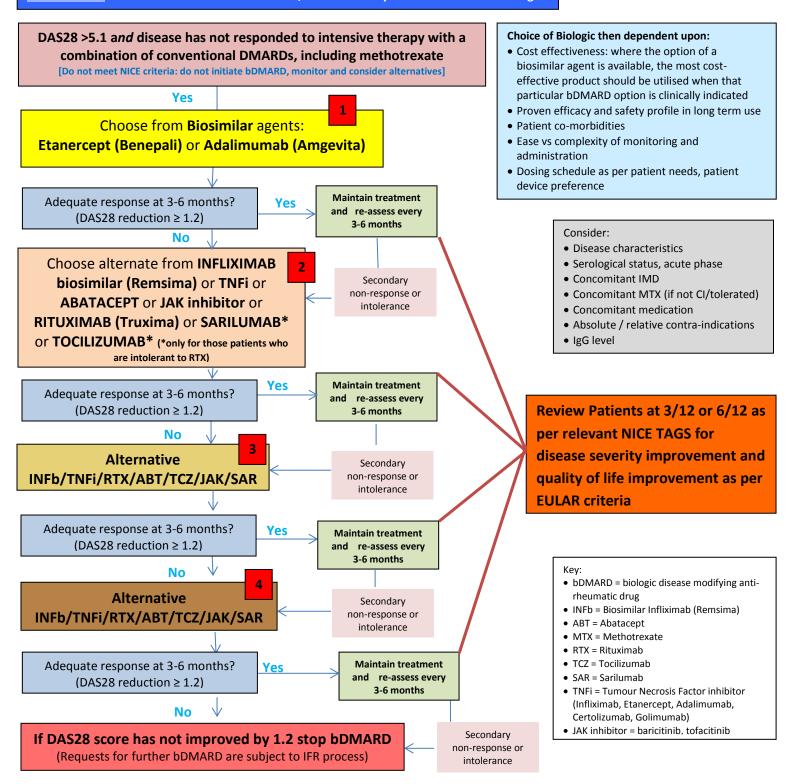
Systemic Biological Therapy for Rheumatoid Arthritis

(To be used in conjunction with the relevant NICE TA)

Methotrexate: Switch to S.C. if oral not tolerated/lack of efficacy before initiation of biologics



- The above pathway is applicable to newly diagnosed patients and those whose disease is not responding to current therapy.
- Patients should not be initiated on a biologic agent unless prior treatment with standard disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs at optimum dose has been trialled and patient has failed to respond or not tolerated.
- Clinicians are able to choose the most appropriate treatment for each patient's disease characteristics, within the confines of the pathway.
- The pathway reflects current NICE guidance for the treatment of RA (see below), and recognises several sub-cohorts of patients where evidence suggests an alternative therapy may be more appropriate.
- The CCG will currently only support 4 lines of funding in line with the above pathway. Evidence for sequential use beyond this has not demonstrated cost-effectiveness.
- For exceptional INDIVIDUAL patients, an IFR submission will be considered.
- Further cohorts of patients will not be considered through the IFR panel.