

Edwin Poots

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Role: Speaker; formerly DUP **Constituency:** Belfast South **Party:** Independent |**Last updated:** 13 July 2026|

Bio

Detail	Info
Name	Edwin Poots
Constituency	Belfast South
Party	Independent
First elected	2022 (current mandate)
Role	Speaker; formerly DUP

Key Information

- MLA for Belfast South
- Speaker; formerly DUP
- **DUP leader (2021)** — During a leadership contest in 2021, former DUP MP Ian Paisley Jr told Poots about a young woman who said Jeffrey Donaldson had "exploited" her. Poots told BBC Spotlight: "We observed at all times the wishes of the young woman." The woman did not want to make a formal complaint.
- **Recused from Donaldson-related Assembly business (29 June 2026)** — Did not preside over Matter of the Day debate on Donaldson; kept out of decision on whether the debate should proceed.
- **Calls to step aside** — Justice Minister Naomi Long and First Minister Michelle O'Neill called on Poots to consider stepping aside from the Speaker role pending review outcome. Long cited precedent for stepping aside during investigations.
- **"Nothing to answer for" (30 June 2026)** — Poots told the Assembly "I would never have protected Jeffrey Donaldson in any circumstance" and insisted he has "nothing to

answer for" over his handling of the woman's concerns. He claimed "a number of people" in the DUP also knew about her claims. Sinn Féin called on him to "stand aside" as Speaker. (Sources: BBC, ITV/UTV, Newsletter)

- **Assembly review into Donaldson (10 July 2026)** — Poots requested the Assembly launch a formal review into Donaldson's behaviour at Parliament Buildings. The review, led by the Director of Parliamentary Services, is open from 10 July to 21 August for anyone to come forward with evidence of abuse or inappropriate behaviour. Poots continues as Speaker despite ongoing calls to step aside. (Sources: BBC News NI, NI Assembly)
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Twitter/X Discussion

🔍 Source: Nitter search, 26 May 2026

No significant discussion found on Nitter/X for this period — section created on setup.

Recent Developments (June 2026)

- **BBC Spotlight (26 June)** revealed Poots was told in 2021 by Ian Paisley Jr about allegations against Jeffrey Donaldson. Poots stated he "observed at all times the wishes of the young woman" who did not want to make a formal complaint.
- **29 June:** Recused from Assembly Donaldson debate. Alliance MP Sorcha Eastwood said it was "not tenable" for the Speaker to remain while DUP conducts internal review into their own handling of Donaldson allegations.

Reddit Discussion

🔍 Source: Reddit, 26 May 2026

No significant discussion found yet — section created on setup.

Sources

- Northern Ireland Assembly: <https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/>
- BBC Northern Ireland: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/northern_ireland

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