This document was translated from English by machine and may contain mistakes. The English original is at https://www.novaracg.com/2026/10/07/signapse-a-stop-right-stated-for-one-product/.

Signapse: Um Ponto Certo, Declarado para Um Produto

Heather Grizzle · October 7, 2026

A Signapse responde à NCG sobre a sua sinalização ferroviária e a validação por Deaf: é afirmado um direito de paragem vinculativo para o SignStudio, mas não para o seu resultado em tempo real.

Conteúdo

1. Uma revisão que já estava concluída
2. O que diz o regulamento
3. Signapse's answers, in full
4. O sistema ferroviário lê dados, não discurso
5. O Conselho Consultivo pode soar o alarme; o conselho de administração puxa o travão
6. Um direito de travão, declarado para um produto
7. "Deaf or use BSL"
8. O que um comprador deve perguntar
9. Fontes

An investor's congratulations, three questions, and a line Signapse drew in its own words

EM RESUMO

- Signapse's rail system generates British Sign Language from live journey data in rail information systems, not from spoken announcements. Information that exists only as speech would not be signed.
- O Conselho Consultivo Deaf pode escalar a questão ao conselho de administração. É o conselho de administração, não o Conselho Consultivo, que pode suspender uma implementação.
- A Signapse afirma que toda tradução do SignStudio precisa de aprovação de intérpretes Deaf nativos antes de ser lançada. Não afirmou o mesmo sobre a sua produção em tempo real, incluindo o sistema ferroviário e a API SignStream, que, segundo a própria página do produto, não possui garantia de qualidade humana.
- Os compradores de sistemas de tradução gestual em tempo real deveriam perguntar, por escrito, quais resultados passam por essa aprovação.

Imagine uma passageira Deaf numa plataforma de estação. O ecrã acima dela mostra um sinalizador digital, fluente e sem pressa, a informá-la de que o seu comboio está atrasado e mudou de plataforma. Depois, o sistema de megafonia estala, e um membro do pessoal, falando de improviso, diz a todos para se afastarem bem da borda. As pessoas à sua volta recuam. O sinalizador no ecrã continua com o horário, porque o aviso foi falado e nunca foi digitado em lado nenhum.

That scene is an illustration, not a reported event, and NCG knows of no case in which it has happened. It is drawn, however, from Signapse's own account of how its rail signing works, which the company gave NCG on September 28, 2026, in answer to a question that began with an investor's congratulations.

On September 4, Raw Ventures, a London venture capital firm, posted the kind of announcement investors write when they are pleased with a bet. It had joined Signapse's latest growth round. "What we like most," the post said, "is that it's already out in the world," and it named the places: UK rail, starting at Huddersfield with Network Rail; US airports, including Cincinnati; live broadcasting, through a partnership with SyncWords; and next, German Sign Language with G&L Systemhaus. It ended on the

people. Around a third of the Signapse team, it said, "are Deaf or use BSL themselves, which is a big part of why the product actually works for the people it's built for."

An investor's post is written to celebrate, not to brief a buyer, and this one deserves to be read in that spirit. Two of its sentences, though, landed on the questions NCG had spent September putting to Signapse: how the rail system actually works, and who inside the company can stop what its systems put in front of Deaf people. So NCG asked again. The answers, published here in full, put something new on the public record. They also draw, in Signapse's own words, a line between the output that Deaf signers check before it ships and the output they do not.

Uma revisão que já estava concluída

By the time NCG saw Raw's post, its review of Signapse was finished. Chief Executive Sally Chalk had given what she called the company's final comments on September 24, and NCG published "Signapse: on the roadmap, not yet shipped," two days later. Reopening a review every time something new surfaces would leave a vendor answering forever, so NCG follows a simple rule: material that appears after a vendor's final comments is recorded separately, the vendor is offered a chance to respond, and the vendor may take it or leave it. On September 27, NCG wrote to Signapse, set out what this piece would say, and asked three questions, with a deadline of 5:00 p.m. UK time on September 30. The answer came back the next day from Ben Saunders, Signapse's co-founder and chief scientist, who picked up the thread while Ms. Chalk was out of the office. NCG said it would publish his answers as given, and it has. Nothing here alleges misconduct by Signapse or by Raw Ventures.



Figura 1. Como decorreu a troca. A NCG identificou a publicação de 4 de setembro depois dos comentários finais da Signapse.

O que diz o regulamento

Signapse publishes more governance than most companies in its market, and it rewards a close reading, because the documents say plainly where authority sits. In its AI Governance Framework, as retrieved on October 7, 2026, the escalation paths climb through customer support and a moderation panel to the chief executive, who gives "final sign-off for high-risk deployments (legal, medical, safeguarding)." The Content Moderation Policy ends in the same place, with the chief executive and chief technology officer signing off "on final decisions for major incidents (e.g., service suspension, regulatory notification)." The Deaf Advisory Board does appear in the framework, in a list of roles, where it "provides oversight on community impact and cultural/linguistic accuracy." It does not appear on either ladder, and the easy-read version of the framework does not mention it at all. Nothing in either version makes sign-off by Deaf signers a condition of release, and the Translation Quality Assurance Policy says of the company's fastest output that "Instant AI is reviewed post delivery." Read as written, the rulebook gives Deaf people a voice in Signapse's governance and gives two executives the last word.

Signapse's answers, in full

NCG asked three things. Does the rail system translate spoken platform announcements into BSL, or does it generate BSL from information entered into rail information systems? Is NCG's reading of the escalation paths right, and does the Deaf Advisory Board, or any Deaf role at Signapse, hold a binding right to halt a deployment?

And is there anything about the Raw investment, or Raw's description of the company, that Signapse wants on the record? Mr. Saunders replied on September 28, 2026:

> 1. Rail deployment. Raw's wording is correct, as our rail system does turn live announcements into BSL, but it does not listen directly to spoken announcements. It generates BSL by processing the live journey information already held in rail information systems, such as departures, platform changes, delays and cancellations, and shows it on platform screens. The BSL then gets translated in real-time, the same way the tannoy processes live announcements.
>
> 2. Vias de escalada. A sua leitura do nosso Quadro de Governação de IA está correta. O Conselho Consultivo Deaf fornece supervisão e pode escalar questões ao conselho de administração, e o conselho de administração pode suspender uma implementação. Além disso, toda tradução do SignStudio é verificada por intérpretes Deaf nativos antes do lançamento, e uma tradução não pode ser lançada sem a sua aprovação. Isso dá aos membros Deaf da nossa equipa um direito vinculativo de impedir que a produção seja divulgada.
>
> 3. Raw Ventures. Temos o prazer de ter a Raw Ventures a juntar-se à nossa ronda de crescimento. A publicação deles é o seu próprio resumo para um público geral, e o ponto 1 acima fornece a descrição exata do trabalho ferroviário. A afirmação deles de que cerca de um terço da nossa equipa é Deaf ou usa BSL é exata.
>
> Isto conclui a nossa contribuição para o adendo.

What follows is NCG's reading of those answers against the public record. It is interpretation, labeled as such, and Signapse may respond to it.

O sistema ferroviário lê dados, não discurso

Mr. Saunders defends Raw's wording, and in one sense he is right: Deaf passengers on Signapse's platforms do see live journey information in BSL. But the description he gives in the same breath is narrower, and far more useful to anyone buying the system. It "does not listen directly to spoken announcements." It reads the structured data already sitting in the railway's information systems, the departures, platform changes, delays and cancellations, and turns that into signing. There is a sound engineering case for building it this way. Structured data is predictable in a way that open speech

is not, and a system that signs only what it can parse cleanly is less likely to sign something wrong.

The same design sets a boundary, and the boundary is where the platform scene at the top of this piece comes from. On Signapse's own description, anything that exists only as speech, the improvised warning, the request to move along, the explanation for a delay that never makes it into the feed, is not signed. That is not a failing peculiar to Signapse. It is what a data-driven system does. But it means a rail operator buying the product is buying signed timetable information, not a signed public address system, and it should know exactly which announcements reach Deaf passengers and which still do not.

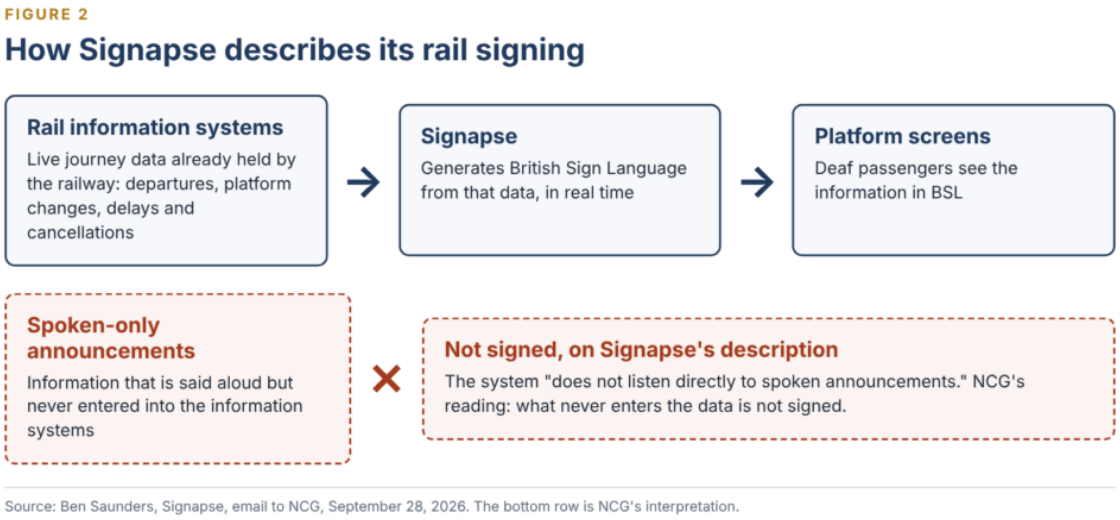


Figura 2. Como a Signapse descreve a sua sinalização ferroviária. A linha de baixo é a leitura da NCG.

O Conselho Consultivo pode soar o alarme; o conselho de administração puxa o travão

Sobre a autoridade, a Signapse confirma o que os seus documentos mostram. O Conselho Consultivo Deaf fornece supervisão e pode escalar uma preocupação ao conselho de administração, e é o conselho de administração que pode suspender uma implementação. O Conselho Consultivo, por outras palavras, pode soar o alarme. Não pode puxar o travão.

That matters more than it might seem, because of how the alarm currently travels. NCG's September review recorded that the route from the Advisory Board to the investment board depends on a single person who sits on both, with no written rule guaranteeing it. Signapse has promised a charter, due this month, that would attach the right to escalate to the Advisory Board chair rather than to whoever happens to hold both seats. Until it is adopted and published, and until the published escalation paths are amended to include it, the Advisory Board's line to the people who decide runs through one individual.

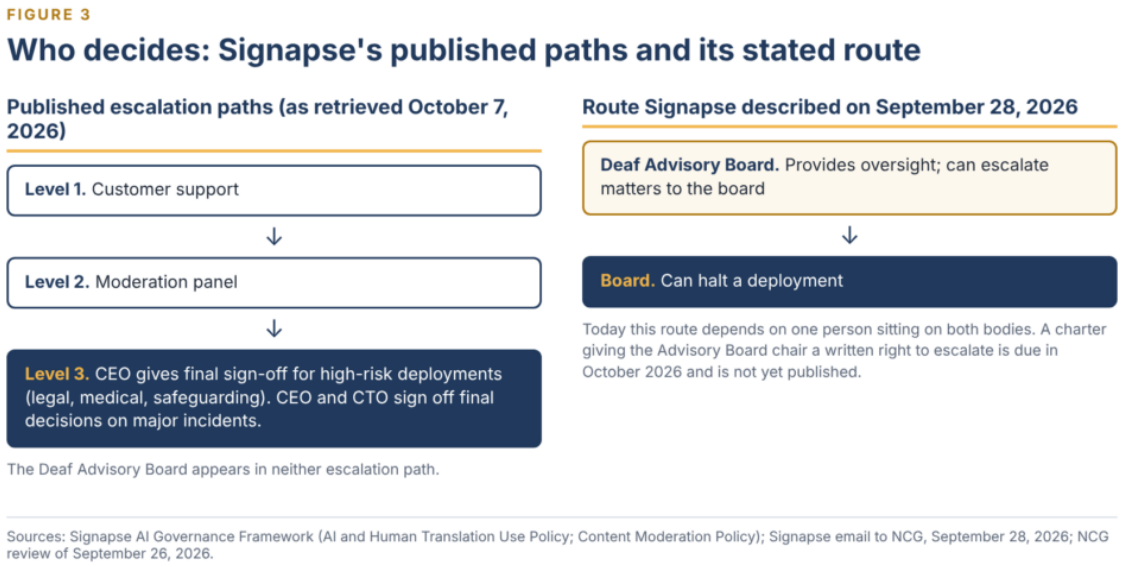


Figura 3. As vias de escalada publicadas pela Signapse ao lado do caminho que descreveu em 28 de setembro de 2026.

Um direito de travão, declarado para um produto

Then comes the most interesting sentence in the response, and the newest. "Every SignStudio translation," Mr. Saunders writes, "is checked by Deaf native signers before release, and a translation cannot be released without their sign-off." That, he says, gives Deaf members of the team "a binding right to stop output from going out."

If SignStudio works that way, it is a real control, and a stronger one than anything Signapse's published policies describe. A right to stop output before it ships is exactly the kind of Deaf authority most of this market lacks. NCG has not seen the procedure, and the framework as retrieved on October 7 speaks of Deaf staff reviewing output against

scoring, not of a sign-off without which nothing is released. Signapse would do itself a favor by publishing it.

Read the sentence again, though, and notice its subject. It is SignStudio, the company's reviewed product. Signapse's own SignStream API page describes its real-time product in very different terms: "entirely AI-generated, with no human grammar checking or quality assurance," and "not suitable for formal, legal, or official use." The quality policy says instant output is reviewed after delivery, and Mr. Saunders describes the rail output as translated in real time. Signapse has not said whether the rail screens, or the live broadcast signing Raw celebrated, pass through the sign-off he describes. NCG traced the same boundary in September, in "Where We Have Control," from the other direction, following a downloaded file out of the company's reach. The picture from both sides is consistent. Where Signapse can slow down, Deaf signers check the work. Where the product is fast, on the record as it stands today, nothing shows that they do.

FIGURE 4

Where the pre-release Deaf sign-off is shown to apply

Product or deployment	Pre-release sign-off by Deaf native signers	What the record says
SignStudio	Stated Every translation, before release	Stated by Signapse on September 28, 2026. Not yet described in its published policies.
Rail platform screens	Not stated	Described as translated in real time. Signapse's quality policy says instant output is reviewed after delivery.
Live broadcast	Not stated	Named in the Raw post. No statement on pre-release review.
SignStream API	No	Signapse's page: "no human grammar checking or quality assurance"; "not suitable for formal, legal, or official use."

Sources: Signapse email to NCG, September 28, 2026; Signapse SignStream API page and AI Governance Framework, retrieved October 7, 2026.

Figura 4. Onde se mostra que a aprovação prévia ao lançamento se aplica, no registo público e na resposta da Signapse de 28 de setembro.

"Deaf or use BSL"

The response also confirms Raw's figure: around a third of Signapse's team are Deaf or use BSL. NCG does not dispute it. A company in which a third of the staff are Deaf

or sign is uncommon in this market, and it is to Signapse's credit. It is worth noticing the "or," though, because it joins two groups that are not the same.

"Deaf or use BSL" counts a Deaf native signer and a hearing colleague partway through a sign language course in the same column. Between them sit hearing interpreters, hearing children of Deaf parents who grew up in the language, and staff at every stage of learning it. All of them may be valuable to the company. But fluency and lived experience are different things, and they do different work. Fluency bears on the quality of the signing. Lived experience bears on governance, because Deaf people are the ones who live with the output when it is wrong: on the platform, in the classroom, at the hospital front desk. A single figure that folds the two together cannot say which of them Signapse has a third of.

Signapse knows the difference, and Mr. Saunders's own answer shows it. When he describes the check on SignStudio, he does not say staff who use BSL. He says "Deaf native signers." That is the precise phrase, used where precision matters, and it is the right one. The team figure is looser, and it is offered by Raw, and confirmed by Signapse, as a reason the product works rather than as a statement about who decides.

Governance turns less on how many Deaf people work at a company than on how many of them hold the pen when the final decision is signed. Signapse's published framework places final sign-off for high-risk deployments with the chief executive, and final decisions on major incidents with the chief executive and chief technology officer. It does not say whether Deaf people hold any of the roles that can stop a deployment, or whether they staff the review of the real-time products. Those questions have plain answers, and a buyer is entitled to them: how many of the third are Deaf, how many are native signers, and how many of them can stop something from shipping.

O que um comprador deve perguntar

A Signapse, com efeito, disse aos compradores onde olhar. Seguem-se cinco pedidos, para a Signapse ou para qualquer fornecedor de sinalização gestual em tempo real, antes de um contrato ser assinado:

- Which products and deployments pass through pre-release sign-off by Deaf native signers, and the written procedure that makes that sign-off a condition of release.
- For rail, airport and broadcast deployments, whether any output is reviewed before display, how Deaf passengers or viewers report errors, and how quickly errors are cor-

rected.
- For rail, which categories of announcement are signed and which, such as those made only by voice, are not.
- The adopted Deaf Advisory Board charter, with the date of board approval, and confirmation that the escalation right is written into the published escalation paths.
- How many Deaf people hold executive, board or final sign-off roles.

Três dos compromissos registados na revisão de setembro vencem este mês: o registo de conflitos, o estatuto do Deaf Advisory Board e um acordo escrito padrão para as pessoas Deaf que participam nas sessões de feedback. A NCG voltará ao registo após 31 de outubro e só considerará cada item como cumprido quando o próprio documento for publicado ou fornecido. A Signapse poderá responder a este artigo, e qualquer resposta será publicada juntamente com ele.

Fontes

- Ben Saunders, co-founder and chief scientist, Signapse, email to NCG, September 28, 2026.
- NCG, email to Signapse, September 27, 2026 (notice and questions).
- Raw Ventures, LinkedIn post announcing its participation in Signapse's growth round, September 4, 2026, retrieved October 7, 2026.
- Signapse, AI Governance Framework (AI and Human Translation Use Policy; Content Moderation Policy; Translation Quality Assurance Policy), retrieved October 7, 2026.
- Signapse, AI Governance Framework, Easy Read, retrieved October 7, 2026.
- Signapse, SignStream API, retrieved October 7, 2026.
- NCG, "Signapse: on the roadmap, not yet shipped," September 26, 2026.
- NCG, "Where We Have Control: Signapse SignStream and AI Signing," September 11, 2026.

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.

SUPPORT NCG

NCG does this work without vendor money, so our findings stay ours. If it has been useful to you, you can support NCG's independent work here. NCG is a for-profit company, not a charity. Contributions are not tax-deductible and buy no service or influence.

Como citar

Grizzle, H. M. (2026, October 7). Signapse: Um Ponto Certo, Declarado para Um Produto. Novara Consulting Group. https://www.novaracg.com/pt/2026/10/07/signapse-a-stop-right-stated-for-one-product/