.

Contenuti

26 September 2026 · Heather M. Grizzle, Novara Consulting Group

IN BRIEF

Signapse publishes stronger AI governance policies than most sign language AI providers, answered all seven of NCG's questions, withdrew an unsupported 95% accuracy figure and committed to seven dated fixes. The contracts, registers and disclosures that would make those policies enforceable are not yet public, so buyers should contract for the documents rather than rely on correspondence.

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Why this record exists

In August 2026, Novara Consulting Group asked Signapse in public how it defines appropriate-use limits for sign language AI, particularly in educational settings involving Deaf children. Chief Executive Sally Chalk agreed with the premise and went further. She added courts, police stations, hospitals, social services and child protection meetings to the list, and argued that as the stakes rise and preparation time falls, a service should involve more human oversight and less AI, or none at all. That is the position a buyer hopes to hear from a vendor. This record asks the question that follows from it: whether the documents behind the company hold that position up.

On paper, Signapse starts from a stronger place than most of the market. Its published AI Governance Framework includes a Use Policy that sorts work sector by sector into what a human must do and what AI may do. Where decisions affect health, liberty, legal rights or safeguarding, the policy requires a qualified interpreter or translator and states that in most cases Signapse will recommend another company. Safeguarding is reserved to humans without exception. The framework names a Deaf Advisory Board and a Deaf Impact Officer, and lists Deaf organisations the company consults, including RAD, the BDA and Action Deafness. Few providers of sign language AI publish anything comparable. A framework, however, sets out how a company intends to behave. A buyer also needs the instruments that make that behaviour enforceable. These include the agreements with the Deaf people whose signing and feedback shape the product, the rules that govern directors who also lead partner organisations, and a privacy policy that addresses signed video, likeness and training data. The buyer also needs a published source for every performance figure the company cites. That gap between stated intention and binding document is where NCG directed its questions.

NCG reviewed Signapse's AI Governance Framework, Terms of Service, privacy policy and ASL product page, and put seven questions to the company. Before publishing, NCG sent Signapse its understanding of the answers and invited corrections. Ms Chalk replied on 17 September 2026 and twice on 24 September 2026, the second time with what she described as Signapse's final comments on the evaluation. Signapse answered all seven questions. It conceded several gaps in writing, withdrew an accuracy figure it could not source, and attached dates to the fixes it proposed. Its first reply on 24 September changed three of the answers it had given a week earlier. When NCG asked which account was accurate, the company clarified all three the same day. Its final answers largely returned to what it had said on 17 September.

That movement is not a mark against Signapse, and this record does not present it as one. It shows why a buyer should not rest a procurement decision on correspondence. Letters are private, they can be revised, and they are written to a consultant rather than to the institution that will carry the risk of a deployment. A public body buying sign language AI for use with Deaf people needs documents it can read, cite and hold a vendor to. This record therefore sets out what exists today, what the company has committed to change and by when, and how its answers moved between letters. Every statement is attributed to the date it was made. Replies are quoted only where the exact wording matters. Where NCG checked a public web page, the date it was retrieved is given.

Signapse is one of several sign language AI providers NCG is reviewing under the same method, set out in the SLAT Index framework (https://www.slatindex.org/framework/).

What exists today

This section records the position as it stands, document by document. For each item it sets out what the public record shows, what Signapse has said about it and when, and why the point matters to an institution deciding whether to buy.

Terms of Service. Deaf feedback is not incidental to Signapse's product. It is how the product gets corrected. The company's Translation Quality Assurance Policy describes monthly user-group meetings in which Deaf participants review generated translations, and it lists consultation with Deaf organisations among its external checks. The terms that govern that feedback therefore matter. The published Terms of Service (https://www.signapse.ai/terms-of-service), last updated 1 October 2023 and unchanged as retrieved on 24 and 26 September 2026, provide that anyone who directly sends Signapse "any question, comment, suggestion, idea, feedback, or other information about the Services" assigns all intellectual property in it to the company, which may then use it "without acknowledgment or compensation." A separate provision waives moral rights in the same material. Read against the company's own Ethos, which says captured signing must respect "fair recompense and transparent terms," the clause sits badly. Signapse has given three accounts of it. On 17 September it described the clause as standard boilerplate drafted for commercial customers that "does not reflect how we work with Deaf community contributors," and said paid participants were not yet on a separate written agreement. On 24 September it said the Terms apply only to paying customers, that feedback sessions run off-platform, and that contributors never create accounts or accept the Terms, so the clause has never applied to them. Its final letter the same day said the customer Terms are unaffected by the October work, which instead creates a standard written agreement for feedback session participants. NCG offers no view on whether the clause could bind someone who never accepted the Terms. The point for a buyer is narrower. On the company's own account, what governs Deaf contributors today is not a published document but a series of individual emails, and the agreement meant to replace them does not yet exist.

Contributor compensation. Signapse reports two arrangements. Signers whose own likeness appears in a product are covered by its Reward and Remuneration Policy, which pays 1% of the monthly value of each contract or licence using their image, quarterly in arrears, for the full contract term, split equally where more than one signer appears. Feedback session participants receive $25 per session for attendance, regardless of the content of their feedback. The royalty is the stronger of the two. It ties a signer's income to the commercial life of their likeness, and few providers in this market disclose any comparable arrangement. The company's Use Policy also commits that where recorded human signers are used, "informed consent and appropriate compensation must apply." The difficulty lies in the paperwork rather than the principle. Signapse states there is no standalone contributor contract: the $25 payment is agreed by email with each participant, that correspondence is the written record, and payments are recorded in its payment records. It says this has been the practice since the sessions began. Those records are private and NCG has not seen them. A buyer who wants to confirm either arrangement will need to ask for the policy and the records directly.

Conflicts of interest. Mark Wheatley is a Signapse director and chief executive of RAD, one of the partners named in Signapse's governance framework. Craig Crowley was a Signapse director from August 2022 to March 2024 while leading Action Deafness, another named partner, and is not a current director. The relationships matter because of where those organisations sit in Signapse's own quality process. Its Translation Quality Assurance Policy lists consultation with RAD and Action Deafness under external review. A buyer reading that list would reasonably assume the organisations are independent of the company they are reviewing. For RAD, that assumption holds only if the connection is disclosed and managed. Signapse states that Article 30 of its Articles of Association has governed director conflicts since 2024, requiring declaration and allowing the board to set conditions or exclude a director from discussion and voting, and that Mr Wheatley's RAD role has been declared under it. A conflicts provision in company articles is not a conflicts register. Signapse confirmed on 17 September that it does not maintain one, and that neither relationship is disclosed in its Quality Assurance Policy.

Deaf Advisory Board escalation. Signapse's Use Policy gives its Deaf Advisory Board oversight of "community impact and cultural/linguistic accuracy." An advisory body is only as strong as its route to the people who decide. Mr Wheatley also sits on the Deaf Advisory Board, and the investment board he joins holds veto authority. On 17 September Signapse acknowledged that this route "depends on one individual holding both seats" with no documented rule behind it. On 24 September it added that matters have been escalated from the Advisory Board to the board on several occasions, as recorded in board minutes. Both statements can be true: escalation has happened, and no written rule yet guarantees it. If Mr Wheatley left either seat, nothing on paper would carry the Advisory Board's concerns upward.

The 95% figure. Asked for the basis of a 95% figure in its materials, Signapse could not locate a source and withdrew it, stating it would be replaced by a figure supported by Deaf user feedback sessions and evaluations. Signapse confirmed on 24 September that this description is accurate. Withdrawing the figure was the right call, and the company made it without argument. Other performance language remains. The ASL page as retrieved on 26 September says both ASL digital signers deliver translations with "an industry-leading level of comprehension," a comparative claim with no stated source or method. The accuracy figures in the Quality Assurance Policy, 60, 80 and 98 percent, are stated as roadmap targets rather than measured results. Until a source, method and denominator are published, a buyer should treat any performance figure from the company as unverified.

Jay and Max. Jay and Max, Signapse's ASL digital signers, are synthetic likenesses: the face on screen is not the face of the person whose signing underlies them, so they fall outside the Reward and Remuneration Policy. The design has a logic of its own. The Use Policy says AI-generated output "must not imply endorsement, identity, or authorship by any individual signer," and a synthetic face keeps any one person's identity off the screen. It does not remove the people behind the signing; it moves the question of their consent and payment out of public view. Signapse states that more than one Deaf signer contributed to Jay and Max, including Certified Deaf Interpreters, under private arrangements that include equity and payment. No individual is named here.

Public pages as retrieved on 26 September 2026. Signapse reported on 24 September that its ASL page update is complete. The ASL page (https://www.signapse.ai/asl) as retrieved by NCG on 24 and again on 26 September introduces Jay and Max as "AI ASL Digital Signers," says they use "photo-realism" and credits "Deaf-led development," but does not state that they are synthetic likenesses or how the people behind them are compensated. The only statement about synthesis is a sitewide footer disclaimer, "Not all videos are synthetic videos," which does not say which videos are. The unfilled template placeholder previously found in the privacy policy (https://www.signapse.ai/privacy-policy) no longer appears. The current policy, version 2.0, now lists photographs, videos and audio recordings as identity data and disabilities as health data, but still says nothing about model training, digital likeness or biometric data.

Commitments and dates

Signapse has committed to seven changes. Taken together, they would close most of the gaps described above: a conflicts register, a written escalation route for the Deaf Advisory Board, a written agreement for the Deaf people who give feedback, a public disclosure about Jay and Max, a US compliance mapping and a privacy policy that addresses signed video and training data. The list moved between the company's two responses. Two dates came earlier, two became less specific, one item was reported complete, and one dropped out of the final account without comment. On 24 September the company described all of them as "internal plans which may change." That caveat is fair, and it is also the reason this record exists. A plan described in a letter binds no one. The table sets out each commitment with both stated dates, so a buyer can see what was promised, when, and how the promise changed.

Signapse's stated commitments and dates

Commitment	Stated 17 Sep	Stated 24 Sep
Conflicts register covering directors and advisory board members, reviewed annually	October 2026	October 2026
Deaf Advisory Board charter giving the chair a standing right to escalate to the investment board without going through the CEO	To the investment board for approval, December 2026	October 2026
Terms of Service: replace the feedback assignment with a limited licence, remove the moral rights waiver, move contributors to a participation agreement	December 2026	Standard written agreement for feedback session participants, October 2026; customer Terms unaffected
ASL page to describe the synthetic likenesses and how contributors are paid	December 2026 or Q1 2027	Complete
US compliance mapping: ADA, Sections 504 and 508, state procurement accessibility rules, state biometric and likeness statutes, FERPA, COPPA	Q1 2027	2027
Privacy policy rewrite covering video, biometric and motion data, digital likeness and training data provenance	Q1 2027	2027
Annotate the Quality Assurance Policy with the RAD and Action Deafness relationships	No date	Not mentioned

Source: Correspondence from Sally Chalk, 17 and 24 September 2026

Three of the commitments fall due in October, and they are the ones that bear most directly on governance. The conflicts register is the only item whose date held steady across both letters. It would turn Article 30 from a private rule into a record a buyer can inspect, and it would put Mr Wheatley's two roles on paper, along with any future overlap like them. The Advisory Board charter moved two months earlier and would replace an escalation route that depends on one person holding two seats with a written right that survives changes in membership. The participant agreement also moved earlier, but it shrank on the way. On 17 September Signapse proposed to change the Terms themselves, removing both the assignment and the waiver. By the final letter the Terms were staying as they are, and the commitment had become a separate agreement for feedback session participants. That is still a real improvement on arrangements made email by email, but the feedback clause remains in the published Terms. When these documents appear, a buyer should check three things: that the register names each relationship and how it is managed, that the charter gives the chair the right to escalate in terms and carries the investment board's approval, and that the participant agreement grants a licence rather than ownership, leaves contributors' moral rights intact and states what they are paid.

The ASL page is a different case. In a single week Signapse moved it from a target of December 2026 or early 2027 to complete, which would be the fastest progress on the list if the page showed it. As retrieved on 24 and 26 September, it does not. It is the one item where the company's account and the public record disagree, and NCG records it as open until they match.

The two largest items went the other way, each slipping from a named quarter to an unspecified year. Both matter more than their place at the bottom of the table suggests. A school district, university or state agency will need to know how the ASL product handles Section 508, student records under FERPA, children's data under COPPA and state law on biometric and likeness data before it can sign, so a US buyer should write the compliance mapping into the contract as a deliverable rather than wait for it. The privacy rewrite would give the governance framework the data layer it currently lacks. Version 2.0 of the policy has moved a little, dropping the template placeholder and listing videos as identity data, but it still says nothing about training, likeness or biometric data.

Then there is the commitment that went missing. Annotating the Quality Assurance Policy with the RAD and Action Deafness relationships had no date on 17 September and did not appear at all on 24 September. It is the cheapest fix on the list, a disclosure added to a policy Signapse already publishes, and the one that speaks most directly to the independence question raised above. Its absence may be an oversight. NCG treats it as outstanding.

NCG will record each item as met only when the document itself is published or supplied. October is the first test.

How the answers moved

A week passed between Signapse's first reply and its second, and the second came back firmer. Several points the company had conceded on 17 September were described on 24 September as settled practice. Three answers no longer matched. A buyer who received only one of those letters would have come away with a different picture of the company depending on which one it was. Rather than choose between them, NCG put the differences back to Signapse and asked which account was accurate. The company answered within the hour. Its final answers are consistent with what it said on 17 September, and they show that the first 24 September letter had overstated two of them.

The first concerned paperwork. On 17 September, Signapse wrote that paid participants "are not currently on a separate written agreement." A week later, the $25 payment "is agreed in writing with each contributor." The distance between those sentences is small in words and large in procurement terms, because the second sounds like a contract. Asked to reconcile them, Signapse said there is no standalone contract. The agreement is made by email with each participant, and that email is the written record. In a narrow sense an email is writing. It is not, however, a standard agreement with terms a buyer could read and compare, and the company's own October commitment to create one concedes the difference.

The second was a contradiction inside a single letter. The first 24 September letter said the Terms of Service had never applied to feedback participants, and then listed an October update to "Terms of Service for feedback sessions." Both could not be true. Signapse's answer was that the earlier reference should have been described as a standard written agreement for participants, replacing email-by-email arrangements, and that the customer Terms are unaffected. The clarification resolves the contradiction. It also confirms what the commitments table shows: the Terms themselves are not changing.

The third turned out to be less a conflict than an incomplete first answer. On 17 September, the signing behind Jay and Max came from "a real Deaf ASL signer," and the data creators held share options. The first 24 September letter named Certified Deaf Interpreters who receive payment and equity. The two accounts seemed to describe different people. Signapse's final answer was that both are accurate, because more than one Deaf signer contributed, including Certified Deaf Interpreters, under private arrangements that include equity and payment. Nothing here was overstated. The singular version is simpler to tell, but the plural one is the accurate account, and it is the one a buyer should rely on. Because the arrangements are private, neither version can be checked from outside the company, and NCG names no one.

Each of these was settled the way correspondence settles things, by another letter. One difference cannot be settled that way. Signapse reports the ASL page update complete, but the page NCG retrieved on 24 and 26 September does not carry the disclosure described. Anyone can check that by opening the page, and NCG will record the item as met when the page carries it.

Assessment

This record began with a position Sally Chalk stated in public: that as the stakes rise and preparation time falls, a service should involve more human oversight and less AI, or none at all. The question was whether Signapse's documents hold that position up. The answer is that they state it well and do not yet secure it.

The statement is real, and in places it goes further than the rest of the market. The Use Policy sorts work sector by sector, reserves safeguarding to humans without exception, and tells customers that for work touching health, liberty or legal rights the company will in most cases send them elsewhere. Signapse also deserves credit for how it engaged. It answered all seven questions, named its own weaknesses in plain terms on 17 September, withdrew a figure it could not support, and attached dates to its fixes.

The first 24 September letter weakened that record by recasting several concessions as settled practice. Pressed, the company walked two of them back to its 17 September account within the hour, which counts in its favour. The episode still matters. When Signapse described itself a second time, the description drifted toward the stronger version, and only a direct question brought it back. That is an argument for anchoring any purchase in documents rather than in the latest account of them.

The documents are where the gap lies. Almost every protection that matters to the Deaf people behind the product currently sits out of public view. Contributor terms live in individual emails. Conflicts are managed under a provision of the company's articles and recorded in board minutes a buyer has not seen. The Advisory Board's route to the investment board depends on one person holding two seats. Article 30, the board minutes, the contributor emails and the payment records are all private or unpublished, and correspondence is not evidence a buyer can rely on. On today's evidence, Signapse's governance is a credible plan rather than a system anyone outside the company can verify.

That leaves a buyer with two practical steps. The first is to take the company at its published word where its word is strongest. An institution considering sign language AI for a courtroom, a hospital or a child protection meeting, the settings Ms Chalk herself named, already has Signapse's own Use Policy telling it to use a qualified human instead. That is a genuine strength. Few vendors put the limits of their own product in writing, and a buyer should hold Signapse to them. The second is to treat everything else as the company's account until the documents exist in public or are supplied under contract, and to ask for the following:

- The standard written agreement for feedback session participants once adopted, and the date it came into use.
- The conflicts register once adopted, and the text of Article 30.
- The adopted Deaf Advisory Board charter, with the date of board approval.
- Written confirmation, in the contract or the participant agreement, that the feedback clause in the customer Terms of Service does not apply to feedback session participants or other Deaf contributors.
- The Reward and Remuneration Policy, and confirmation of how feedback session payments are recorded.
- The public ASL disclosure describing Jay and Max and how the people behind them are compensated.
- For US deployments, the compliance mapping, written into the contract as a deliverable.
- The source, method and denominator for any replacement accuracy figure.

NCG will update this record as each commitment falls due.

Frequently asked questions

+ What is Signapse?

Signapse is a UK company that produces AI-generated sign language translation in British Sign Language and American Sign Language. Its products include SignStudio, SignStream, website plugins and APIs.

+ Should Signapse sign language AI be used in courts, hospitals or child protection settings?

Signapse's own Use Policy says a qualified interpreter or translator is required where decisions affect health, liberty, legal rights or safeguarding, and that in most such cases the company will recommend another provider. Safeguarding work is reserved to humans without exception.

+ Does Signapse pay the Deaf signers behind its products?

Signapse reports that signers whose own likeness appears in a product receive 1% of the monthly value of each contract using their image, paid quarterly, and that feedback session participants receive $25 per session. The payment records are private and NCG has not seen them.

+ Are Jay and Max, Signapse's ASL digital signers, real people?

No. Jay and Max are synthetic likenesses. Signapse states that more than one Deaf signer contributed to them, including Certified Deaf Interpreters, under private arrangements that include equity and payment. As retrieved on 26 September 2026, the ASL product page did not state that they are synthetic.

+ What has Signapse committed to change?

Seven items: a conflicts register, a Deaf Advisory Board charter and a written agreement for feedback participants, all due October 2026; a public ASL disclosure it reports as complete; a US compliance mapping and a privacy policy rewrite, both due in 2027; and an undated annotation of its Quality Assurance Policy. Signapse describes these as internal plans which may change.

+ What should a procurement team ask Signapse for?

The documents rather than the correspondence: the participant agreement, the conflicts register and Article 30, the adopted Advisory Board charter, written confirmation that the feedback clause does not apply to Deaf contributors, the Reward and Remuneration Policy, the public ASL disclosure, a US compliance mapping for US deployments, and the source, method and denominator of any accuracy figure.

+ What is the SLAT Index?

The SLAT (Sign Language Access Trust) Index is the framework Novara Consulting Group uses to review sign language AI providers. Its method is published at https://www.slatindex.org/framework/.

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- Correspondence from Sally Chalk, Chief Executive, Signapse, to NCG, 17 September 2026 and 24 September 2026 (two letters).
- Signapse Terms of Service (https://www.signapse.ai/terms-of-service), last updated 1 October 2023, retrieved 24 and 26 September 2026.
- Signapse ASL page (https://www.signapse.ai/asl), retrieved 24 and 26 September 2026.
- Signapse Privacy and Cookies Policy (version 2.0) (https://www.signapse.ai/privacy-policy), retrieved 24 and 26 September 2026.

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