

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features several dark blue puzzle pieces scattered across a light orange background. Some puzzle pieces are being held by stylized hands in shades of pink, orange, and grey. The background is also filled with various geometric shapes: blue circles, red diamonds, and small red dots. A large, thick pink diagonal line runs from the top right towards the center. The overall aesthetic is modern and collaborative.

LITHUANIAN MULTIDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION SYSTEM: A BLUEPRINT

This Multidisciplinary Cooperation System was developed by NGO Mental Health Perspectives within the project "Linking Information for Adaptive and Accessible Child-Friendly Courts" co-funded by the European Union (LINK- 101097047- CERV- 2022-DAPHNE) and the Foundation of Applied Disability Research (LINKS - Apa2024_058). The project aims to improve the accessibility of and integration of child protection systems in criminal proceedings for children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.¹

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Glossary

Augmentative and Alternative Communication – A set of communication methods used to supplement or replace speech or writing for individuals with impairments in spoken or written language. This includes gestures, sign language, picture boards, and electronic communication devices.

Case Management System – A digital system used to manage, store, and provide access to case-related data. In the context of Diana, it ensures the secure handling of case information for legal and administrative purposes.

Digital Information and Assistance Network Application – A platform designed to provide digital support, case management, and assistance to individuals, particularly those involved in legal or social service cases. It helps streamline communication and information sharing among relevant stakeholders.

e.teismas.lt Lithuanian Electronic Court Services Portal – An online platform that provides access to court-related services in Lithuania. It allows users to submit legal documents, track case progress, and communicate with courts digitally, improving efficiency and accessibility in the judicial process.

EU Victims' Rights Directive – A European Union directive that establishes minimum rights and standards for victims of crime across EU member states. It ensures that victims receive appropriate support, protection, and access to justice.

General Data Protection Regulation – A comprehensive data protection law enacted by the European Union to regulate the collection, processing, and storage of personal data. It grants individuals greater control over their personal information and imposes strict compliance requirements on organisations handling such data.

Lithuanian Courts Information System – A centralised digital system used by Lithuanian courts for case registration, document management, and legal proceedings. It facilitates the efficient processing of court cases and access to judicial information.

Multidisciplinary Team – A collaborative team of professionals from different fields, such as legal, medical, psychological, and social services, who work together to address complex cases. MDTs are commonly used in cases involving vulnerable individuals, such as victims of crime or persons with disabilities.

Secure File Transfer Protocol – A secure method for transferring files over a network, using encryption to protect data during transmission. It is commonly used for safely exchanging sensitive documents, such as legal or case-related files.

Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS	DESCRIPTION
LITEKO	Lithuanian Courts Information System
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication
e.teismas.lt	Lithuanian Electronic Court Services Portal: The platform for accessing court-related services online
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
CMS	Case Management System: The system managing the storage and access of Diana-related case data
VPN	Virtual Private Network
SFTP	Secure File Transfer Protocol
EU Victims' Rights Directive	Directive establishing minimum rights for victims in the European Union.
Diana	Digital Information and Assistance Network Application
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: An international treaty on disability rights
Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)	A group of professionals from different fields collaborating on cases
CAB	Child Advisory Board

Introduction

The model has been tailored to fit Lithuania's context through a series of targeted changes, focusing on improving how child victims—especially those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities—are assessed and supported during legal procedures.

One of the key improvements is the addition of a digital system called Diana. This platform makes it easier to gather and manage victim data, conduct risk assessments, and identify the necessary procedural accommodations. The model also explores how Diana could work alongside existing national tools like the Lithuanian Courts Information System (LITEKO) or e.teismas.lt, ensuring collaboration between professionals such as law enforcement, child protection agencies, and healthcare providers.

To make proposed model a success in Lithuania, several adjustments will be needed. Firstly, legislative changes that mandate the use of digital platforms like Diana, integrating them with tools already in place, such as LITEKO, are needed. Secondly, training of the professionals working in criminal justice and child protection serviced will need to be used to develop skills in disability awareness, child-sensitive communication, and using digital tools effectively to meet victims' needs.

Thirdly, considerations will need to be made to ensure data protection while also expanding access to children in all regions. While Diana must adhere to national laws by implementing sufficient privacy and security measures, such as encryption and secure file transfers, to safeguard sensitive information, it is equally important to reach children across the country requires expanding mobile units to provide on-the-ground support in rural areas where and when needed.

To ensure that the model reflects the lived experiences and perspectives of children and young people, two Child Advisory Board meetings were held throughout the preparation of the document. These meetings created a safe space for a group of young people who had direct or indirect experiences with the justice system to share their insights, concerns, and suggestions. Children contributions from the meetings provided valuable reflections on systemic barriers, procedural safeguards, and the quality of support services, and have been integrated into the proposed model.

01

PART 1

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT
AND PROCEDURAL
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILD
VICTIMS WITH INTELLECTUAL
AND PSYCHOSOCIAL
DISABILITIES IN LITHUANIA

1.1 Individual assessment

In Lithuania, the process of conducting individual assessments for child victims, including those with disabilities, reveals significant challenges. These assessments should evaluate each child's specific needs and vulnerabilities to establish appropriate procedural accommodations. However, in practice, the lack of standardised procedures and inconsistent coordination among agencies results in varying quality and timing of assessments across Lithuania. This highlights the urgent need for a national framework that defines clear protocols, standardised assessment tools, and response timelines to ensure every child receives equal access to appropriate support, regardless of location.²

Although legislation such as the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child offers a limited theoretical framework,³ recent study outlines how its practical application remains inconsistent, particularly in cases involving children with mental health conditions, intellectual disabilities, or reliance on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems.⁴

The first step in the proposed process identifies the risks, vulnerabilities, and barriers through specific indicators. By incorporating digital tools, this stage becomes more efficient and allows for the early recognition of risk factors. This tool should be mandatory and include core questions on personal details (age, gender, disability status, primary language, communication needs), crime-related vulnerabilities (relationship with the perpetrator, history of prior victimisation, risks of intimidation or retaliation), barriers to participation in legal proceedings (intellectual disability, mental health conditions, need for AAC or simplified communication), emotional and psychological state (indicators of trauma, need for urgent mental health support), access to support services (availability of family or social support, previous involvement with social services). The questionnaire can be digitally integrated within Diana, discussed in Part 2 of this document, and linked to the Lithuanian Courts Information System (LITEKO) to allow real-time data access for authorised professionals.

The next step focuses on a detailed assessment to determine appropriate protective measures and procedural accommodations with defined response times to avoid delays and ensure consistency across Lithuania. Although it is understood that these evaluations should be tailored to each child's unique experience, current practise and

² Ugnė Grigaitė and Gabrielė Marija Baltrušytė, *Linking Information for Adaptive and Accessible Child-Friendly Courts: Lithuania National Briefing Paper* (Mental Health Perspectives, May 2024) <<https://perspektyvos.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/LINK-Lithuania-National-Briefing-Paper.pdf>> accessed 15 December 2024.

³ Lietuvos Respublikos asmens su negalia teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas [Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities] <<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.2319/asr>> accessed 15 December 2024.

⁴ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 7.

the absence of standardised procedures has resulted in systemic gaps in Lithuania. For instance, court psychologists have spoken out about limited resources and lack of standardised training, both of which affect their ability to conduct thorough and reliable evaluations.⁵

Based on these findings, it's recommended that within the first 24 hours of reporting initial risk screening takes place using the standardised questionnaire. Within 72 hours a full multidisciplinary assessment conducted by a child protection officer, psychologist, and forensic police interviewer, ensuring all procedural accommodations are in place before legal proceedings begin. Then, ongoing, for example biweekly reassessments would be triggered by the Diana system if new vulnerabilities emerge, allowing modifications to protective measures as needed.

Integrating individual assessments into a digital platform, linked with systems like Lithuanian Courts Information System (LITEKO) or e.teismas.lt, would enhance collaboration among criminal justice professional, as well as other stakeholders, such as psychologists and child protection professionals. Through shared access to findings, psychologists, child protection agencies, and law enforcement could coordinate more effectively, enabling them to design tailored accommodation measures for children with disabilities. These might include child-friendly interview settings, accessible communication aids, or trained intermediaries, ensuring sensitive information remains confidential and accessible only to authorised personnel.

The Diana Case Management System, as outlined in Part 2, would achieve these objectives as it can facilitate secure data sharing and ensure that assessments are continuously updated throughout criminal proceedings. Through shared access to findings, professionals could coordinate more effectively to design tailored accommodation measures for children with disabilities. For example, the Diana system allows psychologists, child protection agencies, and law enforcement to securely contribute to and access case records, ensuring that procedural accommodations (child-friendly interview settings, accessible communication aids, or trained intermediaries) are consistently implemented. By restricting access to sensitive information based on user roles, Diana ensures confidentiality while allowing authorised intermediaries to provide necessary support at key stages. Going back to the national court system, Diana's integration enables automated notifications to relevant

⁵ *ibid* (n 1) 21. "There are more problems when we face, for example, when it is necessary to interview children. Well, for example, not every police station has enough children's interview rooms and they are not always adapted, for example, to children with disabilities. (...) Accessibility and adaptation of the environment and these processes for children with disabilities is not yet strong and it does not yet meet the needs of all children. This might be the biggest problem." – Representative of the Child Protection Agency, female.

professionals, ensuring that procedural accommodations evolve in response to the child's needs.

Finally, implementing procedural accommodations based on these assessments minimises secondary victimisation, intimidation, and retaliation risks, aligning with the principles of the EU Victims' Rights Directive.⁶ In addition, it helps to ensure that legal proceedings are not discriminatory, in accordance with Articles 2 and 13 of the UNCRPD, which emphasise equal access to justice and necessary accommodations for persons with disabilities. Finally, implementing procedural accommodations based on these assessments, aligning with EU Victims' Rights Directive principles.

1.1.1 Timing of individual assessments and the notion of criminal proceedings

In Lithuania, the timing of individual assessments for child victims is an underdeveloped area of criminal proceedings. Although legislative frameworks, such as the EU Victims' Rights Directive and the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, provide a legal basis for timely and personalised assessments, research reveals a gap between policy and practical implementation.⁷

In practice, assessments lack a national standard, leading to regional disparities in timing, quality, and the type of accommodation measures provided. While some municipalities conduct timely and thorough evaluations, others experience delays due to resource constraints or poor inter-agency coordination. This inconsistency disproportionately affects vulnerable children, particularly those with disabilities, highlighting the need for a legally mandated national assessment protocol with defined response times.⁸

One of the main reasons for these delays is the absence of explicit national protocols mandating timely assessments, contributing to inefficiencies across the system. Although Article 27 of the Lithuanian Code of Criminal Procedure⁹ provides a foundation for individual assessments, it fails to ensure their timely application, particularly for child victims requiring procedural accommodations. Research findings from the National Briefing Paper in Lithuania illustrates how individual needs assessments are

⁶ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime [2012] OJ L315/57.

⁷ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 6.

⁸ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 6.

⁹ Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo proceso kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo įstatymas. Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas [Law on the Approval, Entry into Force and Implementation of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Lithuania. Criminal Procedure Code] 2023 (IX-785).

not systematically conducted for all children, and procedural accommodations remain inconsistently applied, especially for those with disabilities. In practice, once criminal proceedings are initiated, forensic psychologists and legal representatives working with child victims heavily depend on the information about the child's situation and needs provided by investigative officers or court professionals. However, information is not always available or provided in a timely manner. This can be linked to the lack of a standardised digital information-sharing system between services (despite the availability of platforms like LITEKO or e.teismas.lt) and poor inter-agency cooperation which further enables these inefficiencies, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities or those at heightened risk of secondary victimisation.¹⁰

Timing of these assessments is also emphasised by the EU Victims' Rights Directive, which requires assessments to be conducted promptly after a crime is reported to address risks and vulnerabilities early.¹¹ However, Lithuanian law does not specify deadlines for when court psychologists must meet with child victims. In practice, efforts are made to arrange interviews as soon as possible, ensuring the child's testimony remains accurate and minimising stress.¹²

The Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child highlights the importance of timely evaluation and support, particularly for vulnerable children. Under the Lithuanian Code of Criminal Procedure, psychologists are mandated to attend interviews with children under 14 and are recommended for children aged 14–18, especially in cases of violence or sexual offenses.¹³ While these provisions, introduced in 2018,¹⁴ are crucial, their inconsistent implementation undermines their potential impact.

To mitigate negative experience, court psychologists typically meet with children before the interview to establish trust and explain the process. Children are typically invited to arrive 30–45 minutes early to acclimate to the environment. While no legal deadlines govern the timing of interviews, practical efforts aim to conduct them quickly to reduce stress and preserve the quality of testimony.¹⁵

¹⁰ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 20.

¹¹ Directive 2012/29/EU.

¹² Gytis Pankūnas, 'Teisėjas apie psichologų trūkumą teismuose: apklausų laukiantys nukentėję vaikai statomi į eilę' *Lrytas* (28 January 2024) <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2024/01/28/news/teisejas-apie-psichologu-trukuma-teismuose-apklausu-laukiantys-nukenteje-vaikai-statomi-i-eile-30282873>> accessed 15 December 2024.

¹³ Criminal Procedure Code 2023 (IX-785).

¹⁴ Pankūnas, 'Teisėjas apie psichologų trūkumą teismuose'.

¹⁵ *ibid* (n 10).

Improving this system requires a more coordinated approach. Multidisciplinary teams should include psychologists, child protection specialists, and trained intermediaries with expertise in supporting children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Psychologists should have training in trauma-informed care and child forensic interviewing. Child protection specialists need experience in safeguarding procedures and disability rights. Intermediaries should be skilled in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to support children with verbal communication difficulties. The current reliance on fragmented practices often results in children being exposed to multiple interviews, increasing the likelihood of secondary victimisation. Furthermore, procedural accommodations in Lithuania lack consistency and specificity, undermining the likelihood of children receiving the tailored support they require.¹⁶

Despite commitments under the Law on Assistance for Victims of Criminal Offences,¹⁷ the implementation of accommodations that consider age, gender, and disability remains inconsistent.¹⁸ For example, the availability of child-friendly interview spaces and the provision of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools are limited, particularly in rural areas. This deficiency is compounded by the lack of mandatory training for professionals on the specific needs of vulnerable children.¹⁹

Leveraging digital tools could help address these gaps. For example, the integration of automated alerts within LITEKO or e.teismas.lt could flag urgent cases and streamline coordination among stakeholders, ensuring that assessments are initiated promptly. Additionally, regular monitoring and reassessment mechanisms should be established to adapt to the evolving needs of victims throughout the proceedings.

1.1.2 Identifying risks, vulnerabilities and barriers

In Lithuania, identifying the risks, vulnerabilities, and barriers faced by child victims is needed to provide effective procedural accommodations throughout criminal proceedings. Despite the importance of this process, existing practices reveal significant inconsistencies in addressing the factors that contribute to a child's vulnerability, including personal circumstances, the nature of the crime, and systemic barriers. The lack of a systematic approach often leaves many child victims without adequate support, reducing their ability to engage effectively in the justice process.

¹⁶ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 38.

¹⁷ Lietuvos Respublikos pagalbos nuo nusikalstamos veikos nukentėjusiems asmenims įstatymas [Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Assistance to Persons Affected by Criminal Acts] <<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/ce7d8910571711eba1f8b445a2cb2bc7>> accessed 15 December 2024.

¹⁸ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 6.

¹⁹ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 22.

Such lack of a systematic approach to addressing barriers leave many child victims without adequate procedural accommodations, undermining their ability to engage with the justice process effectively.²⁰ As one young person shared during the Child Advisory Board discussions, *“Policemen don’t try to talk to us, they just assume we’re dangerous. They don’t try to understand, just restrain.”* This illustrates how gaps in communication and cultural sensitivity can escalate interactions and contribute to secondary victimisation.

It is important to note that the type and nature of the crime also significantly influence vulnerabilities, yet these factors are not consistently integrated into risk assessments. For example, cases involving sexual violence or exploitation require heightened sensitivity and specialised interventions. However, Lithuania does not have a standardised protocol to manage such cases in ways that minimise emotional distress and prevent secondary victimisation. Gender-sensitive measures, such as allowing children to choose the gender of their interviewer, remain underutilised, despite evidence suggesting that such practices lead to better outcomes for victims.²¹

The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator can further complicate the justice process. When the perpetrator is a family member or someone in a position of trust, the risks of intimidation or retaliation increase. In these situations, the absence of clear guidelines and the inconsistent application of protective measures often leave children exposed to further harm.

External barriers, such as architectural inaccessibility, procedural complexity, and communication challenges, continue to prevent access to justice. Rural areas in particular suffer from a lack of resources, including child-friendly interview spaces and trained professionals, leaving children without the necessary support to navigate the legal system.²² Addressing these issues requires a systematic approach that prioritises early identification of risks through comprehensive and multidisciplinary assessments.

To achieve this, the proposed system will assess not only the child’s individual needs but also the specific context of the crime, leveraging digital tools like integrated case management systems to improve communication among professionals, use multidisciplinary teams to ensure the provision of child-friendly environments, gender-sensitive practices, and disability-appropriate accommodations at every stage of the process,²³ which will be further explored in the following sections.

²⁰ *ibid* (n 1) 6.

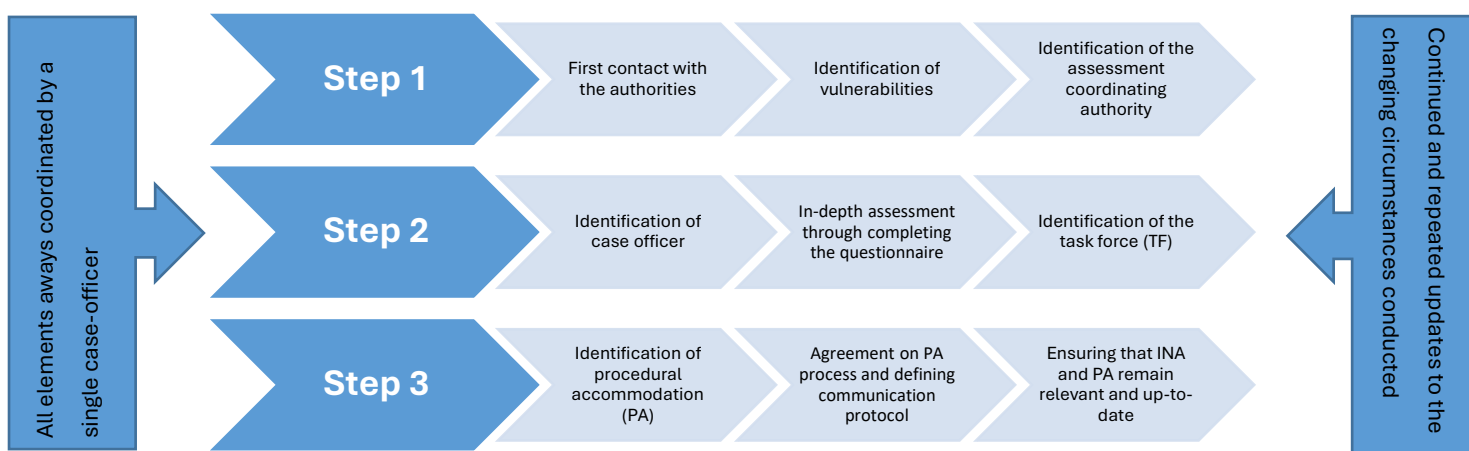
²¹ *ibid* (n 1) 38.

²² *Ibid* (n 1) 44.

²³ National Research Council & Victim Support Europe, 2025. D3.3 - Model Multidisciplinary Cooperation System, Section 9, Part I [Report in preparation].

1.1.3 Workflow for assessing and addressing needs and barriers

The proposed workflow for assessing and addressing the needs and barriers of child victims in Lithuania establishes a coordinated, standardised, and child-centered approach. As outlined in previous sections, currently, the lack of clear national guidelines leads to inconsistent practices that often fail to meet the diverse needs of vulnerable children. Through the integration of a digital system, this process can be streamlined, better aligning with international best practices to respond more effectively to the challenges faced by child victims.



A starting point in this workflow is the initial risk assessment, conducted as early as possible following the submission of a complaint. This step focuses on identifying key vulnerabilities, such as the child's age, disability, socio-economic background, and the nature of the crime. For example, a young child with intellectual disabilities may require additional support mechanisms, such as augmentative and alternative communication tools, to effectively participate in the process.

A standardised digital platform, such as the Diana system, proposed in Part 2 (1.8 Diana: Cybersecurity), which integrates validated assessment tools, will ensure consistency across cases by systematically gathering critical information about child victims. Diana includes features like easy-to-read formats, AAC compatibility, and assistive technologies, and as such improves the accessibility and inclusivity, particularly for children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Once collected, this data needs to be securely shared with stakeholders such as child protection professionals, psychologists, and law enforcement, fostering a collaborative approach to developing individualised support plans. Data security measures are further outlined in Part 2. Additionally, real-time alerts and AI-driven risk assessments within Diana

could facilitate early interventions, helping professionals tailor individualised support plans while minimising delays and risks of secondary victimisation.

A platform which includes validated assessment tools to gather this information systematically will ensure consistency across cases. By embedding features like easy-to-read formats or AAC compatibility, the system could also make the process more inclusive for children with specific communication needs. Once collected, this data needs to be securely shared with stakeholders such as child protection professionals, psychologists, and law enforcement, fostering a collaborative approach to developing individualised support plans.

Building on this, the next step emphasises implementing procedural accommodations tailored to each child's specific needs. These accommodations could include appointing trained intermediaries to facilitate communication, creating child-friendly interview environments, and ensuring psychological support throughout the proceedings. In cases involving sexual violence, applying gender-sensitive measures—such as enabling children to select the gender of their interviewer—can alleviate emotional distress and promote trust.

In regard to the rural areas, where child-friendly facilities are known to be limited, mobile units or virtual consultations can help close service gaps. The Diana system, described in Part 2, Section 1.2 could support this by tracking accommodations in real time. This ensures professionals follow through with support measures and keeps all relevant stakeholders informed. Diana also allows professionals to update a child's support plan as their needs change. In Part 2 of this document, Section 1.4 (Diana: Risk and Procedural Accommodation Assessment – Red Flags), the system flags urgent cases and sends alerts to ensure quick action. Additionally, in Section 1.5 (Diana: Expert System and Chatbot), an AI chatbot helps children and families understand their rights and provide feedback on accommodations. This makes sure their voices are heard and that support is adjusted based on their experiences.

In rural areas, where access to child-friendly facilities may be limited, mobile units or virtual consultations could bridge gaps in service delivery. A digital system could further enhance this phase by tracking the implementation of accommodations in real time, ensuring that measures are carried out effectively and that all informed. This functionality would also allow for recording the child's feedback on the measures provided, ensuring their voice is central to the process and fostering a participatory approach.

The workflow emphasises the importance of continuous monitoring and reassessment, recognising that the needs of child victims may evolve over time and across different stages of proceedings. Factors such as the emotional impact of legal proceedings or changes in a child's living situation can significantly influence their support requirements. For instance, a child initially hesitant to communicate may become more open with appropriate interventions, necessitating adjustments to their support plan. A digital system could play a vital role here, not only by updating assessments dynamically, sending automated reminders for follow-ups, and alerting professionals to emerging risks but also by keeping children and their families informed. With real-time access to key information, they would know what support will be available on the day, what their rights are, and what to expect during procedural acts like questioning. By maintaining flexibility and responsiveness, this iterative process ensures that barriers are comprehensively addressed and that no gaps remain in the support provided.

An example of how this workflow could be applied is a case involving a child victim of domestic violence who requires protection from retaliation by the perpetrator. The initial assessment might identify the child's fear of testifying as a significant barrier. Procedural accommodations, such as using video testimony from a secure location, could be implemented to address this concern. Continuous monitoring could then assess the effectiveness of this approach and identify any new needs, such as psychological counselling or additional protective measures.

Integrating this workflow into Lithuania's justice system would transform the way needs and barriers are addressed for child victims. The use of a digital system would enhance coordination and ensure that the process is both transparent and adaptable. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and embedding flexibility at every stage, this approach would prioritise the well-being of child victims while aligning with best practices. The examples outlined highlight how such a system can respond to the complexity of individual cases, ensuring that children receive timely and comprehensive support tailored to their specific circumstances.²⁴

²⁴ National Research Council & Victim Support Europe, 2025. D3.3 - Model Multidisciplinary Cooperation System, Section 14, Part I [Report in preparation].

Step 1 – Identifying risks, vulnerabilities and barriers

A first and key aspect of the initial assessment is identifying the child's age, gender, disability status, and other vulnerabilities. This step should occur immediately after a criminal complaint is made, ensuring that protective measures and procedural accommodations are identified before the child engages with the justice system. The assessment must be conducted before the first formal contact with law enforcement or judicial actors, allowing professionals to implement necessary adjustments in questioning, forensic interviews, and courtroom settings.

Given the sensitivity of this stage, professionals conducting the assessment must approach it with care, as children or their families may hesitate to disclose disabilities due to stigma or fear of judgment. Families play a critical role in providing essential information regarding the child's needs, communication preferences, and emotional well-being. Their involvement ensures that assessments focus on identifying barriers rather than diagnosing a disability.

Rather than emphasising the collection of detailed medical documentation, the assessment should prioritise an evaluation of the child's functional abilities. This includes identifying difficulties with mobility, communication, or emotional regulation, based on observations from both professionals and family members. Engaging families in this process not only fosters trust but also helps with the implementation of accommodations that are tailored to the child's specific circumstances and habits. This topic will be further discussed in Part 2, which outlines the functionalities of the Diana system.

This assessment could be coordinated by child protection agencies, which in Lithuania have a legal mandate to safeguard children's welfare. It will be further discussed how this assessment can benefit from including other criminal justice and child support specialists. The focus of the assessment should not be on diagnosing a disability but rather on understanding the child's overall needs and identifying any barriers they may face. For example, instead of seeking detailed medical documentation, the assessment could review functional abilities and challenges, such as difficulties with mobility, communication, or emotional regulation.

The assessment should also include a *prima facie* evaluation of the child's communication needs. This might involve observing visible indicators, such as access needs or challenges in verbalising thoughts. A child who relies on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools may require support from professionals trained in such systems. Additionally, non-verbal cues—such as signs of stress or discomfort—can provide valuable insights into the child's needs without requiring explicit disclosures or invasive questioning.

Another critical element of this stage is identifying the child's primary support person. This individual could be a parent, guardian, or another trusted adult who plays a significant role in the child's life. In cases where the primary support person is unavailable or unsuitable—such as in instances of family violence—the assessment should identify alternative figures, like social workers or teachers. Additionally, the names of professionals familiar with the child, such as psychologists, speech therapists, or intermediaries, should be documented when possible. These experts can provide valuable insights into the child's needs and facilitate the assessment process.

Other relevant information that can be gathered without disrupting ongoing investigative actions should also be included in the initial assessment. For instance, observations made during interviews or interactions with the child can reveal their emotional state, coping mechanisms, and potential barriers to participating in legal proceedings. This approach ensures that the assessment process is minimally invasive and prioritises the child's well-being.

All findings from the initial assessment must be carefully documented in the case file to protect the child's confidentiality and security. Sensitive information, such as details about the child's vulnerabilities or support needs, should remain inaccessible to the defence to prevent potential misuse or information abuse. Overall, the access of child assessment data should be strictly limited to only specialists directly involved in the child's support, including psychologists, educators, law enforcement officers, and legal representatives. Sharing this information should be done only on an as-needed basis, ensuring it is used solely to support the child's well-being and participation in legal proceedings.²⁵

Step 2 – In-depth assessment of the child

The second step in the individual needs assessment process focuses on evaluating the specific needs and barriers that a child victim may face throughout the criminal justice process. This detailed assessment allows professionals to identify tailored support measures that prevent retaliation, intimidation, and secondary victimisation while ensuring that procedural accommodations are planned for all foreseeable stages of the legal process.

In CAB discussions, young people emphasised that the quality of support varies greatly depending on the individual professional assigned. This highlights the urgent need for standardised procedures and professional accountability across regions and services. Collaboration between professionals from the criminal justice system, child protection

²⁵ National Research Council & Victim Support Europe, 2025. D3.3 - Model Multidisciplinary Cooperation System, Section 15, Part I [Report in preparation].

services, and other sectors is essential during this stage, with strict adherence to data protection and respect for the child's privacy.

In Lithuania, child protection agencies and law enforcement bodies are primarily responsible for conducting these assessments, often with the involvement of psychologists and social workers.²⁶ Active participation from the child's existing support team, including teachers, healthcare providers, or speech therapists, is also encouraged, provided there is no conflict of interest. For instance, in cases where a family member is the perpetrator, appointing an independent representative may be necessary to prioritise the child's best interests. The ultimate goal is to create a comprehensive support network tailored to the child's circumstances.

This step must account for the child's intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and take into consideration traditional court procedures. For example, courts often rely on complex language and indirect questioning, which can be inaccessible to children with intellectual disabilities. Accommodations, such as simplified documentation, rephrased questions, or alternative communication methods like AAC devices can be used to ensure a better experience. Additionally, identifying and respecting the child's preferred communication methods fosters effective interaction and minimises stress experienced by the child.

Physical and sensory accommodations also play a critical role in ensuring the child's comfort and participation. For example, children with sensory sensitivities may benefit from quieter waiting areas or adjustments to lighting intensity. Accessibility needs, such as transportation arrangements and adaptive equipment, must also be addressed, particularly for children in rural areas or institutions with limited resources. If the child relies on assistive technologies, their specific requirements should be identified and accommodated to avoid disruptions during interactions.

Family circumstances and related vulnerabilities are equally important considerations during this step. Children from families facing issues like substance abuse, custody disputes, or financial instability may require additional safeguards. For example, if communication with a parent poses a risk, alternative correspondence methods must be arranged. Similarly, children living in group homes or institutions may face conflicts of interest with guardians, necessitating the involvement of independent advocates or intermediaries.

²⁶ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 23.

The assessment process must also factor in the child's practical and contextual needs, such as their school schedule, healthcare routine, and living environment. For instance, professionals could draw on communication strategies successfully used at the child's school to improve court interactions. Gender-specific needs should also be considered, especially if the child expresses a preference to work with professionals of a specific gender due to cultural norms or past trauma.

Given the complexity of individual assessments, establishing a specialised task force supported by a digital system would ensure a structured and coordinated approach. This task force should include psychologists, child protection officers, teachers, healthcare professionals, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judicial representatives, each with a clearly defined role in assessing and supporting child victims:

1. Court psychologists can conduct psychological assessments, identify emotional and cognitive needs, and determine appropriate accommodations such as trauma-informed questioning techniques or the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools. They should also provide psychological support and prepare the child for interactions with law enforcement and the judiciary.
2. Child protection officers serve as advocates for the child's best interests, ensure their safety, and liaise with other stakeholders to coordinate necessary social services. They should also monitor whether procedural accommodations are being implemented and intervene if the child's rights are not adequately protected.
3. Teachers can provide insights into the child's learning and communication preferences, offer information about their social environment, and suggest educational support strategies that may enhance their participation in the justice process.
4. Healthcare professionals would work to assess physical and mental health conditions that may impact the child's ability to testify or engage in legal procedures. They should provide recommendations on necessary medical accommodations and collaborate with psychologists to ensure that the child's well-being is prioritised.
5. The role of law enforcement officials primarily focuses on conducting interviews with child-friendly methodologies, in collaboration with psychologists or trained intermediaries. They should ensure that investigative procedures are adapted to the child's needs and that any procedural accommodations are documented and implemented.
6. Prosecutors oversee the investigation phase, ensuring that the child's procedural accommodations are legally recognised and upheld. They should act

as the primary coordinators among professionals at this stage, ensuring that all necessary assessments are conducted before proceeding with legal action.

7. Judges can serve as the coordinators of procedural accommodations during the trial stage. They should ensure that court proceedings adhere to child-friendly standards, that accommodations are consistently applied, and that the child is not subjected to unnecessary stress or repeated questioning.
8. It is recommended to assign a single point of contact to a child to assist throughout the legal process. For example, a family member, a trained facilitator or child protection officer can be assigned with the role based on the complexity of the case and the child's needs. The digital system, proposed in Part 2, then helps to facilitate direct contact between the child and this designated professional, ensuring continuity and trust throughout the proceedings.

The task force should also be designed to align with international principles, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.^{27,28}

Step 3 – Ensuring continued updates to the individual assessment throughout the criminal proceedings

The third step in assessing the needs of child victims in Lithuania emphasises the importance of continuously updating procedural accommodations throughout the criminal proceedings. This requires a dynamic, digital case management system, such as Diana, that centralises information from the initial assessment and tracks any necessary modifications based on the type of procedural act (forensic interviews, courtroom testimony).

Aligning with findings from the Lithuanian National Briefing Paper, this step goes beyond simply identifying a child's needs at the outset and ensures that adjustments are made at every critical stage of the legal process.

A centralised digital victim's file, integrated into Diana and Lithuania's existing judicial platforms (LITEKO, e.teismas.lt), would serve as the single point of reference for updating procedural accommodations. This ensures that professionals (child protection officers, forensic psychologists, law enforcement, and court officials) can access real-time updates and adjust their practices accordingly. For example, if a forensic interviewer notes that a child exhibits increased distress when recalling an

²⁷ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UNGA Res 61/106.

²⁸ National Research Council & Victim Support Europe, 2025. D3.3 - Model Multidisciplinary Cooperation System, Section 16, Part I [Report in preparation].

event, this information would trigger an automatic review of accommodations, potentially recommending video testimony instead of in-person questioning.

To ensure procedural fairness and child-friendly justice, updates to accommodations must align with the type of judicial act the child is involved in. The findings of Lithuanian National Briefing Paper highlights inconsistencies in procedural accommodations during different legal stages, with some children receiving appropriate adjustments during questioning but not in courtroom proceedings. To address this, the system should distinguish updates based on procedural phases: during forensic interviews, during investigatory acts, during trial testimony. The system should then reassess the child's emotional readiness, allowing procedural accommodations such as testifying with an intermediary, using pre-recorded statements, or shielding the child from direct confrontation with the accused.

Sharing this digital file across stages of the legal process would strengthen coordination among stakeholders, including law enforcement officers, child protection specialists, psychologists, legal representatives, and court personnel. As outlined in the previous section, access to all children accommodation measures should be restricted to those directly involved in implementing the child's accommodations, such as intermediaries or social workers, to ensure confidentiality. The file would also include a record of all accommodations provided, such as adjustments to court procedures, communication aids, or environmental modifications, ensuring transparency and accountability.

To promote child agency and procedural fairness, Diana would ensure that children and their families can review and request modifications to procedural accommodations when their needs change. Drawing from the Lithuanian National Briefing Paper recommendations, the system would include an Easy-to-Read section designed for children, providing accessible explanations of their current accommodations and right structured process for children and legal representatives to request changes, ensuring that evolving comfort levels (e.g., a shift from remote to in-person testimony) are accounted for, assistance from trained intermediaries to help children understand and engage with the case file, empowering them to take an active role in shaping their legal journey.

For instance, if a child initially preferred remote testimony but later feels confident enough for an in-person hearing, Diana should allow them to submit a request for review. This ensures that procedural accommodations remain flexible and child-centered, rather than rigid and predetermined. A CAB participant emphasised the value

of understanding the process: *“It helped that a lawyer explained things to me during the interview - otherwise I wouldn’t have known what they were talking about.”* This highlights the importance of supportive communication and child-friendly explanations throughout the case journey.

The digital file could also include automated notifications for relevant professionals, ensuring timely action when changes are made to the child’s accommodations or when new assessments are required. Additionally, the system could generate alerts for periodic reviews, particularly during key transitions in the proceedings, such as the move from investigation to trial, to ensure that all measures remain appropriate and effective.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information, it is important to keep the child’s privacy and data protection secure. Information in the digital file must be encrypted and only available to authorised personnel. As will be further explained in Part 2, Section 1.3 (Diana: Case Management System), access should be limited based on roles. This means different professionals can only see the parts of the file they need. For example, psychologists and child protection officers should have access to assessment details, while prosecutors and judges should see information about procedural accommodations and case progress. Police officers should only access case-related facts for their investigation, but not sensitive psychological or medical records.

To protect the child from stigma or harm, the file should not include unnecessary details about the child’s personal struggles. The Diana system has built-in controls to manage who can see and update different types of information. If a child’s safety is at risk, like in cases where they might face retaliation from the perpetrator, extra precautions must be in place. Some information might even be hidden from certain users, and high-risk cases may need extra authentication before access is granted. Only professionals directly supporting the child should be able to view certain sensitive details.

The system must also account for the child’s right to review and participate in decisions affecting their accommodations. For instance, the file could include an easy-to-read section designed for children, using language and formats tailored to their age and cognitive abilities. Children could be provided with assistance from trained intermediaries or legal representatives to understand and engage with the contents of the file, fostering a sense of agency in the justice process.²⁹

²⁹ National Research Council & Victim Support Europe, 2025. D3.3 - Model Multidisciplinary Cooperation System, Section 17, Part I [Report in preparation].

1.1.4 Collaboration paths in a multi-stakeholder system

To address the systemic gaps in Lithuania's current approach to supporting child victims, a more coordinated and consistent framework is required. While various stakeholders play vital roles in providing support, the lack of a cohesive system results in fragmented service delivery, particularly in underserved regions.³⁰ It is, therefore, helpful to map relevant authorities, institutions, and service providers.

Child protection agencies are central to coordinating care and ensuring the safety of child victims, often serving as the first point of contact. However, their ability to manage complex cases is sometimes limited by resource constraints and inconsistent interagency collaboration. Municipal child rights protection units, as highlighted in the Lithuanian National Briefing Paper,³¹ also play an important role in assessing children's needs. Law enforcement agencies, including police and prosecutors, are responsible for conducting criminal investigations and legal proceedings. While they collaborate with other stakeholders to protect the child's interests, limited training in child-sensitive practices sometimes results in inconsistent outcomes. Healthcare professionals, including doctors and psychologists, contribute significantly by providing medical examinations, trauma care, and psychological assessments. However, access to these services remains uneven, particularly in smaller cities where there are shortages of specialised professionals.^{32,33} Involving municipal child rights protection units more actively can lead to better coordination and structured assessments, ensuring that children receive appropriate support without unnecessary delays. Part 2 of this document provides further details on how the digital system will assign access levels and responsibilities to each professional involved in the assessment process, improving efficiency and communication across agencies.

Educational institutions, such as schools and teachers, provide valuable insights into the child's social and academic environment but their involvement in justice processes is often inconsistent. Social workers, who play a crucial role in addressing family dynamics and welfare needs, frequently face high caseloads and insufficient coordination with other agencies. Non-governmental organisations and advocacy groups, such as Save the Children Lithuania, help minimise service gaps by offering specialised victim support, but their reach is often limited by funding and operational constraints, particularly in remote areas where such services are most needed.³⁴ A CAB participant reflected frustration with the support system: *“Even when you ask for help*

³⁰ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 44.

³¹ *ibid* (n 1) 27.

³² *ibid* (n 1) 27.

³³ *ibid* (n 1) 44.

³⁴ *ibid* (n 1) 44.

and a specialist is assigned, nothing changes. Kids stay in violent homes for months.”

This highlights systemic weaknesses in follow-up and coordination among agencies.

Psychologists and psychiatrists provide essential trauma-informed mental health care, but their availability is insufficient to meet the growing demand. Legal representatives and child advocates work to protect the child’s legal interests and ensure their voice is heard. Judicial authorities, including judges and court staff, are generally seen as responsible for creating a child-sensitive justice environment, yet practices are not uniformly implemented, leaving some children to face intimidating court settings. Community support services, such as crisis centers, provide immediate assistance in urban areas, but rural regions frequently lack these resources, leaving children without access to timely support.³⁵

Currently, there are more significant gaps associated with the availability of victim support services in rural and underserved areas, with no formal protocols to address these disparities. Mobile units or resource-sharing from neighbouring regions could be implemented to fill these gaps, but such measures remain underdeveloped. A centralised directory of services, while theoretically beneficial, does not yet exist, making it challenging for professionals to connect with the appropriate resources.

Child protection agencies, for instance, could take the lead in care coordination while leveraging a centralised digital platform to maintain an up-to-date database of regional expertise, contact information, and available services. Such a system would reduce reliance on informal networks, ensuring professionals have immediate access to the information needed for efficient response.

Categorising and cataloguing the roles of each stakeholder presents a valuable opportunity to enhance collaboration and streamline the support provided to child victims in Lithuania. By clearly defining responsibilities and expertise, agencies can better coordinate their efforts and avoid duplication or gaps in services, and to ensure that all key actors understand their duties and have access to the necessary resources.

For instance, child protection agencies could take the lead in care coordination, using a centralised digital platform to maintain an up-to-date database of regional expertise, contact details, and available services. This would help streamline communication and reduce reliance on informal networks, ensuring professionals can quickly find and connect with the appropriate specialists.

Families also play a critical role in supporting the child. The system could include a dedicated section where parents or guardians receive summarised information about available services, legal rights, and procedural steps. While this proposal does not need

³⁵ *ibid* (n 1) 44.

to be exhaustive, a clear outline of responsibilities within the system would provide a practical foundation for improved coordination and response.

Establishing robust communication and referral pathways would further strengthen interagency cooperation. Developing formalised agreements, such as memoranda of understanding, collaboration protocols, or contractual arrangements, can provide a clear framework for interaction and accountability. For example, clear referral pathways between child protection agencies and healthcare providers could ensure timely access to psychological care for child victims. Regular interagency meetings, even outside active cases, could foster trust, build relationships, and maintain a culture of collaboration. With these measures in place, Lithuania can create a more cohesive and effective system that prioritises the well-being of child victims and ensures a seamless flow of communication among stakeholders.

A digital platform could greatly enhance coordination by allowing stakeholders to securely share case information, track referrals, and update progress in real time. Such a system could also provide a repository for training materials, guidelines, and best practices, addressing the knowledge gaps that frequently hinder effective collaboration. However, such a platform is not currently in place, and professionals must rely on outdated or inconsistent communication methods.

Finally, regular training and capacity-building initiatives are critical but underdeveloped. While joint training sessions and workshops could foster mutual understanding and improve coordination, they are not routinely organised. According to the Lithuanian National Briefing Paper, significant gaps exist in the training of criminal justice professionals, particularly in their ability to adapt and implement age-, gender-, and disability-appropriate procedural accommodations. For example, the report highlights how there are gaps in the knowledge base and skills of criminal justice professionals, including police officers, on how to adapt and implement procedural accommodations across the proceedings.³⁶ Additionally, no official guidelines or requirements for ensuring procedural accommodations exist in the country.

The lack of specialised training for law enforcement officers was also identified as a challenge, with one research participant stating: *"those who help interview the child often are called from 'the list' of professionals. These are usually psychologists who, in general, lack that specialised type of knowledge very much".*³⁷ This suggests an urgent need for systematic training in child-sensitive questioning techniques, particularly for professionals involved in forensic interviews.

³⁶ *ibid* (n 1) 7.

³⁷ *ibid* (n 1) 20.

Healthcare professionals and child protection workers also face training gaps, particularly in working with children with disabilities. During the research interviews, it was found that *"professionals often lack the needed knowledge and skills to communicate with children with disabilities in a simplified and accessible way or using any type of alternative communication methods or formats, e.g., AAC options, and Easy-to-Read materials"*.³⁸ Integrating communication training into capacity-building programs would help to ensure that children, especially those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, can effectively participate in legal proceedings.

In summary, while the foundational elements of a collaborative framework exist in Lithuania, significant work is needed to ensure consistency, inclusivity, and efficiency in service delivery. Addressing specific training needs, such as procedural accommodations, forensic interviewing, and disability-inclusive communication, would strengthen the system and help professionals provide more effective and child-centered support.

³⁸ *ibid* (n 1) 7.

1.2. Setting procedural accommodations to adjust proceedings to child victims

As outlined in previous sections, Lithuania has made a notable progress in improving access to justice for child victims of crime, particularly those with disabilities, through the adoption of the Law on Assistance for Victims of Crime in 2021.³⁹ This law represents a major step in transposing the Victims' Rights Directive into national law, ensuring that children, including those with disabilities, have access to tailored victim support services.⁴⁰ Furthermore, there have been some promising practices in the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for children with verbal communication challenges.⁴¹ These efforts, although not yet widespread, demonstrate potential for bridging the communication gaps between the justice system and children with disabilities.

Despite these advancements, gaps remain in the implementation of individual needs assessments where digital solutions can be beneficial. While children's best interests are emphasised in the legal texts, many child victims, particularly those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, still face challenges in accessing these assessments.⁴² This issue is compounded by the lack of flexibility and timely implementation of assessments, which should adapt to the unique circumstances of each child. As a result, the system does not always meet the needs of vulnerable children, and their vulnerabilities often remain unaddressed, increasing the risk of secondary victimisation.

In practice, procedural accommodations such as ensuring that interviews are conducted in accessible environments and by professionals trained in child protection are often not systematically implemented. For example, alternative communication tools are still underutilised in criminal proceedings for children who rely on AAC. Additionally, while the Victims' Rights Directive requires measures to ensure that victims can testify without the presence of the offender, these measures are not fully realised across the country.⁴³

The absence of a cohesive approach to these procedural accommodations further hampers the ability of the justice system to support child victims effectively. Some procedural accommodations may even need to be legislated.

³⁹ Law on Assistance to Persons Affected by Criminal Acts.

⁴⁰ Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnyba, 'Assistance for Victims of Criminal Offences' (Government of Lithuania) <<https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/en/protection-of-children/ensuring-the-childs-rights/assistance/assistance-for-victims-of-criminal-offences>> accessed 15 December 2024.

⁴¹ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 27.

⁴² *ibid* (n 1) 48.

⁴³ *ibid* (n 1) 47.

One CAB member shared a powerful observation: *“They act like we’re aggressive just because we’re young. They come in ready to restrain, not talk.”* This indicates the need to integrate training on trauma-informed and de-escalation techniques into law enforcement protocols when engaging with minors.

In addition, criminal procedures that require in-person presence or repeated examinations of victims or witnesses in court should be reassessed. The law may need to mandate alternatives, such as allowing victims to testify via video link or through other means that minimise exposure to the stressful courtroom environment. The proposed system highlights the importance of identifying these needs early through individual needs assessments and ensuring that procedural accommodations are enacted in response. This approach ensures that victims who may be secondary victimised by courtroom procedures, such as those with intellectual disabilities or psychosocial conditions, are not subjected to further harm.

Effective coordination between the various sectors involved in supporting child victims, including criminal justice, child protection, and healthcare services, remains a challenge. The lack of a national information-sharing system limits the multidisciplinary cooperation needed to address the evolving needs of child victims throughout criminal proceedings.⁴⁴ While local initiatives may be successful in certain regions, there is no standardised framework in place to ensure consistent and coordinated support across the country. This lack of a unified approach leaves gaps in the services available to vulnerable children, preventing them from receiving the full support they need.

Insufficient training of criminal justice professionals, particularly in disability awareness and child-sensitive practices, further contributes to these challenges. Many professionals lack the necessary knowledge and skills to implement disability and age-appropriate procedural accommodations. This gap in training results in inadequate support for vulnerable children, as professionals are not always equipped to handle the specific needs of child victims with disabilities. Ongoing training on these issues is essential to ensure that procedural accommodations are applied effectively and consistently throughout the criminal justice process.⁴⁵

To improve the system, there is a need to expand the use of AAC technologies in the justice system.

⁴⁴ *ibid* (n 1) 21.

⁴⁵ *ibid* (n 1) 7.

Training programs for professionals should include practical guidance on using AAC tools during victim interviews and court proceedings to enable full participation. This would ensure that children with communication difficulties can effectively express themselves and have their voices heard throughout the process.

Additionally, the individual needs assessment system should be standardised and made more flexible. Standardisation ensures consistency, reliability, and accountability across cases, preventing disparities in how assessments are conducted. At the same time, flexibility is essential to accommodate the unique needs of each child, allowing professionals to adapt assessments based on the child's circumstances, developmental stage, and communication preferences.

For example, while the assessment should follow a structured framework, it must allow room for adjustments, such as using AAC methods or extending the evaluation period if the child requires more time to engage. Timely assessments should be conducted as early as possible to ensure that any vulnerabilities are identified and addressed before further harm occurs, reducing the risk of secondary victimisation.

1.2.1 Accessibility and procedural accommodations

It is important to note that the use of AAC or other procedural accommodations should never be grounds to dismiss a child's testimony or to question its credibility or impose on the child devices that it is not accustomed to. This approach is consistent with both the Victims' Rights Directive and the Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which support procedural accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and supported by the principle of equal participation outlined in the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice, particularly Principle 2, which emphasises the right of persons with disabilities to fully engage in legal processes in line with the UNCPRD (Article 7, 12 and 13).⁴⁶

While Lithuania has made progress in adapting its criminal justice system to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities, further steps are necessary to make the system fully accessible.⁴⁷ As already discussed, the environment in which proceedings take place must be adapted to meet the specific needs of children. For example, accessible venue designs and appropriate waiting spaces are crucial in reducing anxiety and stress for vulnerable children.

⁴⁶ International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice (United Nations, 2017).

⁴⁷ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 54.

Besides the environment, adjustments should be made to the pace of proceedings, allowing extra time for children to process questions and provide answers. Providing breaks when necessary and using language that is simple and understandable are also key accommodations that should be more systematically implemented. These adaptations align with the Victims' Rights Directive and Lithuania's own legal frameworks, which aim to reduce secondary victimisation and promote a fair judicial process. However, there are still inconsistencies in their application, and a more standardised approach is needed across all courts, particularly in areas across the country with less resources.⁴⁸

Another area for improvement is the use of pretrial video recordings of testimony. This accommodational measure serves both as an accommodation and as a protective measure for children, as it allows them to testify without the stress of being repeatedly exposed to the courtroom environment or facing the accused. The potential benefits of video recordings are already recognised in Lithuania's legal system, but further integration into standard practice is necessary to ensure that children are not re-traumatised by the proceedings.⁴⁹

Improving communication support in criminal proceedings is another priority. Assistive listening systems, video-based communication tools, and real-time captioning can help children with hearing impairments or other communication barriers fully participate in legal processes. These tools ensure that children can follow proceedings, engage in discussions, and provide testimony without unnecessary obstacles. However, their availability remains limited in many parts of Lithuania, particularly in smaller towns.

Determining the appropriate form of support requires a case-by-case approach. In some situations, technological solutions such as speech-to-text software or video relay interpreting may be the most effective option. In other cases, a trained support person, such as an interpreter for sign language users, a communication specialist, or an intermediary, may be more appropriate, particularly for younger children or those with complex communication needs. The decision on whether to use tools, a person, or a combination of both should be made as part of the individual needs assessment, ensuring that the child receives the most effective and accessible support throughout the proceedings.

In addition to these technological solutions, it is essential that qualified interpreters, note-takers, and other communication facilitators are available to assist children throughout the process.

⁴⁸ *ibid* (n 1) 44.

⁴⁹ *ibid* (n 1) 31.

As discussed in previous sections, training is important for effective delivery of the service and these professionals must be adequately trained not only in legal and medical vocabulary but also in child-centered communication techniques, have an understanding of age-appropriate language, alternative communication methods, and trauma-informed approaches to ensure the child feels heard and supported. Another insight from the CAB reflected the psychological impact of ineffective support: *“You tell them something is wrong at home, and they write it down, but nothing changes. Then what’s the point of speaking up?”* This points to a broader systemic failure in child protection follow-up and a breakdown in trust between children and institutions.

A further specialised training in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems, sign language, and sensory-friendly communication strategies is recommended. It can be used to ensure that specialists accurately interpret the child’s statements and help bridge any communication gaps. Beyond their technical role, these professionals also provide emotional and moral support, creating a more inclusive and accessible environment that allows children to navigate the judicial process with greater confidence and security.

02

PART 2
DIGITAL INFORMATION
SYSTEM FOR THE MODEL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
COOPERATION SYSTEM

2.1 Proof of concepts: new solutions for victims with disabilities' participation in criminal justice

The Diana system is designed to manage and centralise critical data on crime victims, with a particular focus on children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Diana's purpose is to support risk assessments, facilitate procedural accommodations, and enable collaboration between multiple agencies. Most importantly, it is a powerful tool to facilitate access to information to the child, and where relevant, family, of their rights, case and what will happen in proceedings. To achieve this, the system collects detailed information, including victim contact details, crime specifics (such as type, severity, and context), demographic data (age, gender, and disability status), family and socio-economic background, risk factors, and the procedural stage of the case. By adopting a structured and inclusive approach, Diana serves as a centralised repository for victim data, enabling timely and effective interventions and meets diverse needs of its Lithuanian users, as data collection tools are compatible with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems and easy-to-read formats. The Diana system has been envisioned as a multi-function, multi-role application that integrates several critical features. These include victim data collection, procedural accommodation definition, risk assessment, data management, access to expert system information through an AI chatbot, and a secure communication tool for operators.

The system supports victims directly by providing access through a dedicated website or application available on PC, Mac, Android, and iOS. Vulnerable victims, including those with disabilities or children, can use the platform to report crimes, seek support, or receive procedural and legal guidance. All application interfaces will comply with accessibility standards for persons with disabilities. The design incorporates widely used solutions to ensure ease of use, which will be further explored in subsequent sections.

Furthermore, Diana provides support to criminal justice professionals, such as police officers, prosecutors, judiciary staff, anti-violence centres, healthcare providers, and lawyers. By centralising data and facilitating collaboration among these stakeholders, the system strengthens victim support processes while reducing redundancies and risks of secondary victimisation.

The following sections will explore Diana's ability to adapt to various levels of technological infrastructure, from advanced systems to more basic standalone applications, and how it can ensure its viability in the Lithuanian context.

2.1.1. Diana: Data Gathering

A key consideration in the implementation of Diana is its ability to integrate with existing systems used by law enforcement officers, child protection services specialists, and judicial authorities. In Lithuania, LITEKO or e.teismas.lt system already function as core digital platforms for the judiciary, managing case information and procedural documentation and providing information to court users. Integrating Diana with LITEKO or e.teismas.lt would ensure full interoperability, allowing seamless data exchange between systems. This integration would enable automatic updates from ongoing cases to synchronise with Diana, reducing duplication of efforts, streamlining workflows, and ensuring that all relevant professionals—judges, psychologists, and social workers—are updated in real time.

Where interoperability is not immediately feasible, Diana has been designed to accommodate various operational modes. For example, the system can function as a standalone application, with data manually entered by professionals such as police officers, healthcare providers, or support service workers. This flexibility ensures that Diana remains effective even in remote areas or contexts with limited digital integration. Partial interoperability offers another alternative, focusing on integration with selected systems outside the judicial framework, such as social services or healthcare databases. This approach would lower implementation complexity and costs while still enabling meaningful data sharing. For instance, local practices in Lithuania highlight the importance of specialised psychologists who work directly with children during court proceedings. Partial interoperability could facilitate the transmission of their assessments to Diana without requiring comprehensive system overhauls, ensuring vital information is shared efficiently.

Diana could also function as a standalone application, which may be particularly beneficial in remote areas of Lithuania where access to government systems is limited. In such cases, professionals would manually input data into while continuing to use their existing tools. To ensure efficiency, the information to be added to the system should be accessible during the initial stage of uploading and the system should allow for immediate access to uploaded information, enabling authorised users to review and utilise the data as soon as it is entered. This would help prevent delays in coordinating support and implementing necessary procedural adjustments.

Although manually inputting data is less efficient than direct system integration, this approach would still consolidate victim information into a single platform, ensuring that assessments, accommodations, and risk management are informed by up-to-date records.

The ability to function as a standalone application is especially important given the challenges in Lithuania's judicial system, such as inconsistent practices, limited resources, and insufficient training.⁵⁰

As with any data handling system, it's important to consider sensitive information protection. Diana adheres to data protection standards by utilising encryption and blockchain systems to protect user data. As discussed in Part 1 of this document, user access will be restricted based on roles, ensuring that only authorised individuals can view or modify data. These measures align with Lithuania's data protection laws and the EU's GDPR framework, safeguarding the integrity of victim data.

To achieve its functions, the Diana system collects data on crime victims, including risk assessment, procedural accommodations, and case management throughout various procedural stages. This data is acquired through multiple access points, enabling both victims and system operators to add new data to the system. By centralising this data, Diana ensures timely interventions, reduces redundancies, and minimises the risk of secondary victimisation.

Data is acquired through two primary methods. Firstly, through direct victim input as victims can access the system through a dedicated application or website, register, and complete a guided questionnaire. This process gathers contact details, descriptions of the crime, and relevant information for risk and procedural accommodations assessments. Secondly, professionals (such as police officers, prosecutors, healthcare providers, support services, lawyers) involved in victim support and protection systems can input data via the Diana user platform. This data reduces the need for repeated data collection across agencies.

Categories of the data which will be collected include contact details, specifics of the crime, health information, procedural details (current stage of the legal proceedings and important documents), information on the accessibility assessment and procedural accommodation factors.

⁵⁰ *ibid* (n 1) 43.

2.1.2 Diana: Case Management System

The Diana Case Management System (CMS) contains the information collected during the data gathering stage. For Lithuania, the role of the responsible entity tasked at managing the server could align with existing frameworks,⁵¹ such as those established by LITEKO or e.teismas.lt, with legislative amendments potentially required to formalise the responsibility of a designated authority, such as the Ministry of Justice or National Courts Administration.

Building on what was discussed in the previous sections, the system will allow different levels of access for users based on their roles. Judicial representative, external professionals, and victims themselves will authenticate their identities through a multi-factor authentication (MFA) system before accessing sensitive information. In Lithuania, for adults, this could be done through the Lithuanian Government e-gate portal⁵² and for children, authentication could combine strong passwords with secondary factors such as secure hardware tokens, or biometrics. Credentials will be managed by relevant bodies, such as the Ministry of Justice, or bar associations for lawyers.

The portal will allow access to different data depending on the user type. For example, lawyers could review crime specifics, procedural stages, and evidence-related documents, which can be uploaded in formats like PDFs to support judicial processes. Child victims can access their case information through secure portals designed to be user-friendly and compatible with augmentative and alternative communication systems. For example, instead of complex legal jargon, the system can present step-by-step visual guides explaining the next stages of their case. A dedicated “My Support Plan” section can allow the child to understand what accommodations have been assigned to their case, such as the right to have an intermediary, the ability to testify remotely, or access to a support person during questioning.

Support services, and healthcare providers can contribute to and access case records, ensuring that procedural accommodations are tailored and comprehensive care plans are implemented. Law enforcement officers can view investigative records and risk assessments. This layered approach minimises the risk of unauthorised access and ensures that sensitive information is available only to those directly involved in providing support.

⁵¹ *ibid* (n 1) 30.

⁵² Elektroniniai valdžios vartai, *E. Paslaugos portal* <<https://www.epaslaugos.lt/portal>> accessed 13 January 2025.

The following table specifies the different types of access in relation to the different roles.⁵³

Role	Accessible data	Options for editing data
Victims of crime	• Contact details • Type of crime suffered • Health data • Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation • Phase of the proceedings • Red Flags • Procedural Accommodations needed	• Contact details • Type of crime suffered * • New crimes • Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation * • File new evidence *
Police	• Contact details • Type of crime suffered • Health data • Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation • Phase of the proceedings • Evidences • Red Flags • Procedural Accommodations needed	• Contact details * • Type of crime suffered • New crimes • Health data * • Factors relate to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation • File new evidences
Prosecutor's office	• Contact details • Type of crime suffered • Health data	• Contact details * • Type of crime suffered • New crimes • Health data *

⁵³ National Research Council & Victim Support Europe, 2025. D3.3 - Model Multidisciplinary Cooperation System, Section 2, Part VII [Report in preparation].

	● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● Phase of the proceedings ● Evidences	● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● File new evidences
Support services	● Contact details ● Type of crime suffered ● Health data ● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● Phase of the proceedings ● Red Flags ● Procedural Accommodations needed	● Contact details * ● Type of crime suffered * ● New crimes * ● Health data * ● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● File new evidences
Anti-violence centres	● Contact details ● Type of crime suffered ● Health data ● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● Phase of the proceedings ● Red Flags ● Procedural Accommodations needed	● Contact details * ● Type of crime suffered * ● New crimes * ● Health data * ● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● File new evidences
Lawyers authorised by the victim	● Contact details ● Type of crime suffered ● Health data ● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation ● Phase of the proceedings ● Evidences ● Red Flags	● Contact details * ● Type of crime suffered * ● New crimes * ● Health data * ● Factors related to Risk Assessment/Procedural accommodation * ● File new evidences *

	● Procedural Accommodations needed	
Healthcare system operators	● Contact details ● Health data ● Red Flags ● Procedural Accommodations needed	● Contact details * ● Health data * ● Red Flags ● Procedural Accommodations needed

Note: Roles of Diana users and their data access capabilities.

* Indicating changes that have to be approved by other roles in order to be definitive.

2.1.3 Diana: Risk and Procedural Accommodation Assessment – Red Flags

The roles established in Part 1, particularly the child protection officer, forensic psychologist, and law enforcement officials, will determine who has access to risk assessment data within Diana. Under Lithuanian law, child protection agencies hold the competence to assess a child's best interests and recommend procedural accommodations. Therefore, in Diana's system, the child protection officer will have primary oversight of updating and approving accommodations, such as ensuring that a child who experiences distress during questioning is provided with video testimony alternatives or a trained intermediary. Meanwhile, forensic psychologists will input risk factors into Diana based on psychological evaluations, ensuring that any updates to the child's mental or emotional state trigger new protective measures in court proceedings.

The data stored in Diana system will be used for evaluating the need for procedural accommodations and assessing the risk of secondary victimisation, tailoring its assessments to the needs of children's with intellectual, sensory, or psychosocial disabilities. The first evaluation focuses on the application of specific procedural accommodations based on pre-determined factors that include the victim's gender, age, and type of disability, AAC tools required. The system will further consider the victim's social, family, and emotional background. Having analysed the information, the Diana system will propose accommodations measures. For example, using a child-friendly interview spaces in accordance with current Lithuanian legislations.⁵⁴

Furthermore, artificial intelligence integrated into the system will analyse anonymised statistical data to identify patterns and relationships between risk factors. By examining crime characteristics alongside insights into the emotional, social, and professional circumstances of both the victim and the offender, Diana's evaluation can recommend

⁵⁴ Grigaitė and Baltrušytė, (n 1) 21.

appropriate protective measures. These may include issuing restraining orders, providing additional security, or expediting access to counselling and relocation services based on available support mechanisms in Lithuania. With appropriate safeguards, AI could even serve as a decision-support tool, ensuring that professionals receive data-driven recommendations while retaining full authority over final decisions.

Additionally, AI can enhance accessibility within the system by assisting in the creation of Easy-to-Read content for children and individuals with cognitive disabilities. This feature could help simplify legal documents, procedural explanations, and victim rights information, making them more understandable. However, the application of AI for Easy-to-Read content in the Lithuanian language may be limited, as automated translation and simplification tools often require further refinement to ensure accuracy, cultural relevance, and compliance with linguistic accessibility standards.⁵⁵

For example, if Step 2 (Part 1) identifies that the child is at risk of heightened emotional distress when testifying, Diana will recommend modifications, such as providing pre-recorded testimony or introducing an intermediary during questioning. Most importantly, the system includes alert system in real-time. Through secure communication platforms integrated with existing infrastructure, such as e.teismas.lt, Diana ensures that critical information is delivered promptly to relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement, child protection agencies, and judicial authorities. This seamless flow of data enables rapid responses that are grounded in the specific needs and circumstances of the victims, ensuring that interventions are both effective and contextually appropriate. As outlines in Part 1, this will also enhance intersectoral collaboration, enable support workers to fill the gaps in regional disparities and direct resources where they're most needed.

⁵⁵ *ibid* (n 1) 30.

2.1.4 Diana: Expert System and Chatbot

Once Step 2 (Part 1) assessments are complete, Diana's Expert System and Chatbot provide clear, accessible guidance to the child and family regarding the accommodations put in place. This ensures that the child's guardian understands what support will be available during testimony, questioning, and trial proceedings.

If Step 2 determines that the child requires a designated support person, an alert is sent through Diana to confirm who will fulfil this role and when they will be available. The chatbot offers victim support in a shape of highly regulated and specific information to support participation in some procedural acts. It provides step-by-step instructions for filing complaints, participating in proceedings, and navigating interactions with law enforcement, such as providing practical details about where to go, the documentation required, and what to expect at each stage. It can also explain the roles of courts, prosecutors, and lawyers, as well as what to expect in the next stage of the criminal proceedings, educate children about their rights, and available procedural accommodations. This clarity is particularly valuable in Lithuania, where judicial processes lack accessible information.⁵⁶ To further align with Lithuania's national context, the chatbot can incorporate features that educate victims about their rights under the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child and the EU Victims' Rights Directive. It can also provide advice on overcoming barriers such as stigma.

Different stakeholders from Part 1 could have customised access to the chatbot and expert system based on their role. For example, while child protection officers can use Diana's chatbot to retrieve procedural accommodation recommendations, children and families only access a simplified version of the chatbot that answers frequently asked questions in accessible formats. This means that if a child asks about their rights before an interview, the chatbot will provide a short, clear response. For example: *"You have the right to bring a support person with you. If you feel uncomfortable, tell the police officer, and they will adjust the process for you."* In contrast, judicial professionals will receive legally structured guidance on how to implement these accommodations in practice.

To further support victims beyond legal guidance, the chatbot provides localised information about protection and support services. Through integration with geolocation technology, it can identify nearby child protection agencies, and healthcare facilities. It can also provide real-time updates on service availability, addressing

⁵⁶ *ibid* (n 1) 7.

regional disparities in Lithuania.⁵⁷ By integrating with LITEKO and e.teismas.lt, the chatbot can notify victims about key dates and different phase of their case, upcoming hearings. To address the lack of accessible communication, the chatbot can present information in easy-to-read formats, images, or voice-assisted options, it can also tailor it's tone of voice to user's cognitive abilities and age. The chatbot is compatible with AAC systems.

2.1.5 Diana: Internal Encrypted Secure Chat

The findings from Step 2 assessments must be effectively communicated to ensure timely implementation of accommodations. In addition to user chatbot, Diana facilitates this communication and collaboration among professionals managing victim cases to enhance multidisciplinary teamwork and minimise delays. Operating within Diana's encrypted environment, the chat system ensures that sensitive information remains confidential and accessible only to authorised users. Using encryption protocols such as AES-256 and TLS for data in transit and storage, it aligns with data protection standards.

For example, if the psychologist conducting Step 2 identifies that the child is showing signs of trauma-related anxiety, they can immediately notify legal representatives and interviewers through Diana's secure communication system, allowing them to adjust the child's interview format. A psychologist can even coordinate with legal representatives to implement accommodation measures for child-friendly interviews or provide support to regions where there is a lack of psychologists.

Integration with national systems such as LITEKO or e.teismas.lt will offer a unified platform that reduces reliance on fragmented communication channels. For example, professionals could share direct updates, request support, or log case-specific actions in real time, fostering a cohesive approach to victim care. Logged interactions also create a transparent record for audits and training, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement. This has been noted as a need during the Lithuanian research.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *ibid* (n 1) 44.

⁵⁸ *ibid* (n 1) 28.

2.1.6 Diana Inclusivity: Assistive technologies integrated to the system

The application is equipped with different assistive technologies and inclusion methods to encourage participation and inclusion of users with different disabilities and accommodation requirements. Besides simplifying information through chatbot, for victims with vision impairments, text-to-speech technology converts on-screen text into audio, and braille-compatible outputs can be included.

Physical disabilities are addressed with tools like word prediction software to reduce typing effort and speech recognition for voice input. For learning or intellectual impairments, visual aids like icons, symbols, and reminders help users navigate tasks and remember key details. Diana also integrates or supports tools like AAC systems for those who rely on communication boards. Text-to-speech and speech synthesis can be used to enhance usability for individuals with reading or comprehension challenges.

Diana will also allow children and their families to review certain elements of their case file, with safeguards in place. For example, a parent or guardian will be able to review procedural accommodations assigned to their child, ensuring they understand the support in place. If new risks emerge, such as heightened anxiety before a court appearance, the family can submit a request through Diana's family-friendly interface to reevaluate procedural accommodations. This also helps to ensure a participatory approach where families can play an active role in adapting support measures to the child's evolving needs.

2.1.7 Diana: Cybersecurity

Diana was built with cybersecurity in mind to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, authenticity, and availability of sensitive data within its CMS and chatbot. Given the sensitivity of the data processed special attention is paid to protecting both stored data and information exchanged through the platform. Diana uses blockchain technology for database security, creating a decentralised, tamper-resistant framework for managing data in line with governmental regulations.

Blockchain ensures decentralisation by distributing data across multiple nodes rather than relying on a single server, eliminating risks associated with a single point of failure. The immutability of blockchain, where cryptographic hashes link data blocks, prevents unauthorised alterations. Transparency and traceability are achieved through an open or permissioned ledger, which is also used to ensure limited access to the data.

To ensure secure information exchanges and document storage, Diana data encryption both for stored data and for transmitted data. Secure File Transfer Protocols establish encrypted links between servers and browsers, providing a secure pathway for private data exchanges, as in, chatbots. Content filtering monitors and controls the transfer of sensitive documents, minimising the risk of accidental or malicious sharing or data breaches. Endpoint protection is deployed on user devices to monitor and control activities, further preventing data breaches. Additionally, Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) create secure tunnels for encrypted data transmission, maintaining the confidentiality of information even when using unsecured networks.

By incorporating these technologies, Diana addresses risks associated with unauthorised access or external attacks. This is particularly critical in Lithuania, where Diana could be incorporated with a national system, such as LITEKO or e.teismas.lt and lately country technological infrastructure has been attacked by hostile nations.⁵⁹

As previously mentioned, access to Diana is limited through multi-factor authentication and role-based access controls. To maintain system resilience, regular cybersecurity audits and updates will be conducted which could be done together with LITEKO and e-teismas.lt cybersecurity audits.

⁵⁹ LRT, NKVC vadovas teigia, kad saugumo situacija Lietuvoje išlieka stabiliai įtempta (LRT, 2025), <https://bit.ly/3YfZh1J>, accessed 13 January 2025.

2.2 Conclusions

In this national model, we have discussed the opportunities and challenges of improving the experiences of child victims through the adaptation of the Diana system in Lithuania.

It was emphasised that full integration with existing national systems, such as LITEKO or e.teismas, could significantly benefit judicial and child protection services, allowing professionals to work together more efficiently. However, to achieve this level of interoperability legislative updates and technological investments would be required. In the interim, implementing standalone features or partial integration could provide immediate benefits and serve as a foundation for more comprehensive integration in the future.

The proposed model outlined how Diana could make judicial processes more inclusive, particularly for children with disabilities, how assistive technologies like speech-to-text tools, visual aids, and word prediction softwares, which are not widely used in Lithuania, could address many accessibility challenges and improve what procedural accommodations are available for child victims. To achieve this, training for the criminal justice professionals will be needed to ensure tools are applied effectively.

In reference to data security, the Diana system offers a strong cybersecurity framework, incorporating blockchain and encryption, essential for protecting sensitive information while maintaining compliance with Lithuanian and EU regulations.

03

PART 3 CASE STUDY

3.1 Case study

X is a 10-year-old girl with Down Syndrome who becomes a victim of physical abuse at a daycare centre in Lithuania. Her mother notices unexplained injuries when X comes home one day and sees a change in her behaviour. Usually joyful and energetic, X seems scared, quiet, and withdrawn. Her mother becomes worried and decides to report the incident to the police.

3.1.1 Reporting the incident

Using the Diana mobile app, X's mother is guided through the process of reporting the abuse.

The app allows her to describe what happened and upload photos of X's bruises, along with any other evidence she has. A friendly and accommodating chatbot answers her questions and explains X's and her mother's rights, outlining the steps to follow and what to expect. For example, the app informs her when she can expect contact from the police investigators, how to schedule a medical evaluation, and what kind of support is available for X.

Once the report is submitted, Diana automatically transmits the information to the local police, creating an official case file in e.teismas.lt, Lithuania's judicial case management system. The app also triggers an immediate referral to healthcare services, ensuring X is examined by a specialised forensic doctor within the child-friendly medical unit, where professionals document her injuries and assess her physical condition. A child protection officer is also notified, initiating an individual needs assessment to determine the accommodations required to support X throughout the legal process.

At this stage, X's immediate safety is evaluated. If there is a risk that X may face further harm at the daycare centre, Diana sends an alert recommending temporary removal from the institution and connects the family with child welfare services to arrange alternative childcare options.

3.1.2 Individual assessment

Upon first contact, Diana assesses X's needs and recommends steps to make the process less intimidating for her. Diana sends the outcome of X's needs assessment to a multidisciplinary team, which is reviewed and approved by a child protection officer (responsible for coordinating the case and ensuring procedural accommodations are in place), a psychologist (who evaluates X's emotional well-being and recommends tailored support, such as counseling or therapeutic interventions), a healthcare professional (who ensures X's medical needs are addressed and determines whether additional specialist evaluations are required), a forensic interviewer (trained to conduct child-sensitive questioning using accessible communication methods).

The child protection officer takes the lead in coordinating these professionals and ensures all relevant information is uploaded into Diana and e.teismas.lt. The municipal child rights protection unit is responsible for reviewing and approving recommendations related to X's protection and support. If the psychologist identifies emotional distress, they request approval from the municipal child rights protection unit to assign a trauma-informed counselor to support X. This request is reviewed within 48 hours, ensuring the child receives timely emotional support. If X's condition changes during the assessment, Diana automatically updates the risk level, sending alerts to all relevant professionals, who reassess accommodations accordingly.

To make the legal process less intimidating for X, the app recommends specific accommodations, such as assigning a designated support person to accompany X during interactions with legal professionals, conducting interviews in a sensory-friendly room with calming colors and soft furnishings, using visual aids, simplified language, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools to enhance understanding.

To ensure safety, all proposed measures are once again reviewed and approved by the child protection officer in consultation with the psychologist, ensuring that accommodations match X's individual needs. These decisions are recorded in Diana, making them accessible to law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary.

3.1.3 Legal proceedings

As the case moves forward, Diana ensures that X's family remains informed, providing real-time updates on court dates, required documents, and procedural developments through e.teismas.lt.

X's testimony is recorded in a pre-trial hearing in a child-friendly setting, with her lawyer and forensic psychologist present to support her. The forensic psychologist ensures that the questioning process is adapted to X's cognitive abilities, using clear, simplified language and visual aids.

This recorded testimony is securely stored and shared with the court through e.teismas.lt, preventing the need for X to testify multiple times. This minimises the risk of secondary victimisation and ensures her testimony is considered without unnecessary repetition.

If any new risks or psychological concerns emerge during the legal process, the child protection officer and psychologist are immediately notified through Diana, allowing them to adjust support measures. For example, if X experiences heightened distress, additional psychological support sessions may be scheduled, or modifications to court accommodations may be made to reduce stress.

3.1.4 Support after the trial

After the trial, the app continues to provide post-trial support, ensuring X's well-being is monitored. The app achieves this by notifying X's mother about the enforcement of the judge's decision, including any protective measures granted, provides reminders for counselling appointments and access to therapeutic services, allows X's mother to submit feedback about the support received, helping refine services for future cases.

If X's required support after the trial due to changes to emotional state, Diana can generate alerts for follow-up assessments, ensuring that any additional support needs are promptly addressed. The municipal child rights protection unit remains responsible for monitoring X's well-being for a set period, ensuring that protective measures outlined above remain effective.

