



# Back Pain Systems™

## RAG SCREENING & PATHWAY ALLOCATION TOOL

A System within The Body Systems™ App  
Red / Amber / Green suitability framework for users entering RESET™

*Clinically-informed screening and pathway triage to support safe app-routing decisions*

Working clinical governance draft | Not a diagnostic instrument  
Version 0.1 | July 2026

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# 1. PURPOSE & SCOPE

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## OVERVIEW

Back Pain Systems™ is a dedicated recovery pathway for individuals experiencing back pain within The Body Systems™ App. The RAG Screening and Pathway Allocation Tool is a practical framework for determining whether a person can safely enter the app pathway, needs modified support, or should seek medical advice before proceeding.

The screen is designed to sit at app onboarding and to be repeated if symptoms change. It should be framed as a safety and pathway tool, not as a diagnostic tool.

## INTENDED USE

- App onboarding before a user starts RESET™ or other Back Pain Systems™ content
- Re-screening after a flare-up, new symptoms, worsening function or change in medical status
- Clinician/coach triage when deciding pathway suitability
- Internal clinical governance review of user-safety wording and pathway allocation

## NOT INTENDED FOR

- Diagnosis of spinal pathology
- Replacement for GP, physiotherapy or specialist assessment
- Risk prediction in the formal psychometric sense
- Justifying progression into higher-load movement when symptoms are worsening

# 2. CLINICAL RATIONALE

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NICE recommends risk stratification at first contact for low back pain to inform stratified management, including simpler self-management for lower-risk presentations and more complex support for higher-risk presentations.

The Back Pain Systems™ RAG Screen provides this stratification within the app environment, enabling safe pathway routing at onboarding.

## KEY PRINCIPLE

This tool deliberately separates an automatic red flag gate from scored Amber/Green allocation. This is safer than combining urgent warning signs into a numeric score, because some symptoms should halt the app pathway immediately regardless of total score.

## RED FLAG SYMPTOMS

Certain symptoms require immediate medical assessment and should stop the standard app pathway:

### STOP — SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ADVICE

- Cauda equina syndrome symptoms (bilateral leg pain, saddle anaesthesia, bowel/bladder loss)
- Progressive neurological deficit
- Severe, unremitting pain despite pain relief
- Signs of infection (fever, night sweats)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Significant trauma with new or worsening symptoms

# 3. HOW TO USE THE RAG SCREEN

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## THREE-STEP PROCESS

The RAG Screening Tool uses a three-step approach:

### Step 1: Red Flag Gate

Ask red flag screening questions. If YES to any red flag: STOP. User must seek medical advice before app use.

### Step 2: Amber/Green Scoring

If no red flags, score psychosocial and function indicators. Cumulative score determines Amber or Green pathway.

### Step 3: Final RAG Allocation

Based on step 1 & 2 results, allocate user to Red (medical review), Amber (modified pathway with coaching), or Green (standard solo pathway).

## SCREENING LOCATION

This tool is designed for app onboarding—presented to users before they begin RESET™ or other Back Pain Systems™ content. The questions should be framed as safety checks to ensure the app is right for them, not as a diagnostic assessment.

# 4. STEP 1: RED FLAG GATE

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The Red Flag Gate uses a structured binary (yes/no) screening. Any YES to a red flag item requires immediate medical referral.

## RED FLAG SCREENING QUESTIONS

- Do you have pain or numbness in the groin or genital area?
- Have you lost control of your bowels or bladder, or difficulty passing urine?
- Do you have severe pain in both legs?
- Do you have fever, chills or unexplained weight loss?
- Have you had significant trauma (fall, accident) with worsening symptoms?
- Do you have pain that is not helped by rest, position changes or pain relief?
- Is your pain rapidly getting worse despite treatment?
- Do you have progressive weakness in your legs or feet?

## RED FLAG RESPONSE

**If user answers YES to ANY red flag item:**

Recommend immediate medical assessment. Do not proceed with app pathway until symptoms have been evaluated and cleared by appropriate healthcare provider.

# 5. STEP 2: AMBER / GREEN SCORING

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If no red flags are present, score the following domains to determine Amber or Green pathway suitability.

## SCORING DOMAINS

### PSYCHOSOCIAL INDICATORS (Score points for present items)

**High Fear/Anxiety (present):** 1 point

High pain catastrophising or very negative beliefs about recovery: 1 point

Significant psychological distress (anxiety, depression): 1 point

### FUNCTION INDICATORS (Score based on impact)

**Work Impact:** Work absence or significant work limitation: 1 point

**Daily Activity Impact:** Unable to do usual activities, self-care needs support: 1 point

**Sleep Disruption:** Frequent sleep disruption due to pain: 1 point

## SCORING INTERPRETATION

**Score 0-2 points:** GREEN pathway (Solo app use suitable)

**Score 3+ points:** AMBER pathway (Modified with coaching support recommended)

# 6. STEP 3: FINAL RAG ALLOCATION

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## RAG DECISION TREE

**RED:** Any red flag present → Recommend medical assessment before app use

**AMBER:** No red flags + Score 3+ psychosocial/function factors → Modified pathway with coaching

**GREEN:** No red flags + Score 0-2 psychosocial/function factors → Standard solo pathway

## WHAT EACH PATHWAY MEANS

### RED PATHWAY

- Medical assessment required before app use
- Direct user to GP or appropriate healthcare provider
- Symptoms must be evaluated and cleared by clinician
- Re-screen after medical clearance

### AMBER PATHWAY

- App use suitable with coaching/clinician support
- Recommend BPS Coaching option within app
- Clinician provides guidance and monitoring
- May include periodic check-ins or adjusted pacing

### GREEN PATHWAY

- Standard solo app use suitable
- User proceeds independently through RESET™ and other BPS content

- Self-directed learning and progression
- Re-screen if symptoms change significantly

# 7. BPS PATHWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

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## PATHWAYS WITHIN BPS RESET™

Back Pain Systems™ provides multiple pathways within the RESET™ framework to support different needs:

### GREEN — SOLO PATHWAY

Users progress independently through RESET™ stages: Release → Evolve → Stabilise → Exhale → Transition. Movement education, guided videos, and self-paced progression. Ideal for individuals with lower psychosocial burden and good functional capacity to self-manage.

### AMBER — COACHING PATHWAY

Users receive periodic clinician/coach contact (weekly or bi-weekly) alongside app progression. Coaching supports: pacing guidance, troubleshooting barriers, psychosocial support, real-time progression adjustment. Recommended for higher psychosocial burden or significant function impact requiring external support.

### RED — MEDICAL PATHWAY

Users directed to medical assessment before app use. Once symptoms cleared, user is re-screened to determine appropriate entry pathway (Green or Amber).

## RE-SCREENING TRIGGERS

Users should be re-screened when:

- Significant symptom flare-up occurs
- New neurological symptoms develop
- Function deteriorates despite app use
- Psychological distress increases significantly

- Medical status changes (new diagnosis, treatment)
- User requests pathway change

# 8. IMPLEMENTATION & GOVERNANCE

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## CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

**Status:** Working clinical governance draft. This tool is intended to support safe app-routing decisions for internal use within Back Pain Systems™.

**Not a diagnostic instrument:** The RAG Screen is a safety and triage framework, not a diagnostic tool. It does not diagnose spinal pathology, replace clinical assessment, or override medical advice.

**Validation:** Current version is based on clinical rationale and NICE guidance on low back pain risk stratification. Formal validation is recommended before deployment at scale.

## IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

- Train all clinicians and coaches on RAG screening process and decision tree
- Ensure medical clearance pathway is clear for Red-flagged users
- Audit RAG allocations periodically to ensure consistent application
- Review outcomes by pathway (Green, Amber, Red) to identify system improvements
- Update red flag criteria if new clinical evidence emerges
- Document all RAG allocations for individual users for governance and audit

## USER-FACING FRAMING

The RAG Screen should be presented to app users as a safety check—not as a diagnosis or test result. Recommended framing:

"Before you start, we'd like to check that Back Pain Systems™ is the right next step for you right now. These questions help us make sure you get the best support for your situation."

# BACK PAIN SYSTEMS™

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RAG Screening & Pathway Allocation Tool

A System within The Body Systems™ App

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